

FALL 15

# HOWARD

m a g a z i n e

## DESIGNING THE FUTURE

Young Howard alumnus manages new  
Interdisciplinary Research Building

PAGE 26





# Editor's Letter

## New Beginnings

When you opened up to the first few pages of the *Howard Magazine*, you may have noticed a new name.

That's me. RaNeeka Claxton Witty. I am honored to have recently joined the Office of University Communications as the new Publications Manager. As your new editor, I am thrilled to serve you in this space and get more acquainted with you over time.

This fall, our theme is Addressing Disparities. The topic hits home for me—brings me back to my first semester freshman year at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor. That's when my father died suddenly of liver cancer. A loving husband, amazing father of three, and hard worker, he had insurance and access to quality health care. But like many today, he didn't get regular medical checkups. I'd like to think that, if he had and his doctor would have discovered the cancer before it was in its final stages, he may have had better chances for treatment.

Unfortunately, my father's disparate situation is not a solitary one. In the coming pages, you will read stories that discuss ways in which African Americans are confronting these disparities in various disciplines. You will read a first-person account from a Howard University Hospital cancer surgeon and breast cancer survivor about the disparity of cancer in the Black community. You will also read about a young Howard architect who manages the newest building project on campus. Additionally, you will learn about a recent Howard graduate who has become Google's first hire from an HBCU into a Software Engineering role.

This issue will also debut a few new magazine departments. "Bison Conversations" aims to engage you in dialogue about a given topic. "In Their Words" will give faculty members a chance to write about a subject from their personal perspective. "In Their Shoes" is a department meant to bring you stories about current Bison. "Then and Now" will showcase one image from Howard's legacy, juxtaposed with a similar scene today. Last, but not least, you will find factoids about the University trickled throughout.

This is *your* magazine. With this in mind, my goal is to bring you relevant and timely news and features about the phenomenal things happening among you. I look forward to the journey ahead with you—the esteemed Howard University alumni.

In Truth and Service,

RaNeeka Claxton Witty, Editor

### Alumni on the Move

We hear so many amazing stories about alumni making an impact in their careers and communities, but just don't have the space to publish articles about all of them in *Howard Magazine*. If you have a unique or fascinating story about an alumna or alumnus, we want to know about it. Please email us at [magazine@howard.edu](mailto:magazine@howard.edu).

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# HOWARD

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# Defying Disparities

By Wayne A. I. Frederick (B.S. '92; M.D. '94; M.B.A. '11)

A new academic year has begun at Howard University, and as our nation continues to face adversity, chaos and despair, my mission here at Howard University remains clear: to educate our young people in the most excellent fashion.

In executing my vision, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the fact that Howard's outstanding students and their families, and many other people of color, are confronted with disparities in a number of areas. People of color grapple with more health disparities than any other race, and we simply see a disproportionate lack of Blacks in key professions, such as medicine and dentistry.

But the question is this: How are people of color responding to these disparities?

Historically, Howard University students and alumni have consistently addressed disparities. I am reminded of a conversation I had with CNN host Wolf Blitzer last spring, in which I discussed topics that alumni raised about my vision for strengthening the University. During that conversation, I spoke about my mentor, Dr. LaSalle Leffall Jr. Back in 1948, after he finished his undergraduate degree at Florida A&M University (FAMU), he could only apply to two medical schools: Howard and Meharry Medical College in Tennessee. After FAMU's president petitioned for him to get into Howard, he was admitted, graduated No. 1 in his class, and was, essentially, given an opportunity that got him to where he is today—a highly reputable surgical oncologist.

Like Dr. Leffall, there are a few others who come to mind as African Americans who have overcome and addressed disparities in their respective fields. In the field of law, there was Charles Hamilton Houston, who played a role in nearly every civil rights case before the Supreme Court between 1930 and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). He also joined Howard Law School's faculty, and became a mentor to Thurgood Marshall, who was later appointed to the Supreme Court.

In the field of education, I am reminded of Dr. Jeanne L. Noble. After graduating from Howard, she went on to earn master's and doctorate degrees from Columbia University, and became the first African-American woman to move from assistant to full professor at the New York University School of Education.

Finally, there was Dr. Inabel Burns Lindsay, who became the first dean of Howard's School of Social Work, leading the school to become the second accredited school in the country to serve Black students.

Historically, Howard University, in many fields, offered the only opportunity for people of color. Though times have changed, Howard is still paving the way for people of color to defy disparities. For instance, Howard University sends the second-highest number of Black students to medical school, and we produce 50 percent of Black dentists, along with Meharry.

As we move forward in this academic year and those to come, it is of the utmost importance that Howard University continues to produce professionals who can go out into the community and make a difference in not only medicine and dentistry, but the vast majority of fields in which people of color are underrepresented.

In a society where the stereotype of what somebody of color is capable of accomplishing still exists, Howard University students and alumni will maintain excellence in carrying forth the University's motto, *Truth and Service*, as we tackle the disparities that people of color endure. ■IU





# Wilson: 'We must do more' to address disparities in breast cancer

By Dr. Lori Wilson

In 2013, nearly 230,000 women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and an additional 65,000 with noninvasive breast cancer.

I was one of 27,000 African-American women diagnosed with breast cancer in the same year.

Now cancer-free after aggressive treatment with chemotherapy, surgery, radiation and targeted therapy to reduce my risk of recurrence, I am about to celebrate my two-year anniversary as a breast cancer survivor. As many do after hearing the words "you have cancer," my family and I looked to give the journey purpose, so we shared our lives during treatment in Ken Burns' documentary *Cancer: Emperor of All Maladies*. And though making it through treatment was not easy, the most challenging part of the cancer battle is after treatment ends. There is still so much that we do not know about breast cancer, especially in African-American women. For me, it is a call to arms against this malady.

We know that screening mammogra-

phy and timely follow-up of suspicious results are essential for the best opportunity for a cure. As a cancer surgeon and researcher at Howard University Hospital and Cancer Center (HUH and HUCC), I have seen the difference in the tumor characteristics. They are often more aggressive in African-American women. Although new breast cancer cases are not highest in African-American women for most age groups, they are highest for African-American women under the age of 40, and compared with other ethnicities, we are less likely to have long-term cures. We are more likely to have breast cancers with fewer targets to treat (estrogen receptors present) with current standard-of-care targeted therapies.

Quality access to breast cancer care is essential. It decreases, but does not eliminate, the disparities we see in breast cancer outcomes. As a believer in evidence-based treatment, it means We Must Do More. Research dollars must be directed toward understanding what disparities mean to breast cancer and



how to implement the best treatments for African-American women and men with this diagnosis.

At HUH and HUCC, we hear the call and have developed an amazing Breast Group of clinicians, researchers, navigators, oncology nurses, genetic counselors and so many more to provide dedicated, tailored, evidence-based care. In August, we launched a Transdisciplinary Clinic that allows breast cancer patients to see all specialists on the same day, reducing the time between evaluation and developing a tailored plan of care and survivorship. Our group is dedicated to changing the disparities we see in breast cancer. ■HU

## Bison Conversations Let's talk about it

*Howard Magazine* wouldn't be complete without you—your voices, your viewpoints, your opinions.

So, we want to include you.

"Bison Conversations" is a new place for you to share your voices. Here's how it works: We ask. You answer via email. We publish a handful of your submissions.

### First Question:

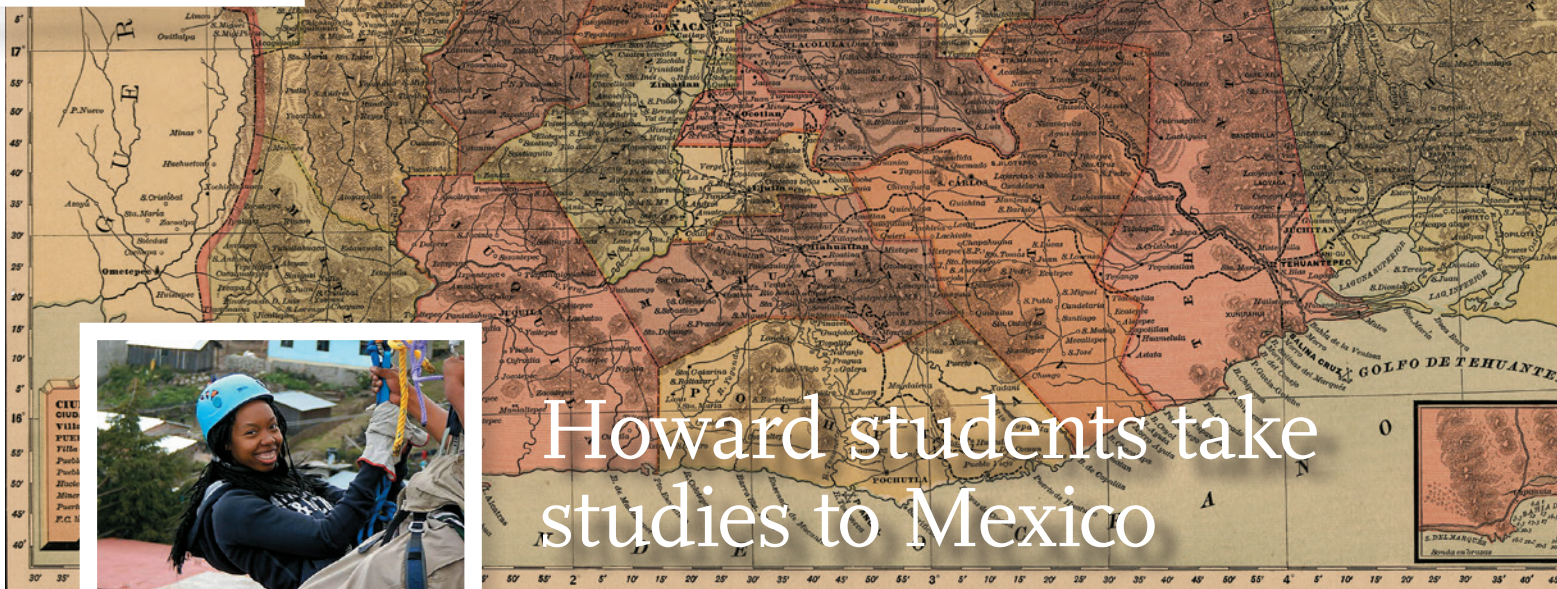
***In what ways has your Howard University education prepared you to address disparities in society?***

**Please email your responses, titled "Bison Conversations," to [magazine@howard.edu](mailto:magazine@howard.edu), and include your first and last name, degree earned from Howard, graduation year and current city.**

You never know. You just might see your words in the next issue of *Howard Magazine*. We look forward to hearing from you.



# In Their Shoes



## Howard students take studies to Mexico

Four Howard University students share their study-abroad experiences from Oaxaca, Mexico, over the summer, in real time.

The students represented a shift in the disparity of African-American students who choose to study abroad.



# HU students 'highlight of our year'

By Walter Hosey (M.A. '01)

This May marked 20 years that I have been traveling to Oaxaca. I have lived here full time for seven years.

As faculty and staff at the Universidad del Mar, we truly do see working with the Howard group as the highlight of our year. The students get to know their professors personally—visiting their homes, riding bicycles together, walking in the park or enjoying a great conversation over coffee.

## Dancing through Oaxaca streets always new

By Yasmeen Enahora

I have been in Oaxaca, Mexico, for exactly two weeks and know for sure that I am meant for travel. Learning a different language in a completely new environment is, in itself, a difficult, yet beautiful, lesson. I am learning the native tongue along with the culture, food and dance firsthand. I've hiked Montaña de Benito Juárez and ziplined from the top, taken yoga classes, and much more.

As a Lucy Moten Scholar, I am conducting research on ballet and traditional dance. So much has transpired [here] that I could never retell the full story!

The one thing I'll always tell myself after this trip: "Dancing through the streets of Oaxaca will never get old."

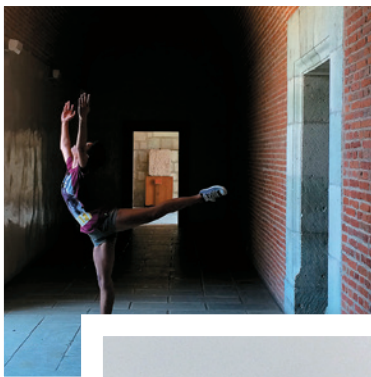
## Learning new language possible in Oaxaca

By Gabrielle Wafer

Being a person of color in Oaxaca was a refreshing experience. The people in Oaxaca were intrigued by our (darker) skin and our "trenzas" ("braids" in Spanish). We received so much love.

My favorite part of the program was our excursion to Llano Grande. It was challenging because we climbed up a mountain. The view was breathtaking, and some of us conquered our fear of heights. We also went ziplining. I liked being able to sit in some accounting classes at Universidad Mesoamericana.

This experience taught me that it is possible to learn another language. I was forced to use the skills I learned in the classroom 24/7. I learned more in those five weeks in Oaxaca than I have learned sitting in a classroom.



# From HU students to Oaxacan celebrities

By R. Delacy Peters III

African Americans are literal celebrities here. The Oaxacan people *love* us. We are often stared at and approached by people who want pictures. This is not because we are seen as oddities, but because we are seen as genuinely beautiful in their eyes. I can't begin to tell you how many people have complimented the girls on their hair.

The Oaxacan people are very welcoming, warm and loving. It is common for men and women to greet each other with a kiss on the cheek. My Spanish has steadily improved for a few reasons. Primarily, I do make an effort to use it whenever I can, but more importantly, *everyone* in Oaxaca is very patient with me when I am speaking Spanish.

We write a diary entry every day for our respective Spanish classes. One reading my diary [would] see how every day here is better than the previous.



## Follow your heart, go to Oaxaca

By David Lawrence

Thus far, Oaxaca has been great to a young brother. Most [people] have not seen many African Americans in their lifetime, so you will catch a person or two sneaking pictures.



STUDY ABROAD  
289,408  
U.S. students studied  
abroad between 2012 and 2013.  
Only 5.3%  
of those students were  
African American.

## Oaxaca Study Abroad

**Who:** 34 Howard University students, representing varied major areas of study, under the leadership of Universidad del Mar Professor Walter Hosey (M.A. '01) and Dr. James J. Davis, Howard professor and ESL director

**What:** Universidad del Mar, Centro de Capacitación Turística General Program

**When:** Summer 2015 Session

**Where:** Oaxaca, Mexico (pronounced wah-HAH-kah)—Southwestern Mexico, about 300 miles south of Mexico City

**Why:** Spanish grammar and conversation courses, cooking, cocktail making, Latin dance classes, and pairings with Mexican students learning English. Audited courses in academic discipline of choice. Excursions to ruins, mountain biking, ziplining, waterfalls, pottery-making and weaver towns.





## — HOWARD UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING 2015 —

LISTED BELOW ARE STUDENT EVENTS. FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF ALUMNI  
EVENTS, VISIT [HOWARD.EDU/HOMECOMING](http://HOWARD.EDU/HOMECOMING)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH

UNVEILING

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH

DAY OF SERVICE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH

5K RACE

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH

PEP RALLY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP SERIES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1ST

FASHION SHOW I & II

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2ND

YARDFEST + HOMECOMING CONCERT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD

HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME + GREEK STEP SHOW + OFFICIAL AFTER PARTY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

CALL TO CHAPEL/CHAPEL SERVICE + ROYAL COURT CORONATION +  
ALUMNI/CURRENT STUDENT BRUNCH + GOSPEL SHOW

# Freshman Leadership Academy Travels to China

Twenty-one students of the Howard University Freshman Leadership Academy (FLA) participated in an intensive 14-day cultural exchange to China from July 13–26, for the fifth consecutive year. This year marked the first trip to include Howard University President Wayne A. I. Frederick.

While in China, students visited important economic and historic landmarks, such as the Shanghai World Financial Center and the Great Wall of China. They also traveled to the U.S. Consulate and toured Beijing University. This year, students raised more than \$105,000 through their own fundraising efforts in order to make the trip to China.

“The Freshman Leadership Academy’s studies and cultural immersion in Asia builds on the vision for expanding Howard’s international footprint and answers the call of President Obama’s 100,000 Strong Educational Exchange Initiative,” said Frederick. “Now, more than ever, our



world is interconnected. To be successful personally, intellectually and professionally, you must become a global citizen.”

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs sponsors FLA, in conjunction with the Howard University Student Association. It was established

in 2010 and seeks to expose first-year students to the opportunities and challenges associated with student leadership and service. The program often attracts hundreds of freshman and transfer student applicants, competing for 65 positions.

## School of Law Clinic Wins Circuit Court Case

The Howard University School of Law experienced a significant victory in the U.S. Circuit Court for DC. in a case in which the school’s Civil Rights Clinic represented Vanessa Coleman, who was pushed out of the D.C. Fire Department after publicly disclosing mismanagement within its ranks.

At the time, Coleman was the highest-ranked uniformed Black woman within the D.C. Fire Department—a captain. She sued for discrimination and retaliation because, among other things, the department ordered her to undergo a psychiatric evaluation once she started complaining. After losing on summary judgment in the District court, the client retained the Civil Rights Clinic for the appeal.

Under Professor Aderson Francois’ guidance, School of Law students spent a year reviewing tens of thousands of pages of discovery and briefing the case. In fall 2014, one of them presented the oral argument before a Circuit Court panel.

The following School of Law students wrote the opening and reply briefs in the fall 2013 and spring 2014 semesters: Parand Kashani, Nicole Tripplett, Shannon McNeal, Christine Santillana, George Davis, and Thai Noa Ngyuen. Jatinique Randle, Sitota Douglas, and Bryant Chambliss did the oral argument in fall 2014.



# Inauguration and Charter Day 2015

Dr. Wayne A. I. Frederick (B.S. '92; M.D. '94; M.B.A. '11) was inaugurated on March 6 as Howard University's 17th president during a ceremony on the University's historic campus. The inauguration coincided with the annual Charter Day Convocation, which commemorates Howard's founding.

In his inaugural address, Frederick emphasized five distinct priorities for his administration: building a culture of academic excellence and rigor; revitalizing the manner in which higher education institutions meet the needs of both students and the world today; infusing service into the University culture; increasing the philanthropic efforts of the University community; and engaging in scholarship and research grounded in solving contemporary problems.

The Inauguration and Charter Day festivities culminated a weeklong series of events that included public service activities, a faculty art show, and a symposium on diversity and technology that featured leaders from Facebook, Yahoo and Google, who discussed strategies for diversifying Silicon Valley.





# Commencement 2015



Howard University graduated more than 2,400 students, including undergraduate, graduate, professional and certification students, at this year's commencement ceremony in May.

Ursula M. Burns, chairman and chief executive officer of Xerox Corporation, delivered the 2015 keynote commencement address to students, faculty, staff and guests. Howard University President Dr. Wayne A. I. Frederick reflected on current events and the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice and Freddie Gray, urging graduates to uphold the University's long history of community leadership.

The University awarded honorary degrees to award-winning actor and director Morgan Freeman, Spelman College President Beverly Daniel Tatum and philanthropists and Howard University graduates Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown.



JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



INSANA COLLINS

INSANA COLLINS



# Alternative Spring Break 2015



JUSTIN D. KNIGHT  
AND ASHTON MYLES - DETROIT AND NEW ORLEANS

The Alternative Spring Break program, which is committed to serving communities in need and involving students in meaningful service, sent more than 450 students this year to community service projects in Baltimore; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Detroit; Memphis; New Orleans; St. Louis; Newark; and Haiti.

Students' service activities from Detroit and New Orleans are captured here.





# On Campus

News

## Howard Students and Faculty Visit Haiti

A team of 18 student and faculty members from Howard University's College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, College of Pharmacy, College of Dentistry and College of Medicine traveled to post-earthquake Haiti for a week and a half over the summer to embark upon an ambitious service-learning-based trip.

The team traveled in conjunction with the New York chapter of the National Organization for the Advancement of Haitians (NOAH NY) and the Haitian-American Alliance. This year marks the fifth that the University has conducted service-learning projects in Haiti.





## Dr. Mesfin Named Anesthesia Department Chair

Dr. Besrat Mesfin, a faculty member in the Department of Anesthesia since 2004, has been named permanent chair of the department at Howard University Hospital (HUH). He previously served as interim chair of the department and helped streamline operations while maintaining excellence in the clinical practice of anesthesia.



## Howard Professor Among National Journalism Grant Winners

Associate Professor Yanick Rice Lamb (M.B.A. '05), Howard's School of Communications, won a \$35,000 micro-grant from the Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education.

Rice Lamb will partner with the National Newspaper Publishers Association and Trice Edney News Wire to pursue her project, "HU Insight," which seeks to determine if students can create a digital network for fact-checking and investigating reports and claims about the African-American community.

The Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education was created in 2014 to encourage journalism programs to experiment with new ways of providing news and information. Among others, grant-recipient universities include Duke University, University of Florida and West Virginia University.

## National Bar Association Honors Howard Alumni

Antonio Kizzie (B.A. '08), of McNeill & Wyatt, and Brandes Ash (J.D. '11) of the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, were recognized by the National Bar Association on its "Top 40 Under 40" list at the organization's 90th annual convention.

The awards recognize the nation's top lawyers under 40 years of age who exemplify a broad range of achievements, including innovation, vision, leadership, and legal and community involvement.

NATIONS

46

Number of nations  
represented in  
Howard University's  
Class of 2019

# Howard Faculty and Student Named Fulbright Scholars

Three Howard faculty members and one student have been selected as Fulbright Scholars. Two other Howard students have been selected as alternates.

Dr. Kellee Jenkins, assistant director, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education, will travel to Salvador, Brazil, to partner with the Universidade Federal da Bahia and study self-efficacy and self-identity in Afro-Brazilian educators.

Associate Professor Kehbuma Langmia, of the Howard University Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communications, will travel to the University of Buea in Cameroon, West Africa, to assist in the development of the graduate program in the Journalism and Mass Communication Department. He will also mentor the graduate students as they prepare theses and dissertations.

Assistant Professor Michael Lipscomb,

Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences, will travel to Brazil to conduct research on Brazilian mobility.

Graham Ellis, a third-year student from the College of Medicine and the winner of a Fulbright-Fogarty Fellowship in Public Health, has elected to study sickle cell anemia in Malawi.

Fanta Traore, a member of the Class of 2015, and School of Law student Oluwafunmilayo Ladeinde were chosen as alternates for the student program for Cote d'Ivoire and Botswana, respectively.

The Fulbright program, established in 1946, is offered by the U.S. State Department to facilitate international educational exchanges for students, teachers and other professionals.

Since its inception, the Fulbright program has awarded more than 70 grants to Howard University faculty and students; 42 grants were to students.



Graham Ellis

# Graduate School Student Summers at Harvard

Anjerrica Bean, doctoral student, spent the summer at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD). The School allows its students to explore a new perspective of design, testing limits, expanding potential, concepts that are central to the design and planning professions—and central to what career discovery offers.

Students spend most of their time, including evenings and weekends, in a stimulating studio environment at the GSD that mirrors a graduate-level studio experience. They learn to analyze challenges from multiple angles, pursuing new ways of thinking and seeking out creative solutions. In the studio, a student's participation, dedication, and enthusiasm are essential to success.



## Jones Awarded Researcher of the Year

HU ADVANCE-IT recently awarded Dr. Kimberly L. Jones (Ph.D. '09), professor and chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the Woman in STEM Researcher of the Year Award.

The award, first given in 2014, recognizes the distinguished scholarship and leadership of women faculty in STEM at Howard University. HU ADVANCE-IT's mission is to educate, advocate for and empower women faculty in the STEM disciplines at Howard. Its goal is to increase the number of women faculty in full professorships and administration.



# Professor *Emerita* Wins Prestigious Book Award

Associate Professor *Emerita* María Roof, Department of World Languages and Cultures, College of Arts and Sciences, recently won the outstanding book prize awarded by the Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies (MACLAS)

for her 545-page book of interviews and translations of poetry by Nicaraguan author Vidaluz Meneses, *Flame in the Air: Bilingual Poetry Edition*.

Roof, who retired from teaching Latin American literature and culture,

Spanish language, women's studies and translation at Howard in 2014, will deliver the Whitaker Address next year at the 37th MACLAS meeting at Temple University's Fox School of Business in Philadelphia.

# Akala Makes Advancements in Pharmacy

Professor Emmanuel O. Akala, R.Ph., Ph.D., College of Pharmacy, is the recent recipient of a three-year research grant award from the National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute. The grant, which provides \$377,500 for each of the three years, will allow Akala to study ways to circumvent the problem of drug resistance when treating breast cancers that contain the gene HERS2.

Akala has also been selected to serve as a member of a United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) Expert Committees, which is responsible for developing and revising USP standards that comprise its compendia: the USP and the National Formulary, USP Compounding Compendium, Herbal Medicines Compendium, Dietary Supplements Compendium and Food Chemicals Codex.



# Howard University Athletics Unveils New Bison Logo

Howard University Athletics has unveiled a new Bison logo. The new logo symbolizes strength, power and tenacity that guides the University's athletic teams.

The development of a new logo began in 2014, using a process that engaged all stakeholders in the Howard University community. In January, the University solicited input from students, faculty, staff and alumni via social media, asking, "What makes you a Bison?"



# New Appointments

**Dr. Anthony K. Wutoh**, former dean, College of Pharmacy, and assistant provost for international programs, was appointed provost and chief academic officer of Howard University. Wutoh succeeds Dr. Michael R. Winston, who has served as academic counsel to President Wayne A. I. Frederick since November 2013 and as provost since September 2014. Winston will continue to serve as academic counsel.



**Dr. Hugh E. Mighty**, former vice chancellor for clinical affairs at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, was appointed the 18th dean of the Howard University College of Medicine and vice president of clinical affairs. In his new role, Mighty will oversee the College of Medicine's academic programs and provide oversight for the administrative and financial operation of the College of Medicine; serve as vice president of clinical affairs, with oversight of the relationship between the academic enterprise and the hospital and development and direction of the Faculty Practice Plan; and serve as professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Mighty succeeds Dr. Edward E. Cornwell III, who led the Howard University College of Medicine on an interim basis since October 2014.



**Tiesha "Ty" Grace**, former head women's basketball coach at the University of New Haven, was recently hired as the head coach of the Lady Bison Women's Basketball program. Grace has nearly 20 years of coaching experience on every level of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and had a standout career as a student-



athlete. Prior to New Haven, Grace coached at Seton Hall University, the United States Military Academy, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Fairleigh Dickinson University and University of Hartford.

**Dr. Gina S. Brown**, former academic administrator for Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts and graduate administration associate professor at Loma Linda University in California, was appointed dean, College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences. Brown, who succeeds Dr. Marguerite Neita, will report to the provost and chief academic officer.



**Dr. Dexter A. Woods**, former associate dean for the College of Dentistry, director of Faculty Practice and associate professor at Howard University, was appointed dean of Howard University College of Dentistry. Woods succeeds Dr. Leo E. Rouse, who, prior to his retirement, served as dean of the College of Dentistry since 2004. He will report to Dr. Anthony K. Wutoh, Howard University provost and chief academic officer, and oversee all aspects of academic and administrative affairs for the College of Dentistry.



**Carrolyn J. Bostick**, former assistant administrator for human resource management at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), was appointed vice president of human resources and organizational effectiveness at Howard University. Bostick also held HR leadership positions at Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), U.S. Fidelity and Guaranty Insurance Company (USF&G), the Washington Metropolitan Area Tran-

sit Authority (WMATA), and the Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae).

**Bernard A. Mair, Ph.D.**, former associate provost for undergraduate affairs at the University of Florida, has been named dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Howard University. Mair was also director of the Ronald McNair Program and associate dean of the University of Florida's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences during the 2008–09 academic year.

**Sandra Edmonds Crewe, Ph.D.**, a seasoned administrator and expert on aging and quality of life issues, was appointed dean of the Howard University School of Social Work. She had served as acting dean since July 2013. Crewe also serves as a professor of social work and director of the Howard University Multidisciplinary Gerontology Center.



**Michael Masch**, former vice president for finance and chief financial officer at Manhattan College in Riverdale, N.Y., was appointed vice president and chief financial officer at Howard University. In his new role at Howard, Masch will be responsible for all aspects of the financial management of the University. He will report directly to Howard University's President Wayne A. I. Frederick.

**Florence Prioleau**, currently general counsel, was also appointed secretary to the Board of Trustees. Prioleau brings extensive experience as a public policy partner, former White House official and senior congressional aide. For more than 25 years, she has provided counsel to clients on a wide range of issues before Congress and federal agencies.







# HOWARD UNIVERSITY



**HOWARD**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Howard University, one of the nation's leading research universities, is dedicated to educating students from diverse backgrounds at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels. Guided by our extraordinary cadre of faculty, students are immersed in cutting-edge scholarship and innovation, including nanotechnology, human genome research and atmospheric science, as well as the social sciences, arts and humanities on four campuses.

Since its inception more than 145 years ago, Howard University has been at the forefront of preparing globally competent students for positions of leadership and social responsibility.



# Legacy



Then

Freedmen's Hospital, circa 1941: A teaching hospital that doubled as an emergency facility to care for sick and mentally ravaged ex-slaves unable to care for themselves at the height of the Civil War.

Now



On April 21, 1983, the Freedmen's Hospital was dedicated as the C.B. Powell Building, which houses the Howard University School of Communications. The School of Communications offers six degree programs, including bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. options; a new 120-credit-hour curriculum; specialized programs; and high school outreach programs.



# HARVARD

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# Profiles

in Leadership





# Jeron Smith (B.B.A. '08)

Forbes Magazine's 2015 30 Under 30: Marketing and Advertising, Nike

## *How has Howard University influenced and prepared you for your career?*

Without a doubt, my peers were most influential. I transferred to Howard from UCLA, and upon stepping foot into the School of Business, I had never in my life been immersed in an environment of not only intelligent students, but ambitious, motivated and focused students as well. That environment was foundational for future success, as it forced me to follow suit or get left behind. I chose to follow suit. I also had access to resources and guidance counselors (Ms. Hampton) [who] genuinely cared about my growth and development. Those resources proved to [be] invaluable.

## *In what ways do you mentor young males? Discuss the personal and professional development mentioned in your bio and your inspiration for reaching back.*

I rarely pass up an opportunity to speak to young students. I remember how instrumental speakers and mentors were and are in my life. Experience is such a great teacher. I knew what I wanted to accomplish, but there were so many times when I felt like giving up or thought I

couldn't go any further. Through my faith in God and hanging on just a little longer, I was blessed to finally break through. As such, I am passionate about hopefully inspiring young students to hang on and be relentless in their pursuit, despite the obstacles.

## *You are in a fortunate position, blending your passion of sports with your profession. What advice would you give to current students navigating their way through Howard, who have aspirations to climb the corporate ladder?*

My favorite phrase is "relentless ambition." I believe that phrase perfectly captures what it takes to break into and thrive in this industry. Essentially, extraordinary benefit accrues to the tiny minority of people who are able to push just a bit longer than most. That benefit is breaking into [a] job field you desire, but the trade-off is the ability to outwork your competition. Given the competitive nature of the sports and marketing industry, it's imperative that any students [who] aspire to work in this industry [are] relentless in their pursuits, strategic in their networking and unique in their skill set. ■■

My favorite phrase is "relentless ambition." I believe that phrase perfectly captures what it takes to break into and thrive in this industry.



# Profiles

in Leadership





# Alexandra Jones

By Briahnna Brown

For Alexandra Jones (B.A. '01; M.A. '03), archaeology never seemed to be in the plan.

She had never had the opportunity to learn about the field as a child, and after studying both biology and history at Howard University, Jones realized that becoming a medical doctor was not her calling.

One course in archaeology revealed something for Jones: She had fallen in love with the field. Yet, she still had doubts that she would be able to turn her passion into a viable career. She didn't know many people in the field, let alone African Americans, and had not known much about it before her time at Howard.

Today, Jones is an archaeologist and founder and CEO of Archaeology in the Community, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that aims to increase awareness of archaeology and history.

"I am passionate about empowering future generations through the knowledge and perspectives only archaeology can provide," Jones said.

She established Archaeology in the Community in 2009 and now works with community centers, churches and schools in the Washington, D.C. and Maryland areas conducting a variety of programs, including archaeology clubs,

classroom visits and after-school and in-school programs. The organization also offers seminars for undergraduate students studying anthropology that teaches them about the job market in their field.

In 2013, she worked as the archaeology field school director for PBS's *Time Team America*, a television program that showcases archaeology research at a variety of sites around the country. Jones worked with middle and high school students on the show and was able to expose them to different elements of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning that is not typically offered in schools.

"I told my students every day they could be anything they dreamed; the only thing stopping them was themselves," Jones said. "But how could I be a role model without leading by example?"

Jones went on to earn both a master's degree and doctorate in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in history from Howard so that she could utilize her talents through teaching children.

"My advice to future archaeologists is to follow your dreams," Jones said. "Do what you love and what you are passionate about. And most importantly, be patient." ■HU

JASMINE WHITING

# Milestones

Alumni

## '70s



**Stephenie Jones, B.A. 1974**, president of Amedia & Associates, was recognized recently as a

"Communications Consultant Extraordinaire" by the State Bar of Georgia for her exemplary service to the organization's president from June 2014 to June 2015. Jones was an award-winning television producer at WJLA-TV's Seven on Your Side, and a general manager of radio and TV in Atlanta. She is a former staffer for the White House Cabinet Committee for Spanish Speaking People and an international contributing opinion writer.

## '80s

**Brandon Hewitt, M.ED. 1982**, has been selected to be among the first 36 Woodrow Wilson Georgia Teaching Fellows through the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. Hewitt will receive \$30,000 to complete a specially designed, cutting-edge master's degree program, based on a yearlong classroom experience. In return, Fellows commit to teach for three years in the urban and rural New Jersey schools that most need strong STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) teachers.



**California Attorney General Kamala Harris, B.A. 1986**, is running for U.S. Senate to replace

Sen. Barbara Boxer. If elected, Harris will become the first Black and first South Asian senator from California.

**Dr. Curtis Charles, B.A. 1986**, has been appointed as the fifth president of Tiffin University, Tiffin, Ohio. Charles was the Howard University School of Architecture and Design's 2015 Howard H. Mackey Lecturer. He joins a number of Howard alumni and administrators who have become presidents of higher education institutions.

## '90s



**Breshawn Nicole Harris, B.A. 1996**, received her doctorate in higher education administration

from the University of Phoenix in November 2014. Her dissertation is entitled *The Talented Tenth: A Phenomenological Investigation Why Black Men Are Missing in College*. Additionally, in March 2015, Dr. Harris was enshrined in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) Hall of Fame for her volleyball contributions during her years at Howard.

**Geraldine Brown, Ph.D. 1994**, is editor of the *Journal of the Association of Black Nursing Faculty, Inc.*, a quarterly peer-reviewed publication. It primarily consists of research articles geared toward college and university faculty seeking tenure.



**Denine M. Rogers, RDN, LD, FAND, B.S. 1992**, was selected as a Fellow for the Academy of

Nutrition and Dietetics. She is currently running her integrative nutrition private practice called HEPSA Living Healthy in Douglasville, Ga., and also works as a nutritional telehealth consultant at Anthem. She is also working on her master's degree in complementary alternative medicine, specializing in herbal medicine at the American College of Health Sciences.

**Dr. Jaret C. Riddick, B.S. 1992**, an aerospace engineer in the U.S. Army Research Laboratory's Vehicle Technology Directorate, began a one-year assignment this year as the ARL liaison officer, Air Portfolio Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Technology, Office of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology in Crystal City, Va.

## '00s

**Tracie Suggs Masimini, M.A. 2009**, was named the vice president of administration for GrayEagle Integrated Solutions, a result-oriented, client-focused provider of specialized security solutions for government, commercial organizations and individuals. In this role, Suggs Masimini is charged with strengthening and aligning central administrative and financial functions while keeping in line with the company's core values of integrity, innovation, intestinal fortitude and implementation.



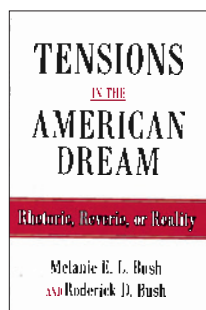
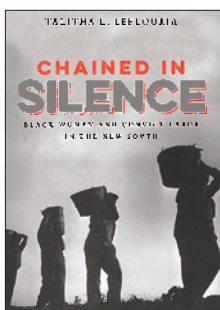
# Bison Bookshelf



**Do the Right Thing: Make Ethics Your Brand** (CollinsLegal), by **Jeffrey G. Collins** (J.D. '84), is a guide to becoming successful through actions based upon ethics rather

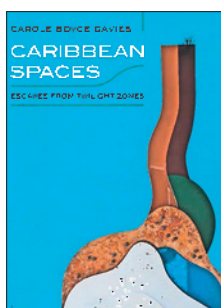
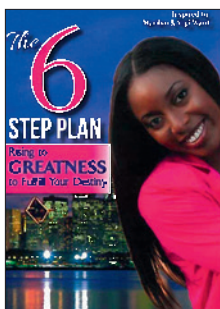
than on results.

**Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South** (The University of North Carolina Press), by **Talitha L. LeFlouria** (Ph.D. '09), tells the stories of Black women's lives after slavery within the convict lease and chain-gang systems of Georgia.



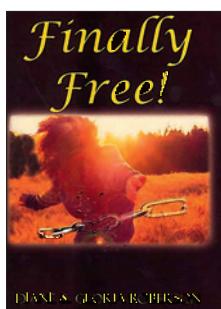
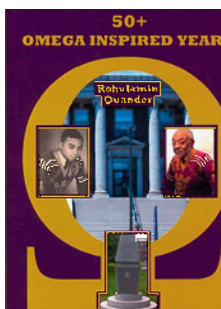
**Tensions in the American Dream: Rhetoric, Reverie, or Reality** (Temple University Press), by **Roderick D. Bush** (B.S. '68) and **Melanie E.L. Bush**, addresses contemporary issues dealing with the American Dream and how that ideology affects American citizens.

**The 6-Step Plan: Rising to Greatness to Fulfill Your Destiny** (Life To Legacy), by **Lauren C. Ward** (B.A. '11), is a motivational book for teenagers and adults that discusses ways to access untapped potential.

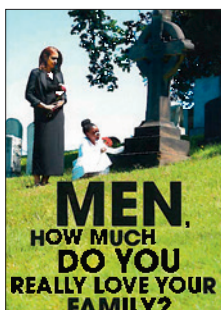


**Caribbean Spaces: Escapes from Twilight Zones** (University of Illinois Press), by **Carole Boyce Davies** (M.A. '75), is both a memoir and scholarly study that examines the nature of internationalizing Caribbean culture.

**50+ Omega Inspired Years: Tracing an Omega Legacy to 1931** (Quander Quality), by **Rohulamin Quander** (B.A. '66; J.D. '69), is a personal memoir detailing the author's experiences as a member and double-legacy of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.



**Finally Free!** (Anointed Press), by **Gloria Roberson** (M.B.A. '92) and **Diane Roberson**, is a book of poetry motivated by the authors' love for Jesus Christ that hopes to inspire readers to feel the same way.



**Men, How Much Do You Really Love Your Family?** (Yarrah Properties), by **Durand C. Spruill** (B.B.A. '85), tells the story of a man who dealt with the taboos of getting a prostate

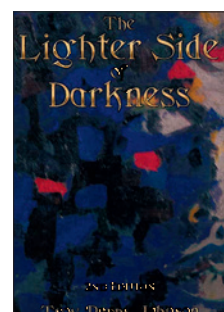
exam to stay healthy. This book aims to encourage African-American men to get early screening for prostate cancer.



**TEARS Trilogy Book 2** (Identity Publishing), by **Steven Torriano Berry**, associate professor, Department of Radio, TV and Film, School of Communications, is

the second book in a fictional trilogy that addresses racial issues from both sides in an effort to start healing the wounds created by racism.

**The Lighter Side of Darkness** (Xlibris), by **Troy Johnson** (B.S. '93), is a supernatural thriller about God's actions to extinguish evil by commissioning sinners to do away with Satan.



To submit a book for consideration in **Bison Bookshelf**, please mail a copy to: **Howard Magazine**, 2225 Georgia Ave., NW Suite 610, Washington, DC 20059



A man in a dark suit, light blue shirt, and red patterned tie is shown in profile, looking out a window. He is wearing glasses and has a watch on his left wrist. The background shows a modern building with orange-tinted glass and metal railings.

# DESIGNING THE FUTURE

Howard alumnus addresses  
disparities in architecture

By RaNeeka Claxton Witty





## Derrek Niec-Williams' choice of architecture as a profession was more than just a choice. It was a need.

According to a U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics report, there were about 178,000 architects employed in the country in 2014. Of that number, only 4.1 percent of them were African American.

"This is yet another area where we have an invaluable contribution to make," said Howard University President Wayne A. I. Frederick. "However, this contribution isn't enough; so, we must and will continue to promote this field."

Niec-Williams (B.Arch. '07), Howard University's executive director of campus planning, architecture and development, agrees.

"I'm interested in seeing more diversity in the design field," he said.

In his current position at the University, Niec-Williams is carrying on the legacy of Albert Irvin Cassell, Howard's first Black University architect, whose 1932 Campus Master Plan laid out the framework of the campus that many know and love today.

Among the other Black architects and faculty members who taught at Howard's School of Architecture and Design, Professor Harry G. Robinson III (B.Arch. '66; M.C.P. '70) was one of Niec-Williams' mentors.

Niec-Williams and Robinson are of the same mind that there is a phenomenon behind these disparate numbers. Black professionals have been historically relegated to specific types of roles in the industry.

"Historically, architecture has been referred to as 'a White man's profession,'" Niec-Williams said. "[There are] design types and [then there are] 'sticks and bricks' types that have to make a design constructible. ... There's a design, but [also] a back-end process to make it a reality."

Robinson echoes that "a lot of the students find their places in the construction companies" because they aren't disci-

plined or committed to the profession enough to start out working more than 80 hours a week at an architecture firm, only to have to spend a few years working their way up to earn more money. Instead, African-American students fresh out of college would typically rather start out with higher pay, on the construction end, building other people's designs.

Yet, Robinson and Frederick concur that the University does a great job of grooming great candidates for the field of architecture.

"Our School of Architecture and Design continues to produce highly competent people of color for this field," Frederick said.

Niec-Williams, who Robinson believed would go directly to an architecture firm, is a prime example.

As a result of Niec-Williams' path, Frederick hand-picked him for his current position.

"Derrek has worked on several projects here at the University while in the private sector," Frederick said. "Also, as an alumnus, he brings a unique understanding of the University's history."

Niec-Williams has also been charged with one of his largest architectural and urban planning undertakings yet—managing the Howard University Interdisciplinary Research Building (HUIRB) project, an 81,670-gross-square-foot, state-of-the-art research facility on Georgia Avenue at W Street.

### 'Passion for art'

Take one look at Niec-Williams, and one can tell that he means business. Clad in a dark-colored suit, perfectly creased shirt and sharply tied tie, his gold Howard University pin stands out brightly on his left lapel.

Tall and lean, he takes University-related calls on his cell phone as he walks



along Georgia Avenue toward the HUIRB; but, he never once thinks he's too important to interact with the contractors working on the building—most of whom are African American. He locks eyes with them, or points and smiles along the way.

"How's it going, man?" Niec-Williams asks one guy, with a fist pound.

"Have a good birthday weekend?" he asks another guy wearing a yellow hard hat.

As senior project manager, Niec-Williams insisted that the key firms involved hire Howard students and create programs to expose students to the construction process in real time.

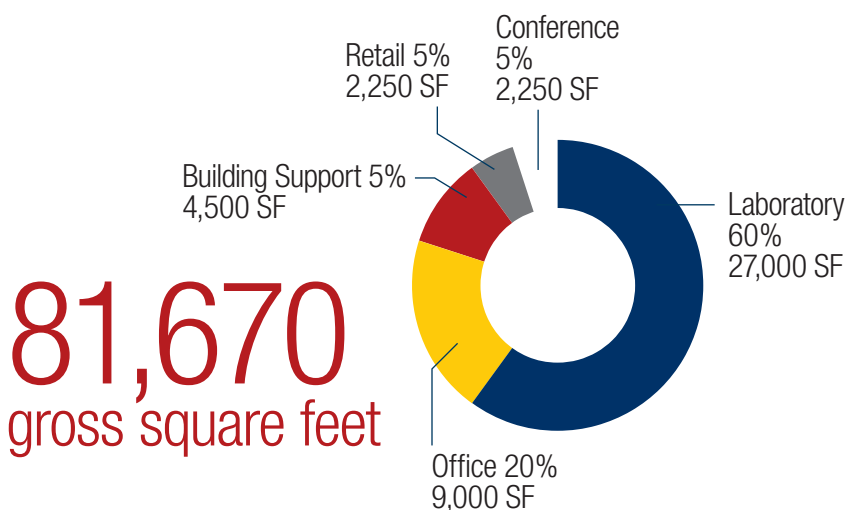
"[There is a] value chain, all the way down from the guy who's swinging a hammer up to the guy who's writing the

check," Niec-Williams said.

As he walks along the side of the building, Niec-Williams admires the HUIRB's brick-colored terra-cotta material ridges that cast shadows onto the façade. Once inside, he inspects the composition and construction of the monumental stair between the third and fourth floors and comments about his fascination with the automatic task lighting in the laboratories and the natural light throughout the building.

The way Niec-Williams speaks so eloquently about each area of the HUIRB, one would think that he knows the building inside out.

"Some of the areas I'm more familiar with than others," he said.



Niec-Williams' allure with all things architecture is, in part, a result of his passion for art that stemmed from childhood.

The son of a jeweler and a diplomat, he grew up in Senegal, Mali, Guinea and Barbados before coming back to the states for high school. Bilingual in English and French, Niec-Williams was inspired to pursue architecture through his teenage exposure to the work of Eliel Saarinen (1873–1950), a Finnish "starchitect," whose master plan governed every aspect of Niec-Williams' high school campus in the suburbs of Detroit—Cranbrook Schools. Saarinen lived on campus, designed each building and taught architecture at the school's graduate art program. His son, Eero Saarinen, was raised at Cranbrook and also became a noted architect, whose work includes the Washington Dulles International Airport.

"The idea that this one guy resided in and raised his family in the environment that he created ... was a cool concept," Niec-Williams said.

After landing a National Merit Scholarship, which is awarded to the top 1 percent of PSAT and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test takers in each state, Niec-Williams earned a full-ride scholarship to virtually any university he wanted to attend.

After attending Howard's Weekend at the Mecca, an invitation-only, overnight visitation program for recruiting National Merit Scholarship recipients, Niec-Williams was sold.

"I was met with a campus that had Black Americans, Caribbean Americans and Africans," he said. "I thought, wait, that's me."

He found his home at the University's School of Architecture and Design.

"Derrek was a student of mine," Robinson said. "He took my Urban Design course in '05. He's one of our star students."

Niec-Williams' undergraduate experience gave him a clear picture of where his career would be headed. His first job out



of college was at Brailsford & Dunlavey, a national, minority-owned company that specializes in planning and development for education, sports and government industries.

“In architecture, I found a ... marriage of technology and art ... a place that blended creative expression with an above-average salary.”

For Niec-Williams, though, it doesn't just stop there. He goes beyond the surface of “drawing pretty pictures” to try to understand the end user.

“What happened before the client saw the need for an architect?” Niec-Williams said he often asks himself. “What happens when the client receives the design?”

Niec-Williams prefers to get a well-rounded sense of each end user.

“As a planner ... I prefer to talk to the dean, faculty, staff and students,” he said. “Each user has a different feel. You need to accommodate that in your design.”

## HUIRB partnerships speak to African-American economic escalator

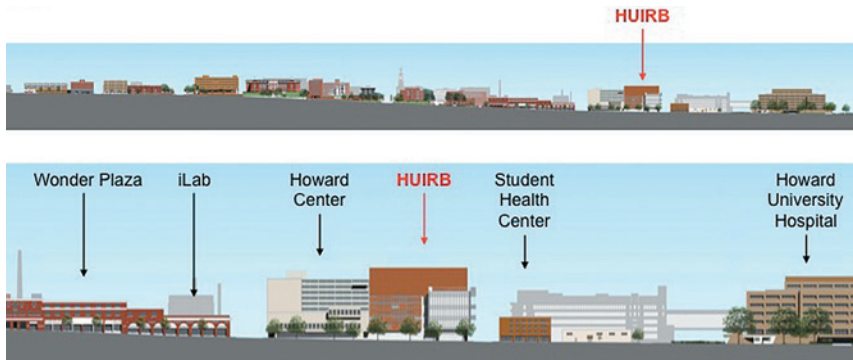
For the HUIRB architectural design, the University chose leading design firm HDR, Inc., which specializes in designing health care, justice, science and industrial facilities. But the University also encouraged a partnership with Black-owned design firm Lance Bailey & Associates.

This move was not only important to Niec-Williams, but also to Frederick.

“President Frederick has been quoted saying that Howard University does many things, but a key facet of our mission is to be an economic escalator that enables people of color to pursue fulfilling careers that elevate their net worth,” Niec-Williams said. “If that's part of our mission, that mission must permeate all of our activities and departments.”

As for the Howard campus plans and designs that Frederick and Niec-Williams will bring about together in the future, Robinson is more than optimistic.

“I think it'll be perfect,” Robinson said. “What a pair.” ■<sup>HU</sup>



# Howard University Interdisciplinary Research Building Facts

**Purpose:** To be a research space that creates synergies that lead to research opportunities among investigators across disciplines and to provide core and user space to researchers.

## Research Areas:

- **Nano Sciences**—Manipulation of very tiny matter
- **Cleanroom**—Controlled environment that has a low level of pollutants, such as dust, airborne microbes, aerosol particles and chemical vapors. The lowest level, for example, level 10, indicates that there are fewer airborne pollutants in the environment. Level 10 is the ideal controlled environment for research in drug development and nanotechnology.
- **Developmental Biology and Stem Cell Differentiation**—Mechanisms for stem cell development into specific cell types

- **Natural Products Research**—Drug synthesis, delivery and testing that will aim to increase affordability
- **Microbial Ecology, Diversity and Immunology**—Bacterial interaction with plants and animals, immunology of breast milk, food poisoning
- **Atmospheric Sciences**—Weather measurement in real time, climate change, forecasting
- **Core Labs**—To support general research activities and shared services

**Size:** 81,670 gross square feet, 43,400 of which can be assigned for use

**Building Uses:** Office, lab and street-front retail

**Building Launch:** The HUIRB received its Final Certificate of Occupancy in July; however, it will take about eight months to a year to move in the building occupants and their sensitive research.



# GOO GLING,

GAMING,  
NAVIGATING  
INTO  
SILICON VALLEY

By Stephanie Zerweck









Computer science graduate Chris Hocutt (B.S. '15), recently hired at Google, may signify a step in repairing the long-standing "404 error" of Silicon Valley's relationship to diversity.

Hocutt is officially Google's first software engineer hire from a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), a company spokesperson said.

Bertram Richardson (B.S. '15), a fellow computer science major and Hocutt's roommate since freshman year, was present during the winter holiday break when Hocutt's phone rang with the job offer. Pausing their session of Nintendo Super Smash Bros. for Wii U, Hocutt answered.

"He [Richardson] motioned for me to come back," laughed Hocutt, "and I was like, 'Hold on, hold on, I've got to finish with this [call].'"

Thirty minutes later, Richardson found himself congratulating his Sutherland, Va.-born friend on his impending Silicon Valley-bound journey.

"Even though a lot of things come easy to him," said Richardson, "Google wasn't just [a piece of] cake. ... He worked really hard to do something pretty cool."

Hocutt, a graduate of the Googler-in-Residence (GIR) program—an instructional partnership between the tech giant and Howard University's computer science program aimed at increasing the number of HBCU-educated Google job applicants—had also heard back from Charles Pratt. Pratt taught the pilot semester of the GIR program in fall 2013. After receiving an email from Hocutt within 24 hours of the job offer, Pratt responded with both a heartfelt congratulatory email and an announcing tweet.

"That tweet was burning a hole in my pocket, waiting for him to find out [and] tell the world first," Pratt said. "Google is a strongly data-driven company. ... I knew the potential significance of what Chris accomplished prior to even starting the GIR program. Once I arrived at Howard and saw all the talent, I knew Google's first full-time new graduate engineer was just a matter of time and hard work."

## The Power of Mentorship

Hocutt and Pratt first met at the Department of Systems and Computer Science. Department Chair and Professor Legend

Burge suggested that Hocutt, the newly elected president of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM), take Pratt's web-development course. Burge also wanted Pratt to speak at an ACM membership-growing event.

"His primary purpose was to talk to the freshmen and the sophomores, make sure that they're getting the preparation that they need [for] technical interviews and ... higher-level jobs," said Hocutt. "We became pretty close friends, to where I was just like, 'Maybe not just the freshmen and sophomores should get a little edge ... but let's just kind of spread the love,' and then he was able to help us [juniors] through the application process to get internships."

Hocutt said Pratt stayed after hours, after classes, just hanging out and talking with him and the other students about programs and the department or preparing students for technical interviews.

"I approached it like I did all of GIR," Pratt said. "If I saw a need and thought I had the bandwidth to help, I stepped up."

Hocutt applied to Google once during his freshman year, got denied and kept his options open.

"I was applying to other companies, like Microsoft, Baxter, Capital One," Hocutt said.

"I think a lot of people felt like Google is this unattainable thing, just out of reach, but Chris being able to get a full-time position there, and also helping us, it makes us [underclassmen] feel that we can do it, too," said Alanna Walton, an underclassman Hocutt mentored and assisted with mock interviews, who also landed a summer internship. "He gives us a lot of confidence that we can follow in his footsteps."

But Hocutt said he did nothing differently than any other student would have



Charles Pratt  
@ChazPratt

Follow

Congrats Chris Hocutt: #1st Google eng from an HBCU straight out of college! Proud of his work! #GoogleInResidence



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Falating Woods @Falawoods · Jan 15  
@ChazPratt @C\_Winnings #BisonPride #BisonUnited





done to land the position with Google—same technical interviews, difficult project, no special treatment. In his opinion, it's important to simplify the application process and prepare for the interview style Silicon Valley companies expect.

Burge believes Hocutt's next step is to use his energies to help change a tech culture stuck at the startup or post-startup phase—common in businesses around 10 years old—wherein companies are content to recruit employees primarily from their pool of friends or other places with which they're already familiar.

"I tell him to knock the door down. Go in, knock the door down, do what you have to do," Burge said. "And then, make a change in the culture [and] diversity that needs to happen."

Not willing to pause the game on his hard-earned success by giving merit to individuals who might detract from him, Hocutt would rather continue ahead and teach others how to play.

"I can move around there for years, for decades, if I want to," Hocutt said, "but I definitely want to go into maybe a startup at some point, maybe teaching, which I can do as a Googler-in-Residence."

## Starting Up and Accelerating HBCU Entrepreneurs

For those who come after Hocutt at Howard, startups and entrepreneurship are definitely within reach.

Howard's College of Engineering, Architecture and Computer Sciences (CEACS) has adapted the classroom model of its entrepreneurship classes through the Bison Startup course. The new model—patterned after the Lean Startup process model, the standard by which most Silicon Valley startups most commonly develop—has recently led to a partnership between Howard University and Y Combinator's Michael Seibel.

The result is a new course, Bison Accelerate, which made its debut this fall 2015 semester.

"[While] Y Combinator's goal is to get companies to the next step of raising money," Seibel said, "[with] this program, the goal is to basically have people on campus who have experience *launching* a business."

According to Burge, this is the first

time Y Combinator has partnered with a school to replicate a miniature educational variation of its process.

"I want this class to be a model that can spread across other HBCUs and across other universities, in general," Seibel said. "I think HBCUs can be a place where innovation in education happens, and I think this type of class is an innovation in education."

Seibel first met Burge and Mechanical Engineering Associate Professor Grant Warner—all startup entrepreneurs

"I think a lot of people felt like Google is this unattainable thing, just out of reach, but Chris being able to get a full-time position there, and also helping us, it makes us [underclassmen] feel that we can do it, too."

themselves—at a diversity education event hosted on Stanford University's campus; and, the relationship evolved from there.

Seibel said, as one of only a few minority tech executives in Silicon Valley, he's always wanted to give back, especially through helping inspire more minority founders to start companies. The most compelling reason for his decision to partner with Howard University, though, was simply that the professors he met represented an enthusiastic partnership, as opposed to coming to the table with the typical list of limitations many bring.

"They were like, 'Let's get this done,' and to me that was exciting," Seibel said. "That's kind of that startup energy; and, that's something that I want to support."

If traditional business classes are silos, Bison Startup and Bison Accelerate, in combination, are to be the open-door test kitchen, where ingredients come together from different sources, are iterated, reiterated and baked into something a bit more palatable to the marketplace, a bit more interdisciplinary and a bit more effective.

According to Warner, the precursor to the Bison Startup program, Lean Launch-

pad, which began in fall 2013, soon proved unsuccessful because it was only offered to those in the engineering "silo."

"You have to have people from different mindsets, people from different backgrounds," said Burge, "and that's what sparks innovation."

So, in fall 2014, under the name "Bison Startup," the co-teachers opened the class to all majors and grades, added School of Business Assistant Professor Micah Crump to the roster—as well as his teachings of entrepreneurship theory,

terminology and finance to the curriculum—and made acceptance competitive for the spring semester.

"I started seeing these fliers around campus, which said something to the effect of 'Calling all hackers, hipsters and hustlers,'" said rising sophomore and computer science major Alston Clark.

After coming to one of the four interdisciplinary mixers, Clark assembled a team of freshmen, and they pitched their business idea before the panel. The result: admittance.

For their Uber-style campus snack-ordering and delivery concept, each week, the team had to conduct at least 10 one-on-one interviews with potential customers and use the information to change elements of their business model. More than 250 interviews later, Clark's team has not only revised its service, but was accepted to interview for the television show *Shark Tank*.

"Bison Startup is really about developing your idea, your business model and getting some experience," Clark said. "The next stage, Bison Accelerate, is going to be about launching your idea and iterating your product development." ■IU



By Brittany A. B. Surratt

# Artistic Influence



In many parts of the country, the arts have been one of the first victims on the chopping block whenever there is talk of school budget cuts.

However, people like C. Brian Williams (B.B.A. '91) create opportunities to ensure that arts education remains possible for students. In 1994, he founded Step Afrika!, the first professional dance company in the world to base a program primarily on the dance form known as stepping, popularized on the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities like Howard University.

"The performing and visual arts are ... absolutely necessary in schools," said Williams, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.—Beta Chapter. "I have seen the arts transform a shy little girl into a vibrant leader in her class ... [and] a disengaged student step forward and become more active in both his school and his studies."

In keeping with its commitment to public service and outreach, Step Afrika! has developed a partnership with D.C. Public Schools' (DCPS) Empowering Males of Color (EMOC) program, whose members traveled to Croatia in April as part of an International Youth Exchange program.

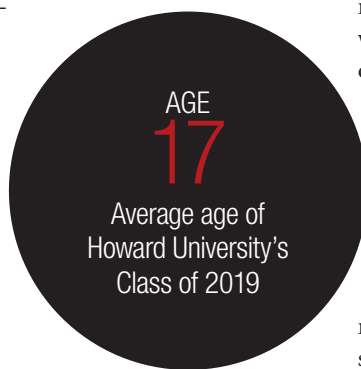
Dr. Robert Simmons, head of EMOC and chief of innovation and research with DCPS, said Williams "reached out to us, asking if Step Afrika! could collaborate with EMOC on mentoring male students that would eventually join them in Croatia." The troupe took 10 students, along with DCPS Chancellor Kaya Henderson.

"After years of stepping all over the world, the opportunity to take these young men of color and expose them to international travel and cross-cultural exchange really meant a lot to me," Williams said.

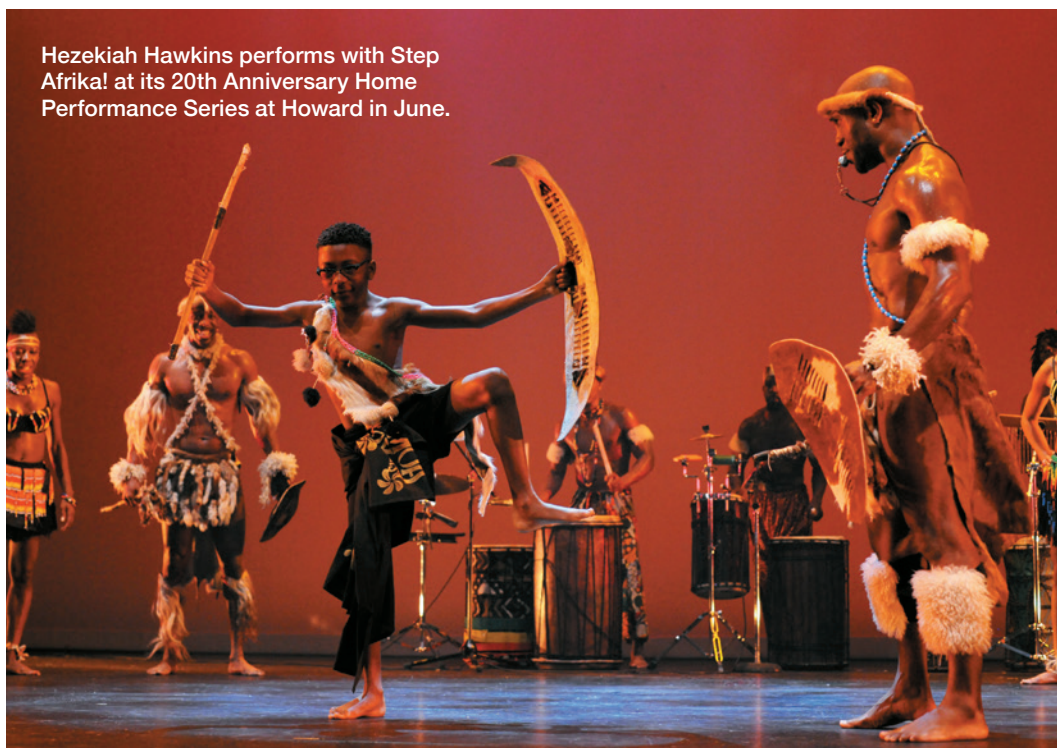
Now that they've returned, students and their parents are remembering their experiences, and how Step Afrika! has influenced their lives.

Christopher Tate, whose son Christopher Tate Jr. participates with the organization, is thrilled.

"What Step Afrika! did that really impressed me was spending four weeks with ... mandatory Saturday meetings on empowerment, roles in society, how they connect with each other, how they relate, getting to know your fellow man and getting them to understand their similarities and differences," Tate said. "I wouldn't trade this experience with Step Afrika! for anything in the world. This is the most empowerment I've seen in my 15 years of being a single father." ■ HU



Hezekiah Hawkins performs with Step Afrika! at its 20th Anniversary Home Performance Series at Howard in June.

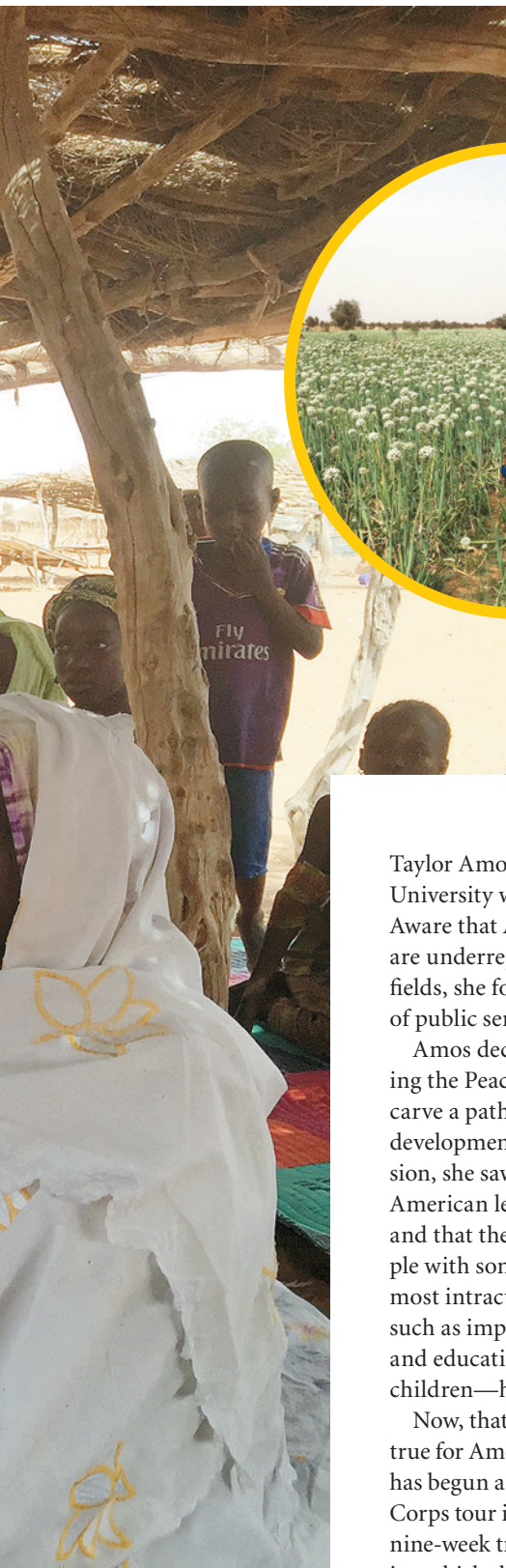






By BettyAnne Williams





Taylor Amos came to Howard University with a mission. Aware that African Americans are underrepresented in many fields, she focused on her love of public service.

Amos decided that, by joining the Peace Corps, she could carve a pathway into global development. In this profession, she saw that African-American leaders are scarce and that there is room to grapple with some of the planet's most intractable problems, such as improving the health and education of women and children—her special interest.

Now, that dream is coming true for Amos (B.A. '14). She has begun a two-year Peace Corps tour in Senegal. After a nine-week training period, during which she lived with a host family, she began serving as a community volunteer, working with families and partner organizations to improve maternal and child health, sanitation

and other basic conditions, and spreading information about nutrition, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

According to the Peace Corps, Amos is one of 13 Howard University alumni currently in its service. More than 221 Bison have served in the Peace Corps since 1961. In 2014, Howard was ranked as a top producer of Peace Corps volunteers among medium-sized colleges and universities and retained its long-time standing as a leading source for Peace Corps volunteers among Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Amos, 23, of Chicago, said her interest in Howard, politics and public service took root when she served as a page in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2008.

Encouraged by professors who nurtured a sense of public spiritedness, she made service a part of her life at Howard—

volunteering as an art and dance teacher at a Columbia Heights community center and working with the National Arboretum's Youth Garden. She participated in Alternative Spring Break in 2011, working in local public schools. She also worked on public service projects with her sisters in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and served as chapter president during her senior year.

Amos has also interned at the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County, Md.

A major benefit of Peace Corps service is that volunteers attain significant leadership, technical and cross-cultural experience that makes them stand out in the professional world.

"As a recent graduate, some of the best advice I can give my fellow Bison is to go after their dreams with full force and with no regrets," Amos said. ■IU

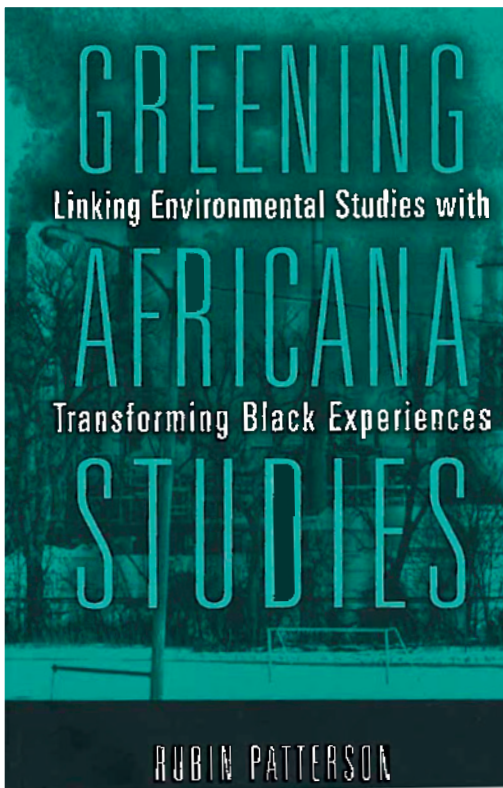


# Turning Africana Studies Green

By Shamilla Amulega and  
Stephanie Zerweck

If there's one thing that bothers Dr. Rubin Patterson (Ph.D. '92), it is the lack of Blacks and Latinos in environmental leadership positions.

So, instead of complaining about it, Patterson proposes to make Africana studies programs across the country green. His new book, *Greening Africana Studies: Linking Environmental Studies with Transforming Black Experiences*, outlines his ideas.







210

The number of Howard University students this fall semester who are covered under the more than \$2 million Graduation & Retention Access for Continued Excellence (GRACE) Grant. The grant pays the remaining tuition and mandatory fees for highest-need students who are on track for graduation.



“On predominantly white campuses, where some 90 percent of Black students matriculate, they have African-American studies courses,” said Patterson, professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Howard’s College of Arts and Sciences. “[I want to look at] greening the Africana studies curriculum ... [where they would] have environmental studies topics within the curriculum. African Americans would get the exposure and increase the appetite ... in Black and Brown communities,” Patterson said.

In his book, Patterson discusses ways in which Black communities are harmed by local environmental degradation and global climate change. For example, these communities can contain brownfields, which are lots that contain toxic or hazardous materials. Since many “African-American students come from areas that are more degraded,” there is a distinct need for students of color to learn about how toxins in their communities affect their health, Patterson said.

Kyndal Coote, one of Patterson’s spring 2015 Environmental Inequality course students, concurs.

“If children learn to love their planet, they will be more likely to feel obligated to protect and preserve what the planet has to offer before what we’ve taken for granted can only be explained to our great-great-great grandchildren through pictures,” Coote said.

Patterson inventoried the existence of environmental studies programs at the top 100 national universities. Of those institutions, 98 of them have the program, compared to about 25 percent of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, he said.

And even with the large number of environmental studies programs offered at predominantly white institutions, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released statistics this year confirming the limited number of freshmen minorities who chose to major in the science and engineering fields in 2012. The study, conducted by the NSF’s National Center for Science and Engineer-

ing Statistics—Women, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities in STEM, revealed that only 12.5 percent of minority freshmen at all U.S. four-year colleges chose these fields as their concentration.

Arguing that many Black communities are not aggressively engaging in environmental issues, Patterson’s book also provides examples of how Africana stud-

## Environmental studies programs progress at Howard

- The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has endorsed a new emphasis in environmental sociology.
- The College of Arts and Sciences recently voted unanimously in support of starting a new interdisciplinary degree program in environmental studies. The program’s anticipated development phase is fall 2015.



Chandler Puritty

ies students and members of Black communities can prepare for green careers.

### Budding scientist takes environmental science and runs

Chandler Puritty, a senior biology major at Howard’s College of Arts and Sciences, can certainly identify with the importance of increasing minority interest in the environmental sciences.

Puritty went from being a freshman in the Environmental Biology Scholars Program to being a 2015 recipient of an NSF Graduate Fellowship, which provides her with about \$46,000 per year for three years within a five-year fellowship period to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of California, San Diego’s Ecology, Evolution and Behavior program.

Puritty’s doctoral research focus is currently undetermined, but at Howard, she focused on the way plants use the metal nickel to either defend themselves or thrive in toxic-metal environments.

“When you plant nickel hyperaccumulator in soil that is permeated with a toxic element, such as nickel, the plant will harmlessly, basically, just suck up all the toxins out of the soil into an above-ground [environment],” Puritty said. “So, you can use these plants to remediate or restore any soils that have been kind of polluted before, and it’s cost efficient.”

This kind of research speaks, in part, to Patterson’s brownfields discussion.

“I’m trying to create a situation that more students of color get this exposure and develop career trajectories that will put them in position to shape policy on the environment,” Patterson said.

Puritty agrees.

“I think increasing minority representation in the sciences is just super, super, super important, and not enough people know how to do it,” she said. “I just want to be successful in my career, so that I can inspire another brown girl to ... follow in my footsteps and lead her to the STEM field.” ■IU



# MAKING STRIDES IN LITERACY

As the journey of a thousand miles can begin with a single step, it is fitting that Dr. Kellee Jenkins' upcoming trip that spans more than 4,000 miles began with just a few steps across the room to her officemate's desk—the School of Education's Dr. Helen Bond.

Jenkins, an assistant professor and literacy education expert in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, will be traveling to Brazil to fulfill her 2015–2016 Fulbright Postdoctoral Scholar Award, thanks—in part—to the enthusiastic suggestion of Bond, a 2011–2012 Fulbright-Nehru Fellow to India.



By Stephanie Zerweck

Bond, who teaches many of the international and technology courses in Jenkins' department, described her experience to Jenkins as great and supportive.

"And then I just said [to Jenkins], 'Why don't you apply?'"

After some months of tenure-track-safeguarding hesitation, Jenkins finally conceded to Bond. She was looking for a way to balance her teaching with research, through a structured, supportive and immersive medium. At first, Jenkins' top choices were France, due to her instructional-level linguistic prowess with French and undergraduate experience in the country, and South Africa, to satisfy her curiosity surrounding the educational legacy of apartheid. She eventually selected Salvador, a region of Brazil known for having the highest number of people of African heritage and for retaining the greatest amount of Afro-Brazilian culture.

"Brazil has such a complex history with colorism, racism, self-identity, how people see themselves, whether they think of themselves as Brazilian or Afro-Brazilian or mixed race," said Jenkins. "So, I thought Brazil would be the perfect place to go to—in a sense—run a parallel study. I'm studying teachers here in the States, so let's go to a foreign country that's dealing with similar issues and see how they're dealing with their own literacy lineage."

With research and development of literacy instruction as her passion, Jenkins' Fulbright research will focus on investigating the relationship between literacy instruction and those for whom literacy is the pursuit.

"We know 70 percent of [U.S.] students leave high school not really prepared to go to the next step," said Jenkins, "whether that's a job or to go to college. ... We know that research supports that once students get into college, 70 percent of those entering freshmen, oftentimes, need a kind of transitional course, and oftentimes, it's in a transitional English course. ... So we see these effects in K–12 schools, and we see them again in universities. ... This has been happening for decades, at least the last 50 years, and we still haven't been able to get a true handle on the literacy achievement of students."

According to Jenkins, these effects, even more pervasive for minority students, are exacerbated by teachers who are uncomfortable teaching literacy through writing, because they're uncomfortable with writing themselves and often don't believe themselves capable of teaching it well.

"People who declare themselves as Afro-Brazilians have an opportunity to get into [the] university that they didn't have before," said Robert Varhine, a professor in the School of Education at the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA)—at the time, vice provost for graduate studies—a member of the Brazil Fulbright Commission and a 2012 member of the country's visiting Science Without Borders contingent to Howard's campus.

Varhine also described a significant percentage of the population as functionally illiterate, despite current trends in K–12 educational improvement.

"Focusing on children is one thing, but

we also need to focus on how students are being taught," Jenkins said, "and I think that's probably ... not as much talked about."

Having a never-questioned pride and comfort in her own skin, with her own gender, with her own identity as an African-American female, Jenkins was eager to explore the teacher-to-student translated impact of variance in the willingness, wish and application by other teachers to identify in terms of *African-ness* or *Blackness*.

Now preparing with the accelerated study of Portuguese, as well as a historical overview of education for minority groups, student and teacher achievement gaps and Afro-Brazilian acceptance rates into university-level school of education programs, Jenkins is looking forward to her typical day in Salvador. She predicts this will entail working with UFBA faculty, firming up survey interview protocols, practicing Portuguese, and, later, going into communities and classrooms to observe and interview a sampling of 20 teachers—giving them surveys about their self-identity, self-efficacy, instructional practices and routine literacy activities.

Jenkins will limit her stay in Brazil to seven of the 12 months of her award term, so that she can return to teach her Howard students in the fall 2016 semester.

"It doesn't matter what language you speak, it doesn't matter what color you are, it doesn't matter where you live," Jenkins said, "literacy is really the pathway to an accessible life." ■ TU







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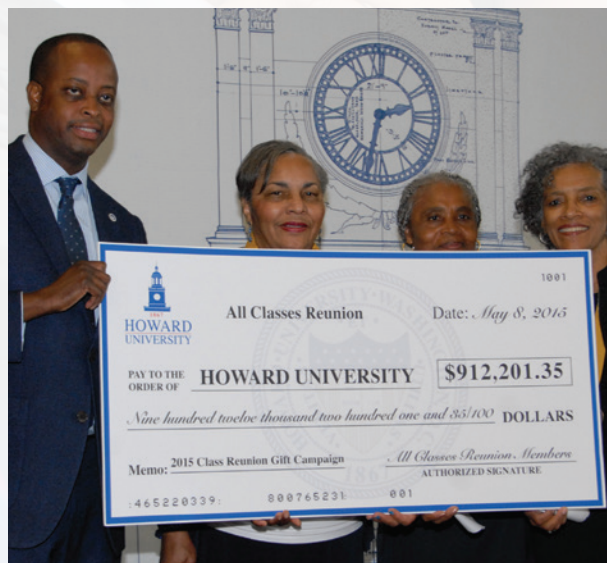
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# In Memoriam

Alumni

## '50s

**Raymond Gray, D.D.S. 1953**, died Jan. 25, 2015. Gray was drafted into the United States Army in 1945, where he served as a military police staff sergeant in the Pacific theater. He was honorably discharged in 1947. After returning to Baltimore to complete his undergraduate studies and graduating from dental school, he completed an oral surgery internship at Provident Hospital, also in Baltimore. He went on to start a general dentistry practice for his community. Gray also provided dental services to elementary school children under the Baltimore City Health Department. During his 40-year career in dentistry, he was a member of the Peer Review Committee of the Baltimore City Dental Society, the Peer Review Committee of Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Maryland, Inc., the Maryland State Drug Abuse Board, the Maryland Dental Society and more. He also served as a member and chairman of the Patient Relations Committee of the Baltimore City Dental Society. He later became a fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry in 1984. He was 89.

**James Pendergrass Sr., B.S. 1953**, died March 22, 2015. In 1943, Pendergrass entered the U.S. Army and served in World War II. In 1946, he moved to Washington, D.C., where he began a 25-year career with the Smithsonian Institution. Pendergrass was also a contractor with the U.S. State Department for 16 years. He was 92.

## '60s

**Houston Kelley, M.D. 1960**, died May 20, 2013. After graduating, Kelley moved to Massachusetts, where he worked for Somerville Hospital as a house officer. Kelley was also a medical fellow at the Cambridge City Hospital. He later

entered into private practice. In 1971, Kelley joined the Nation of Islam, making him the first doctor in the Nation of Islam, for which he was recognized and awarded as a Pioneer. Kelley moved his family to Nashville, where he worked at Meharry Medical College with the Department of Family Medicine. He started another private practice consisting of Locum Tenens in Emergency Medicine until 2007. Kelley was an officer in the U.S. Army Reserves until being honorably discharged. He obtained the rank of captain. He was 85.

**Vernestine Sherrod, D.I.P.N. 1961**, died March 23, 2015. She was 79.

**Lionel Rose, B.S. 1958; M.D. 1963**, died March 10, 2015. Rose practiced Pediatrics and Community Medicine in Baltimore for 30 years. Rose won the Island Teacher Scholarship to attend the Government Training College for Teachers in Trinidad in 1943. After graduating, Rose returned to Grenada to teach primary school. After a year of teaching, he was appointed to the "head teachership" of the Mount Moritz Anglican School. After moving to the United States, Rose secured an internship at the Provident Hospital in Baltimore. He entered a pediatric residency program through the University of Maryland. After his residency, Rose began his professional career as the director of the cleft palate and plastic surgery program for the state of Pennsylvania. He later directed the Children and Youth Program at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital, becoming an assistant professor of pediatrics. Rose also became a director for the Health Maintenance Organization of Provident Hospital, Provident Comprehensive Neighborhood Health Center. He was 91.

**Arletta Juliet Bingham Verley Massey, M.D. 1965**, died Aug. 22, 2013. Upon completing medical school, Massey finished her residency at Annapolis, Md., Naval Base. After this, Massey moved to Salisbury, N.C., where she became the first

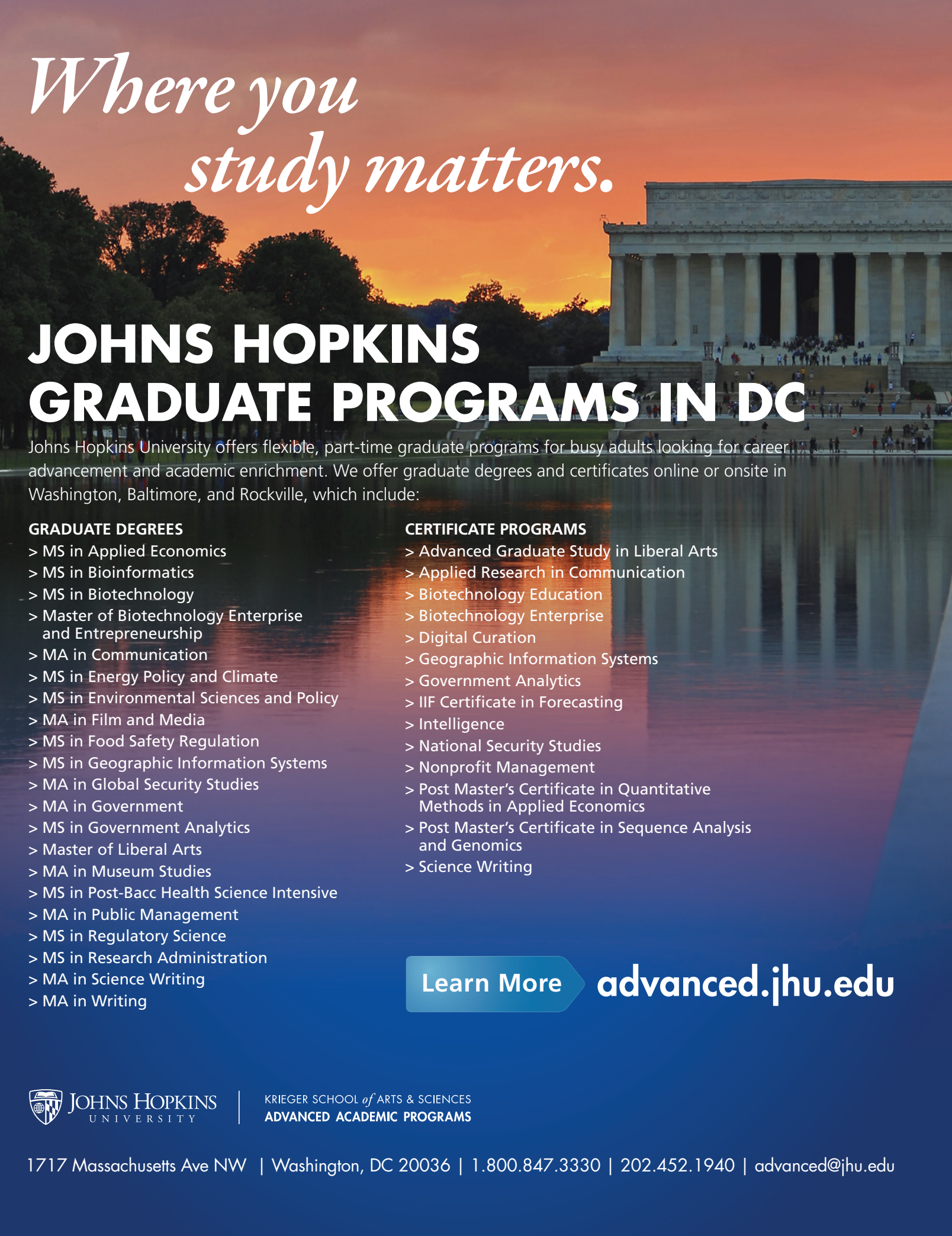
Afro-American chief of anesthesia for the W.G. (Bill) Hefner V.A. Medical Center. She worked for the V.A. Hospital for more than 25 years. A member of the Soldiers Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, she was inducted in 2001 into the President's Club at Livingstone College. Massey was later awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Community. She was 74.

**Ronald Dandridge, B.S.E.E. 1968**, died Oct. 31, 2014. Upon graduating from college, Dandridge began his professional career with Singer Company's Kearfott Division as an aeronautical engineer. He oversaw the administration of timesharing computer services, programming, reliability and testing engineering, and inertial and stellar navigation engineering. In 1972, he joined the American Telephone and Telegraph's Treasury Department. There, Dandridge worked on research and analysis related to Bell System financing, capital structure and pension funds. He later moved to the Engineering Department, where he helped with the introduction and maintenance of transmission facilities, outside plant methods and materials. Dandridge later worked for the Equitable Life Assurance Society in 1980, serving as a vice president in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Between 1975 and 1980, Dandridge taught undergraduate and graduate economics and finance courses at Kean College. He also served as an assistant professor of accounting and finance at Seton Hall University. He was 68.

## '70s

**Ronald Clarke, B.A. 1972**, died Feb. 26, 2015. Shortly after graduating, Clarke taught economics at Howard. Later in his career, Clarke worked at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, where he wrote several articles concerning macroeconomic policy. He was 69.



A photograph of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., taken at sunset. The sky is a vibrant orange and red, reflecting on the water in the foreground. The memorial's white columns and steps are silhouetted against the bright sky. People can be seen walking on the steps and around the base of the monument.

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