

HOWARD

MAGAZINE

FALL 2021

CONFRONTING
HEALTH
DISPARITIES

THE CHANGING
FACE OF GOLF

HOWARD ALUMNI
LEAD NEW HAVEN'S
ARTS SCENE

THE NEW NORMAL

Howard's Experts
on How the Pandemic
Changed Us



Perspective

■ **SOCIALLY DISTANT BUT CLOSELY BONDED** — Graduates of the classes of 2021 and 2020 were able to come back to campus for an in-person commencement in May, held at Greene Stadium. Graduates were given masks with their respective class years on them and a ceremony to remember. *Photo by Oscar Merrida*





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BACK COVER
Photo by Justin D. Knight

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Three Howard alumni are driving the change behind New Haven's once white-dominated arts and culture scene.



Dear Howard University Community

OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS, OUR HOMES BECAME A CACOPHONY OF overlapping Zoom meetings, virtual schooling, Amazon deliveries and family members in each other's personal space. People yearned to go back to "the way things were." Meanwhile, our nation elected a woman of color to the vice presidency, confronted police brutality against African-Americans and recognized the importance of mental health through star athletes like Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka, who publicly acknowledged their limits and pulled out of competitions. We're all learning to recognize our limits while pushing our boundaries at the same time.

In this Fall issue of Howard Magazine, we meet the Bison who are also altering what we once thought of, and often tolerated, as "normal." Our Division I golf teams are proving that golf is more than just a white man's sport. In New Haven, Connecticut, three alumni are diversifying a once white-dominated arts scene. Another alumna is working to destigmatize postpartum depression. On campus, our health care workers and researchers are showing what the face of modern health care looks like.

This is our new normal. There's no going back to that former shadowy version that our world used to be. And I, for one, rather prefer what we have now.

While this particular issue of Howard Magazine explores the "new normal" in the wake of the pandemic, in truth, that is what every issue of the magazine seeks to do. We will always use these pages to examine the world as it is and how those in the HU community are working to redefine what is considered "normal."

We are always looking for stories, so please feel free to reach out if you have any ideas or even if you just want to chat. We also welcome any feedback and suggestions about the magazine. You can reach us at magazine@howard.edu. Thank you for sharing and reading these amazing Bison stories.

Be safe and happy Autumn,



Rin-rin Yu, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



PHOTOS BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

From the President

Dear Howard University Community,

■ **THE MECCA HAD BEEN TOO QUIET FOR FAR TOO** long. But this Fall, our campus is full once again. The Yard is bustling with the sounds of students rushing from class to class. The classrooms are filled with discussion and conversation. Even the silence of the libraries feels more active and energetic.

I know that this was a welcome and most eagerly anticipated return for all of us. But rather than think about “returning to normal” or settling into a “new normal,” I would urge us to find a new paradigm as we emerge from the pandemic, one that rejects the use of the word “normal” altogether.

The world we have now is dramatically different than the one that existed prior to the pandemic. Our present society seems to prioritize mental health and personal wellness. It seems to emphasize altruism and empathy. And, critically, it seems to have a stronger attachment to the ideals of diversity and tolerance, equality and justice – as well as a stronger commitment to realizing them.

It is no coincidence that the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protest movement and this current moment of racial reckoning all happened at the same time. Transformations, evolutions and revolutions – they can only take place when the “normal” is disrupted. When a society becomes unsettled, nothing is fixed and everything and anything is subject to change.

For too long, intolerance, inequality and injustice had been normalized, which means they went largely unnoticed. But when the pandemic struck, the heavy heel of society had been lifted, unsure where it would settle next. In that moment, we had the opportunity to pull back the rug, the foundational fabric of our society, to reveal what had been swept underneath.

Forward progress is most difficult when there are forces pulling us backward, tempting us to return to the way things were before. But we must always resist allowing any aspect of our society to become so normalized that it is allowed to persist without critical assessment. Even the parts of life that we cherish most should never exist beyond



WE MUST ALWAYS RESIST ALLOWING ANY ASPECT OF OUR SOCIETY TO BECOME SO NORMALIZED THAT IT IS ALLOWED TO PERSIST WITHOUT CRITICAL ASSESSMENT.”

scrutiny. As we enjoy our return to campus, we must always evaluate, based on present conditions and future outlooks, whether being physically on campus is in the best interest of our students, faculty and staff as well as the communities we serve. We should never grow so comfortable with the world we have that we fail to see how it could be improved. Because there are always improvements to make – we just have to make ourselves uncomfortable enough to see them.

Excellence in Truth and Service,



Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA

CHARLES R. DREW PROFESSOR OF SURGERY
PRESIDENT

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JUSTICE

No Peace

by Ravi K. Perry, Ph.D.



■ ON MAY 25, 2020, FORMER MINNEAPOLIS police officer Derek Chauvin put his knee on George Floyd’s neck for nine minutes and 29 seconds, killing him. The world protested, with thousands taking to the streets to demand “justice” for a murder we all saw on cell phone video, thanks to a teenage Black girl, Darnella Frazier, now the recipient of a Pulitzer citation for her bravery. “No justice, no peace” was among the rallying cries of Howard students who led a march in June 2020 from the hilltop campus to the White House, demanding change. In March, the city of Minneapolis settled the Floyd family’s civil lawsuit for \$27 million, the largest pretrial settlement in a wrongful death case ever. And most of us released a sigh of relief when Chauvin was found guilty by jurors on April 20. With the request from Chauvin’s legal team for a new trial denied, Chauvin was sentenced to 22.5 years in prison on June 25, the longest sentence for any former police officer in Minnesota history under state law. He will likely serve 15 years in state prison. Federal charges are still pending. For most Black Americans, the jury’s guilty verdict was a welcome occurrence and a rare instance in which “justice” seemed possible in an imperfect and biased criminal justice system. However, Chauvin is an anomaly; most cops are never charged, let alone arrested, stripped of their careers and put on trial. The Washington Post has tracked fatal shootings by on-duty police officers since 2015. Every year, the Post has found about 1,000 deadly shootings. In most cases, officers were not charged with any wrongdoing.

But, far too often, Black people have been killed by police, and we don’t even know most of those instances, their names or their stories. We don’t know because cultural norms, legal codes and “good ol’ boy” police union protections have disposed of Black life without reservation for centuries. When I was a teenager in my hometown of Toledo, Ohio, I was regularly pulled over by cops with their guns drawn and their knees in my back under the guise of “looking like a suspect.” The racial profiling and police brutality I’ve survived was never recorded – as if it never happened. What justice is and what it requires is a question we examine in my contemporary political theory courses. Chauvin’s sentencing is not “justice” because Floyd is dead and Chauvin will get out of prison when he’s 60. “Justice” won’t come until our laws are changed to redress the murderous wrongs inflicted upon Black Americans at the hands of the state. In our democratic republic, that work will require all of us to choose to participate and vote in local and state elections. Biased policing in America will be solved politically. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act has been passed twice by the U.S. House of Representatives. It’s now the U.S. Senate’s turn. When more Black Americans seek elected office and build coalitions to achieve the goal of systemic change, I might say justice has been served. Until then – the battle rages on.

➔ Ravi K. Perry, Ph.D., is professor and chair of the Department of Political Science.

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT (2)



HUMANITIES

WHY STUDY DEAD WHITE MEN?

by Brandon Hogan, J.D., Ph.D.

■ Howard students have long debated the role of dead white men in the Howard curriculum. Because Howard is a Black refuge in a nation that tends to center the concerns, perspectives and histories of persons of European descent, it is difficult to determine how we should engage with the Western literary tradition. My students legitimately question why they must study known racists like Immanuel Kant, David Hume and G.W.F. Hegel. They question Aristotle’s relevance, given that he believed that some people were naturally suited to lives as slaves. Admittedly, I struggled with these questions as well. My questioning led me to create an “all Black” syllabus for my senior course and to design one on the theory of knowledge. This latter course addressed conspiracy theories, political propaganda, and the active attempts of some Americans to avoid knowledge about racial injustice. I believe that students found the content compelling and liberating. However, the courses didn’t float free of the Western tradition. Many of the Black authors my seniors cited were influenced by Western thinkers. In my course on knowledge, our discussion of conspiracy theories led us to Hume’s theory of belief formation. Hume thought that beliefs were more a reflection of our emotions and desires than our rationality. This helps to explain why some hold on to conspiracy theories despite overwhelming contradictory evidence. Additionally, our discussion of ignorance about racial injustice was intimately connected to the Western social contract tradition, which, as philosopher Charles Mills argues, was constructed by European philosophers who ignored the trans-Atlantic slave trade and African colonization. In short, our courses were unable to totally escape the West. I draw two lessons from my experience. First, many authors in the Western tradition are smart and worth engaging. Howard students benefit from wrestling with Plato’s rejection of democracy and Karl Marx’s critique of capitalism. This engagement is only harmful when it turns into unreflective reverence. Second, engaging with the Western tradition allows students to gain an understanding of their place in a country whose morality, political systems and evils are deeply indebted to Western philosophical thought. This knowledge is an essential component of social change. To be sure, Western thought is but one tool among many. Howard students are ambitious, bold and mission-driven. They should engage all texts in relation to their larger aims. The future CEO should look to Kant as an example of a thinker who was able to resolve a seemingly intractable dispute between two theoretical camps. Political science students should use Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to think about why we have governments at all. Aspiring doctors can use John Stuart Mill as a springboard for their own ideas about health disparities and the distribution of medical resources. In addition, Howard professors should continue to think about how to make course content relevant to students’ ultimate objectives. Effort from both sides is needed if Howard students are to continue to be leaders who think radical thoughts that others dare not to.

➔ Brandon Hogan, J.D., Ph.D., is an associate professor of philosophy at Howard University.

IN THEIR SHOES

SENIORS SHARE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GRADUATE IN A PANDEMIC

Earl Tankard
B.S. '21

[What] made me want to come back here to campus was the home feel. I know my friends and family have helped me thus far, and I know that they're really with me here in spirit and that they are still going to be watching, and I just needed to come back one time.



Sarah Etienne
B.A. '21

I'm excited to be here today – I love Howard, and I wanted to have a proper send-off, [especially since] everything [was up] in the air, and I thought this was the best way to do it.

Jordan Moore
B.A. '21

The main reason I'm here today is to honor myself and to honor my journey from where I started four years ago. I think coming to Howard [today], I knew I wanted to be here, but what I am walking away with is everything that I needed and a lot of what I wanted too.



Cailee Copes
B.A. '21

Graduating in a pandemic is very stressful. I actually ended up taking 21 credits in both my semesters this year so it was like, how do you combat the pandemic and everybody getting sick and some things happening in your family [while also] getting good grades so you can graduate. It was a lot. Definitely a lot.



Sarah Thorne
B.A. '21

It's very exciting because college was a journey to say the least. And it's nice to have my efforts pay off and [receive] the recognition. I'm not too big into fanfare, but I like the celebration of what I achieved. Part of my reason for coming back is [that] I'm a Marylander, and I'm an hour away driving. I just wanted to have a graduation, so it seemed worth it.



CAMPUS SAFETY

Moving Forward

Provost and Chief Academic Officer Anthony Wutoh shares pandemic challenges, processes to bring the campus back to life and his latest baking quests.

by LATASHA MURPHY (B.A. '14)

■ ANTHONY WUTOH, PH.D., R.PH., IS NO STRANGER TO CHANGE. AS THE PROVOST and chief academic officer, it is his responsibility to oversee the evolution of academics at Howard University as he works to move Howard ahead. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he and his colleagues had to quickly think of a plan to transition everyone efficiently to an online environment. And then they had to work to transition everyone back to campus safely – a feat that required a lot of careful steps, strategic planning and reassurance to all. Now, it's just a matter of maintaining vigilance and safety to make sure the Fall semester goes smoothly.

Q How are you adjusting to seeing your colleagues and peers more regularly?
A It has been good seeing colleagues face to face and not through a computer or phone screen. I look forward to having more faculty, staff and students on campus.

Q Tell us some of the steps taken to ensure the safety of both staff and students as we return to campus.
A We have implemented a vaccine requirement for students to try to ensure the safest possible environment for them. We have been conducting COVID-19 testing since last August and using that to assess our safety. We will continue to do regular testing. We will also continue to implement the Bison Safe app for daily screening and require masks on campus and other safety

measures. In addition to enhanced cleaning, disinfection and additional environmental measures, we feel confident in our plan to keep faculty, students and staff safe.

Q There are a lot of people involved behind the scenes to reopen campus. Who are some of them?
A Every unit and office on campus was fully engaged in the process. Our public health officials, clinicians and health professional schools have been operating the COVID-19 testing clinic and the vaccination clinic. The facilities staff have posted signage, implemented cleaning protocols, and facilitated HVAC cleaning and filter replacements. Enrollment management was busy supporting our admissions and enrollment processes as we have the largest number of enrolled students

■ ■ ■
CHANGING TIMES
Dr. Anthony Wutoh welcomes students back to the Mecca after over a year.

in recent times. Student affairs was preparing for the return to residential housing and preparing a robust and safe list of student activities. Our communications team has been supporting the messaging to our faculty, students and staff regarding the progress on campus and preparations for the Fall. A number of renovations have been ongoing in Douglass Hall, the Blackburn Center and the Undergraduate Library as contractors have been on campus supporting our preparation for the Fall as well.

Q As an avid baker, did you bake a lot during the pandemic?
A I started baking new items, like strawberry cake, orange yogurt cake with chocolate ganache frosting, and yeast biscuits. I had actually lost weight before the pandemic but have been challenged to keep it off. Will have to get more exercise.

Q If anything, what might you consider some good things that came out of the quarantine phase?
A We have been discussing moving towards more online courses and programs for some time now. The pandemic has accelerated our progress towards that. Actually, while many universities saw a drop in enrollment, we experienced a 15 percent increase in enrollment – both new students and a higher retention of returning students. We expect to keep up that positive trend.

Q What would you say to students, faculty and staff who are still worried?
A We have been and are continuing to go through the most significant public health concern in 100 years. It is natural that folks may still feel anxious and concerned. The COVID-19 vaccines have been a game changer. The most recent data demonstrate that the majority of recent hospitalizations have been from unvaccinated individuals. This is a tribute to the effectiveness of the vaccines as well as the measures we have taken to keep everyone safe.

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

■ Events, Recaps, News & Notes on All Things Bison

CAMPUS NEWS

STUDENT LIFE

Home Again

Howard students return to campus after more than a year of going virtual

■ THIS FALL, STUDENTS RETURNED TO CAMPUS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE MARCH 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic closed dorms and sent students home. For Howard juniors and seniors, it was a warm welcome to return to the Hilltop they had left so abruptly as freshmen and sophomores; for incoming freshmen and sophomores, it was the first time they were arriving in person.



JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



ON THE MOVE: Safety precautions were the focus of this year's move-in. Only two guests per student were permitted to assist. Temperatures were checked and rooms were sealed after sanitization. The first chapel in-person service took place outdoors, while Mr. and Ms. Howard University greeted incoming students.

FAST
FACTS

8,899
UNDERGRADS

1,593
GRADUATE

475
LAW

450
MEDICINE

312
DENTISTRY

237
PHARMACY

PRELIMINARY DATA AS OF AUGUST 30, 2021

HISTORY

Tragedy to Triumph

Tuskegee study descendants tackle distrust of medicine and overcoming COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy



BELOW: Descendents of the Tuskegee study discuss overcoming vaccine hesitancy.

■ **Descendants of the men** involved in the Tuskegee syphilis study shared their stories during a major public awareness event at Howard University. The July event came amid the national effort to overcome COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and the need to confront the sources of lingering distrust of medicine by Black Americans.

The Tuskegee study, whose original title was “The Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male,” continues to have an important impact on perceptions and trust in medicine to this day, but many people do not know the full story. To shed light on the study, the event showcased “Legacy,” a new short-form documentary that not only tells the story of the

study but also includes messages from descended families that encourage people to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

According to recent data from the Kaiser Family Foundation, nearly a quarter (22 percent) of Black Americans are taking a “wait-and-see” approach to the COVID-19 vaccines. The event at Howard University featured panel discussions that included former mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama, Omar Neal, and Leo Ware – both of their grandfathers were subjects in the study. It also featured Lillie Tyson Head and Howard alumna Carmen Head Thornton (B.S. ’96), who spoke about family member Freddie Lee Tyson who was in the study. All of their voices were also heard in the short film.

The U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee was conducted from 1932-1972 by the United States government. During the study, more than 600 Black men in Tuskegee were made to believe that they were receiving free medical care – when they, in fact, were not receiving treatment. More than 100 men died from syphilis or its complications by the end of the study.

The Howard event was organized as part of the COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative and the “It’s Up to You” campaign from the Ad Council COVID Collaborative and the Joy Collective.

➔ *More information can be found at [GetVaccineAnswers.org/Legacy](https://www.getvaccine.org/legacy)*



VOTE

VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS AT HOWARD ON VOTING RIGHTS

by SHOLNN FREEMAN (M.A. '12, PH.D. '21)

■ **VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS** (B.A. '86) rallied an audience at Howard University in a powerful defense of voting rights and the need to ensure that all American voices are heard in the political process.

Speaking at Louis Stokes Health Sciences Library in July, Harris addressed members of the Howard community, local community organizers and volunteers for civil rights organizations. The Howard alumna spoke about her party’s efforts to combat voter suppression and protect voting rights nationwide. At the campus event, Harris unveiled a \$25 million expansion of the Democratic National Committee’s “I Will Vote” initiative to address and overcome efforts across the country to make voting more difficult and burdensome.

“Your vote matters. Your voice matters. Your will matters,” Harris said. “Your desire for yourself and your families matters, and regardless of who you are, where you live or what party you belong to, your vote matters. Your vote is your power, and I say don’t ever let anyone take your power from you.”

The event was one of the first major visits by Harris to Howard’s campus since taking office. It also represented the first major public event held on campus since the pandemic began. Harris’ remarks at Howard University come in the midst of political efforts to pass restrictive voting laws across the country.

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

A YEAR OF GIVING

■ The fiscal year 2020-2021 turned into a record-breaking year for gifts from alumni and friends of Howard University – and that trend has continued in 2021-2022. The gifts poured in from across the country towards various schools and programs. “It goes to show that not even a pandemic can slow down the support our alumni and community have for Howard even after they’ve graduated,” said David Bennett, senior vice president of development and alumni relations. “When alumni give back to Howard, it makes that connection between the past and the future.”

In FY 2021 (JULY 1, 2020–JUNE 30, 2021), Howard achieved the following:

MOST PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT IN A SINGLE YEAR:

Over \$169,262,182

14,555

MOST TOTAL DONORS IN A SINGLE YEAR

MOST TOTAL GIFTS IN A SINGLE YEAR:

30,614

MOST ALUMNI FUNDRAISING IN A SINGLE YEAR:

8,357

Jerome L. Greene Foundation:

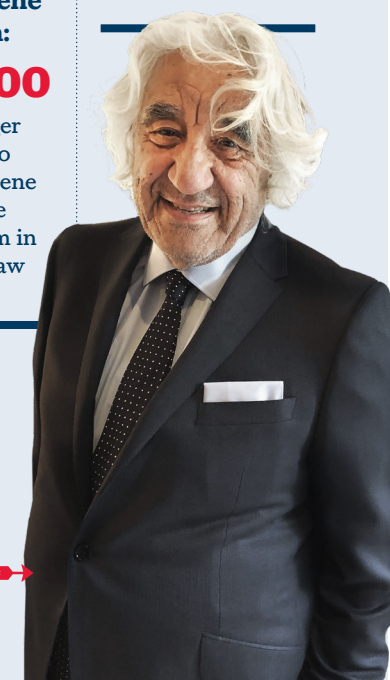
\$2,000,000

as part of a larger commitment to establish the Greene Public Service Scholars Program in the School of Law

THE PISHEVAR FAMILY

\$3,000,000

for the Dr. Abraham Pishevar Endowed Chair in honor of their father, alumnus **Abraham Pishevar** ➔ (Ph.D. '95, clinical psychology).





LEGACY

Reestablished College of Fine Arts Named in Honor of Alumnus Chadwick Boseman

■ THE NEWLY REESTABLISHED COLLEGE of Fine Arts has been named after beloved alumnus Chadwick Boseman (B.A. '00), whose career as an actor, director, writer and producer inspired millions around the world. “When Chadwick Boseman returned to campus in 2018 to serve as our commencement speaker, he called Howard a magical place. During his visit, I announced our plans to reestablish the College of Fine Arts, and he was filled with ideas and plans to support the effort in a powerful way,” said President Wayne A. I. Frederick. As a student, Boseman led a student protest against the absorption of the College of Fine Arts into the College of Arts and Sciences. Long after graduat-

ing, he, along with other alumni, continued to engage in conversations with Howard University administration. The Walt Disney Company’s Executive Chairman Robert A. Iger is leading fundraising efforts in honor of Boseman, a cherished member of the Disney/Marvel family, to build a new, state-of-the-art facility to house the college and an endowment for the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts. A native of South Carolina, Boseman graduated from Howard University in 2000 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in directing. He is known for playing iconic roles that uplifted Black characters, including Jackie Robinson, James Brown, Justice Thurgood Marshall and King T’Challa in the “Black Panther.”

REPRESENTATION

Bison in Space

■ Artifacts and paraphernalia from Howard University and 13 other historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were included in the cargo of an outer space voyage on-board the Boeing CST-100 Starliner. “Closing representation gaps in our company and our industry is a priority for Boeing, and inspiring diverse students to pursue careers in aerospace is an important part of that effort,” said Boeing President and CEO David Calhoun. “By representing HBCUs on our Starliner mission, we are demonstrating our commitment to working with these institutions to advance equity and inclusion and help ensure a bright future for their students.” Howard and other HBCUs sent flags, small pennants and other items that accompanied provisions, supplies and other commemorative items on the journey to the space station.



HOWARD
UNIVERSITY

FOUNDERS WALK ENGRAVED BRICK PAVER PROGRAM

- FAMILY LEGACY PAVER \$500 (LIMITED AVAILABILITY)
- KEEPSAKE REPLICA \$40
- PATHFINDER BRICK \$100
- INNER CIRCLE BRICK \$250

For more information, contact Cheryl Green in the Division of Development and Alumni Relations at 202-238-2340

COMMENCEMENT

Howard Celebrates Graduates with In-Person Ceremonies

OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO: Graduates came back to campus one last time for commencement.

AFTER MONTHS OF UNCERTAINTY, the classes of 2021 and 2020 were welcomed back to campus to commemorate their graduation with a safely distanced, outdoor Commencement ceremony at Greene Stadium on May 8, 2021. The activities were livestreamed for friends and family to watch virtually. “You have demonstrated tremendous resilience to reach this milestone,” said President Wayne A. I. Frederick to the graduates at the 153rd Commencement. “Under difficult personal circumstances and national upheaval, you decided to persevere in your chosen field of study. At a time when no one could have faulted you for becoming complacent or distracted, you pursued

your studies with a renewed passion because the pandemic reinforced your ‘why’ and reminded us all that a Howard education truly comes to life when it is deployed in the service of others.” Attorney and social justice activist Bryan Stevenson, who is founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), served as keynote speaker. “Today, we have the special opportunity to call ourselves Howard alums,” said Stevenson. “But more than that, we have a special obligation. A Howard degree means you have an identity that allows you to say things that the world needs to hear. Today, we’re going to have to commit to changing some of the things we see around us.”



MICHAEL BLOOMBERG SPEAKS AT COLLEGE OF MEDICINE CEREMONY

At the Howard University College of Medicine ceremony, former New York mayor and philanthropist Michael Bloomberg spoke to the graduating class about the critical need for more Black doctors. He noted how medical debt was often a large burden on Black families. “We found that Black patients are 34 percent more likely to receive preventative care measures when they are seen by Black doctors. But, while 13 percent of the U.S. population is Black, only 5 percent of doctors are Black.” He also discussed how medical school loans can also burden an aspiring Black doctor. To combat the latter, last year, Bloomberg and Bloomberg Philanthropies made a \$31.7 million gift to support scholarships for current Howard University College of Medicine students with financial need. The Bloomberg gift was the largest donation in the college’s history. He contributed \$100 million to the nation’s four Black medical schools in total.

ROTC CADETS HONORED

NINE ARMY CADETS AND 11 AIR FORCE CADETS WERE honored in the first Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Joint Commissioning Address on May 5 in Cramton Auditorium. Previously, the two groups held separate ceremonies to transition from officer trainees to commissioned officers. Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, served as keynote speaker. “In short, you are entering the military service at a very dynamic and important period of history,” said Milley, “and we absolutely need your innovation, your leadership and your competence – most importantly, your character.”



HOWARD GRADUATES by the NUMBERS



CLASS OF 2021

2,356 DEGREES

224

MASTER'S DEGREES

555

PH.D.S

26

CERTIFICATES

44

STATES

26

COUNTRIES

CLASS OF 2020

1,358 DEGREES

153

MASTER'S DEGREES

86

PH.D.S

26

CERTIFICATES

40

STATES

32

COUNTRIES

Howard Hosts Inaugural Lavender Graduation Ceremony

Howard University's Office of Student Life and Activities hosted the 2021 Inaugural Lavender Graduation Ceremony virtually on May 19, 2021. The celebration was an opportunity for the Howard University community to honor its lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer identifying graduates. Keynote speaker Ravi Perry, Ph.D., chair of the political science department, delivered a message of empowerment to the graduates. “We cannot wait for others to advocate for us,” he said. “We must advocate for ourselves.”





CIVIL ENGINEERING

Infrastructure Innovation

A Howard-led team of cross-disciplinary researchers is developing a new method to detect structural problems.

by SETH SHAPIRO

■ IN THE SUMMER OF 2021, THE NATION was abuzz with talks of infrastructure. There was the White House-backed infrastructure bill that was being debated by Democrats and Republicans. While there were certainly disagreements between the two parties over how much to spend and what to spend it on, there was – and has been for some time – bipartisan acknowledgement that our country’s aging infrastructure required attention.

And, of course, there was the collapse of the Champlain Towers South condo complex in Surfside, Florida, which killed almost 100 people. Amidst the search and rescue efforts, there were conversations around the building’s major structural problems and why nothing was done to repair them. It was

a tragic episode that added urgency to the negotiations taking place on Capitol Hill and made Americans question the safety of the infrastructure they relied on for so much of their daily lives.

Meanwhile, a Howard-led, cross-disciplinary project team, led by Claudia Marin, Ph.D., P.E., professor of civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering and Architecture, was working to develop a new method of detecting damage in structures ranging from traffic lights and chimneys to electric power plants and residential buildings.

“The motivation for this project is straightforward to communicate,” Marin says. “Our nation’s infrastructure is in poor condition. Visual inspections are subjective, time-consuming and insufficient to make the right decisions. We need automated tools to assess the health of our infrastructure.”

According to Marin, most structural monitoring today is conducted in one of two ways: The first method involves an inspector or team of inspectors scanning a structure using few tools other than their own eyesight. The other method uses sensors strategically placed on the building to collect structural data, which Marin says is costly, labor-intensive and less effective than the approach her team is working on. Additionally, according to Marin, the applicability of the sensor-based method has not been sufficiently demonstrated, which leads to skepticism surrounding the data the method produces.

Marin is helping pioneer a method of using video to capture movement and artificial intelligence-based modeling to assess and analyze structural integrity. Video is easy to capture and establishes a baseline for how the structure can be expected to move and change.

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT (2)

“The vibration data of a structure is like a fingerprint,” Marin says. “Problems of structures can be identified by studying the vibration data changing over time.”

The team has received a total of \$914,000 in funding from the National Science Foundation to continue its work. Marin believes the new video-based approach is essential to improving our nation’s infrastructure. Not only does this method enable more cost-efficient inspection, but it also promises to provide more accurate information about where funding is most needed and how to prioritize intervention.

The team’s efforts to improve our nation’s infrastructure began locally, right on Howard’s campus. A Howard student noticed a crack in the chimney of a building. Marin is working with the Physical Facilities Management team to test out their new approach. On August 4, 2021, they installed instruments to monitor and assess the chimney. Once they have collected enough data, they will offer recommendations for how to proceed.

As they continue to refine their approach, the team has worked with a number of different organizations to share data or conduct damage detection, including WMATA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Microsoft and the University of Illinois.

“We are trying to help with decision-making,” Marin says. “We have deteriorating and deficient infrastructure in our country. But we do not have sufficient funding to replace everything.” These reliable automated tools for evaluating and monitoring structural health will help support decisions to prioritize what to repair, what to rebuild and what to replace.

BIOPHYSICS

The Power of High Temperature and UV Rays

Doctoral candidate in physics Kenisha Ford uncovers a potential pathway for new targeted breast cancer treatment.

by UMARAH MUGHNEE (B.A. '16)

■ The human genome is 99.9 percent the same for everyone in the world. The red hair that’s easy to spot in a crowd or the dimples that a mother and child share are what make people so different; yet, they only make up 0.1 percent of who we are. This 0.1 percent of information, called variants or single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), also gives clues to the causes of certain diseases. Kenisha Ford, a doctoral candidate in physics, dives straight into the 0.1 percent and joins researchers in the developing field of genodynamics, the research of variants associated with triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC).

“Biophysical metrics” is what Ford calls her field of research. But what she is trying to achieve with her research is just as interesting as how she gets it done. She examines people of African origins who live in Nigeria, Gambia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Great Britain, Italy and Spain. Then, she calculates the likelihood a particular SNP will appear in a specific population. After that, she uses the SNP potential occurrence data and compares it to data on environmental factors (think humidity level, dew point, ultraviolet rays, temperature and diet).

Ford is on a mission to find correlations between SNPs and environmental factors that could give reason to investigate the relationship further. If scientists understood the biological function of the SNP, they could use it as an effective treatment for TNBC.

Her most surprising in-

sight? “One thing that I keep seeing in relation to these variants and these SNPs is the recurrence of UV and temperature as environmental parameters that show possible correlations,” she says. “In lower temps, the SNPs may be a part of a gene that functions in a protective capacity in their native environment. These SNPs appear to be correlated to a higher potential for TNBC.”

After researching these particular groups, Ford takes her insight a step further.

African-Americans are an admixed population, so to determine some of the population-specific genomic information, other closely related populations are examined in order to provide insight. When the researched groups are in their ancestral environments with higher temperatures and UV, the variants found to be relevant

in TNBC can, in some cases, have a gene that functions in a way that may protect the body from the harsher elements. On the contrary, when these populations are put in environments with lower temperatures, these same variants don’t necessarily work in their favor. Simply put, things that were set up naturally to protect people in certain environments then become harmful to them when they’re not in their ancestral environment.

Black women have the highest mortality rates when it comes to TNBC and the highest rate of occurrence of this particular subtype across all population groups. Ford’s research is another way to understand how to lower these stats. “The next steps will be trying to see what [other environmental factors] can be used to develop more effective treatments.”



STATISTICS

Data, Data Everywhere

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment tells Howard's story through data and dashboards.

BY RIN-RIN YU

Academic decisions do not happen in a bubble – the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) makes sure of that. Since its creation three years ago, IRA has been operating within the Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, churning out reports based on data – lots of data – to help professors, departments, deans and others make thoughtful decisions and improve planning across the University. “We’re kind of the story-tellers who help programs tell their story,” says Kyle Shanks, assistant director of assessment. The team, under the lead-



ership of Associate Provost Dr. Daphne Bernard, is made up of passionate data scientists, assessment professionals and higher education wonks. IRA's mission is two-fold: one, to support internal decisions and external reporting requirements; two, to support assessment and accred-

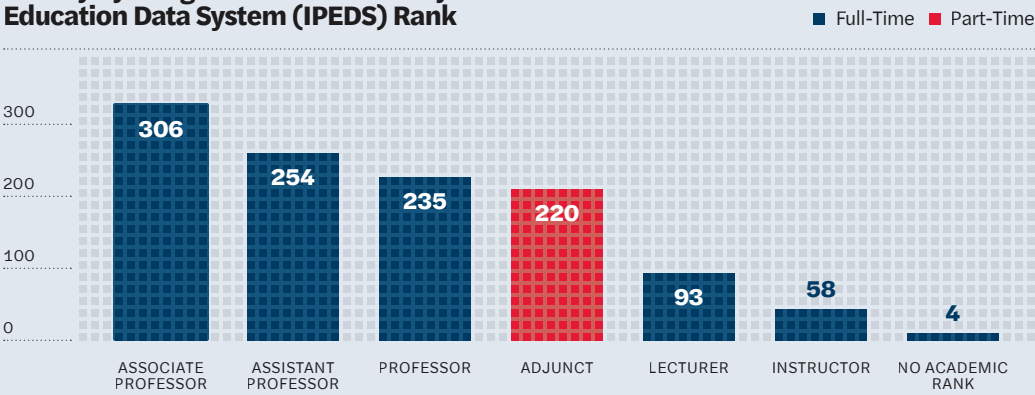
itation activities across campus. The team monitors and reports on student outcomes and student success factors. In addition, they compile surveys, administer course evaluations and more to determine whether various stakeholders have reached their goals. On the IRA website, there are colorful, interactive dashboards charting the various information.

“We are the data repository for the University,” says Yesenia Espinal, director of institutional research. “We ensure that data used across the University is reliable and accurate.”

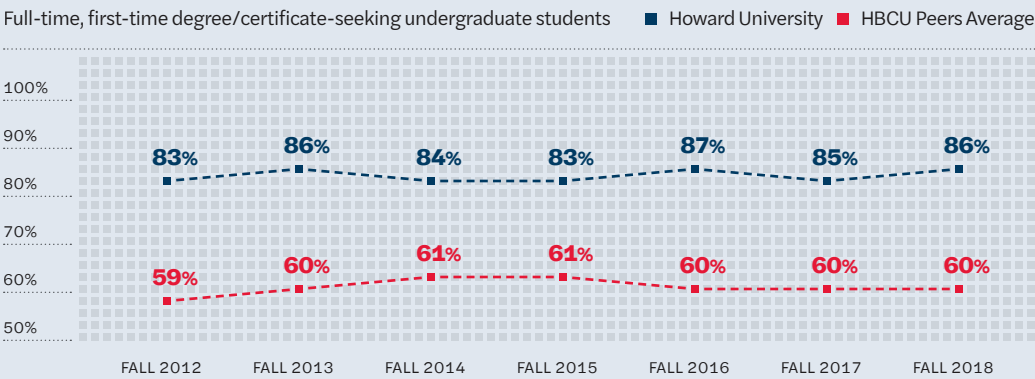
IRA helps to bridge the gap between expectations and performance. Recently, IRA provided data that was critical in earning a \$5 million dollar commitment in support of the GRACE (Graduation & Retention Access to Continued Excellence) Grant program and a \$31.7 million dollar grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies to help pay down student debt. Espinal says IRA is partnering with the strategic planning office to help drive Howard Forward. It serves as a liaison for Workday, the University's new financial and human resources management software, to ensure streamlined reporting. IRA also purchased and uses the U.S. News & World Report academic rankings tool and database to assist with comparative analysis on a national level.

Both the institutional research and assessment arms of IRA are constantly pushing Howard Forward. “IRA is a place where the University comes with questions,” says Glenn Phillips, director of assessment. “Our job is to help find an answer or to ask a better question.”

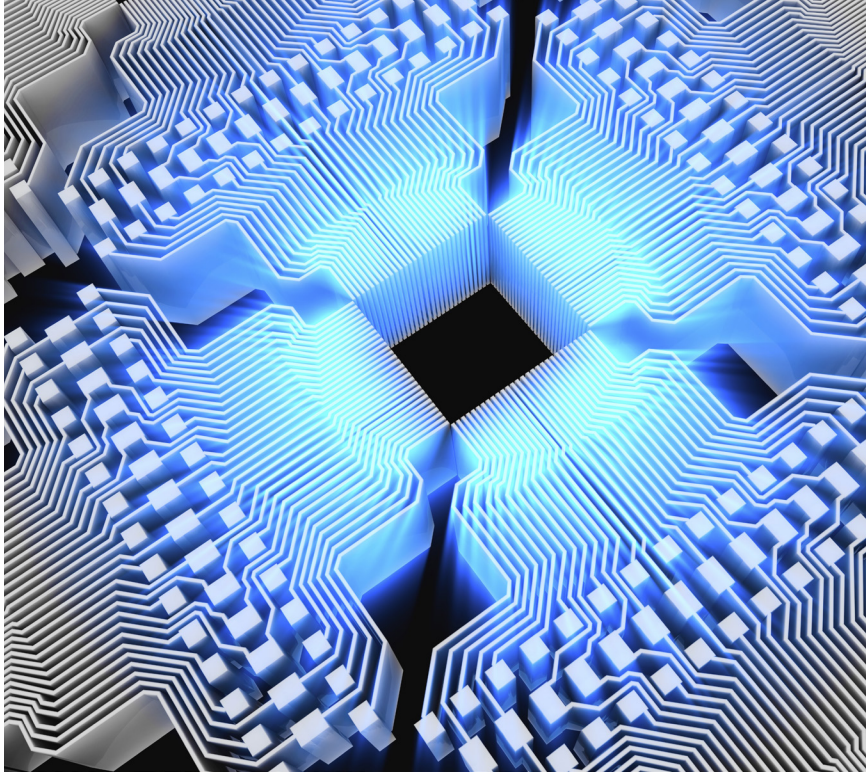
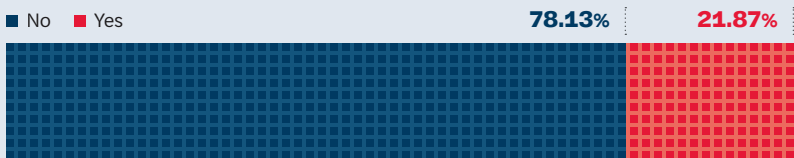
Faculty by Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Rank



One Year Retention Rates



Were you employed in this position while pursuing your degree?



TECHNOLOGY

THE EVOLUTION OF QUANTUM EDUCATION

Howard looks forward at the IBM–HBCU Quantum Center

by AALIYAH BUTLER

HOW DO YOU LEARN SOMETHING AS complex as quantum mechanics? By playing games. Through the IBM Quantum education and research initiative for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), students were guided on their learning journey by Qiskit, an open-source software development kit for working with quantum computers. With premium access to IBM quantum computers, Howard juniors and seniors used Qiskit to develop quantum games that they hope will be published and playable through IBM's platform.

IBM Quantum's HBCU initiative was launched a year ago in recognition that Black and Latinx students leave STEM programs at nearly twice the rate of their counterparts, largely due to the lack of support and access to resources as they pursue their academic goals, according to EAB, a best practices firm that uses research, technology and consulting to address chal-

lenges within the education industry.

“Long term, we are working to grow this curriculum to other STEM aspects on campus and even having a more general course for all Howard students,” says Thomas Searles, director of the IBM-HBCU Quantum Center.

The program language that Qiskit is based upon is now being integrated into the curricula of physics, computer science, electrical and computer engineering majors. Among the quantum games being developed, there is a West African version called Wonchawa. Playing Wonchawa helps students learn different

aspects of quantum mechanics and develop rules that other quantum games have not considered yet.

Led by Howard University and 12 additional HBCUs, the multiyear investment was designed to not only prepare and develop talent from all STEM disciplines for the quantum future, but also provide STEM-based opportunities for these traditionally underrepresented communities.

In less than a year, an additional 10 HBCUs hopped on the quantum education train, including Florida A&M University, Norfolk State University, and the University of the District of Columbia, bringing membership to a total of 23 HBCUs. There are 20 faculty members and counting involved in quantum-related research at Howard. Due to this collaboration, 30 undergraduate students and 10 graduate students per year are supported in doing research with these faculty members and others from HBCU centers.

This collaboration increases opportunities for faculty and students, launches successful careers in the budding field of quantum computing, and overall prepares Howard to be in a better position to contribute as an American institution. The center appears to already be paying dividends as Howard students who have participated in the quantum programming were admitted to prestigious Summer STEM programs at Princeton and other institutions, furthering their education in Ph.D. programs.

“Like many other places around the world, people are catching on to the importance of quantum information,” Searles says. “Without doubt, Howard is the leader of the HBCU space.”

“LONG TERM, WE ARE WORKING TO GROW THIS CURRICULUM TO OTHER STEM ASPECTS ON CAMPUS AND EVEN HAVING A MORE GENERAL COURSE FOR ALL HOWARD STUDENTS.”



CHSOC at 50:

A New Direction,
A Return to Our Roots

BY **Aaliyah Butler** AND
Sholnn Freeman (M.A. '12, PH.D. '21)

■■■
GOLDEN YEARS: The School of Communications celebrates 50 years of educating and training students in media and beyond.

■ THE LIST OF NOTABLE ALUMNI IS long: Isabel Wilkerson (B.A. '84, H '12), Sheila Brooks (M.A. '03, PH.D. '15), Deborah Ayorinde (B.A. '09), Fredricka Whitfield (B.A. '87), Keith L. Alexander (B.A. '91) and more. There are Pulitzer Prize winners, renowned authors, prominent researchers, Fulbright scholars, public relations professionals, speech language pathologists and award-winning journalists. Fifty years after its founding, the impact of the “School of C” on campus and beyond has been indelible.

Founded in 1971, the Cathy Hughes School of Communications was instituted on a vision of education, countering racism and nurturing leaders capable of illuminating the profound impact of communications on social life. In 2016, the school was named after the radio pioneer, former lecturer at the school and former WHUR general manager who received an honorary degree in 2005. Today, the new generation of crème-of-the-crop scholars are making their mark on the school.

“The 50th anniversary is a milestone for us,” says Dean Gracie Lawson-Borders. “It’s an opportunity to celebrate our achievements and the achievements of our outstanding students in public relations, advertising, journalism and film. You name it, we are present in communications and media.”

Currently, the school has two undergraduate departments: the Department of Media, Journalism and Film, which includes an MFA graduate film program, and the Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication. It also has two doctoral graduate programs: the Communication, Culture and Media Studies Program as well as the Communication Sciences and Disorders Program, which includes a master’s of science degree.

Though looking back at all it has achieved has been an important moment to reflect and celebrate, it’s the next 50 years and beyond, faculty say, that really count. Here’s how:

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT (5)

Influence Social Justice

Professors and leaders in the school say its location in the nation’s capital and the seismic shifts in the current social, cultural and political landscape, particularly the social justice movements that culminated in the Summer of 2020, positions the school to step up its influence in the national conversation about political action on race and social change. In July, the school garnered national acclaim when it announced that Nikole Hannah-Jones, who won a Pulitzer Prize for her work on The New York Times’ 1619 Project, an examination of the slave trade’s consequences 400 years later, would join the school.

“The Black Lives Matter movement has led us to a change-agency vision for our department within the college,” says Kehbama Langmia, Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Strategic, Legal and Management Communication (SLMC), which includes the successful, University-wide mock trial and debate teams, where both Chadwick Boseman (BFA '00) and Kamala Harris (B.A. '86) got their starts. “We believe our school is poised to impact the conversation toward uplifting Black lives and eradicating systematic racism in the United States.”

Connect and Share

It is the SLMC department’s objective to ensure communication are viscerally engaging. The best messages are the ones that lift the human spirit and give us a sense of connectivity; shared joy in being with others; and desire to give, receive and grow through our Black community, says Richard Wright, Ph.D., who has been teaching at Howard for more than 48 years. He is also the founder of the school’s Annenberg Honors Program.

Preserve the Past

Part of what will prepare the School of Communications in the future will involve preserving the past, says Natalie Hopkinson, Ph.D., associate professor in the School of Communications. She has been working with the National Endowment for the Arts and the DC Arts Commission to ensure that the traditional arts

and culture of Black D.C. are represented in folk life programs.

“D.C. is a very culturally sophisticated place. We have all these museums, such as the Smithsonian, and there is a lot more work that needs to be done; and Howard is a unique place to preserve cultures, learn about them and train the next generation of scholars who can do this work for generations to come,” she says.

Hopkinson wants to see the school contribute as a training ground for the next generation of curators, cultural programmers and researchers who are guardians of the culture, especially for the diasporic culture of African-Americans.

“**We believe our school is poised to impact the conversation toward uplifting Black lives and eradicating systematic racism.**”



Memorializing accomplishments will nurture those generations and prepare the school to leave an everlasting memory that stretches beyond half a century, says Angela Minor, associate professor and director of the Martin Luther King Jr. forensics program. “Cement our digital space,” Minor says. “Just to let the world see how hard students work on behalf of this University and the department.”

Innovate and Experiment

Lawson-Borders says innovation in academic programs would intensify. Already, the school has achieved success with a new B.A./J.D. program that takes undergraduate students in legal communication onto a direct path into the Howard University School of Law for a juris doctorate.

“We use these words: ‘Legacy of influence.’ ‘Future of innovation.’ That is our focus this anniversary year to tell the story of our talented students, alumni, faculty and staff,” Lawson-Borders said. “We are showcasing their achievements and our legacy while laying the foundation for the future.”



HAVEN

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT AS
THE PANDEMIC WINDS DOWN?
HOWARD'S EXPERTS SAY
THERE WILL BE CHALLENGES,
BUT ALSO SOME BLESSINGS.

by **Tamara E. Holmes** (B.A. '94)

Illustrations by **Erick Ramos**

NORMAL



EARTHQUAKES, WILDFIRES, FLOODS, tsunamis, tornados – these are the type of events, along with their impact on individuals and communities, that disaster scientist Terri Adams, Ph.D., a professor of criminology in Howard’s Department of Sociology and Criminology, typically studies.

However, the pandemic is a first for her. Unlike other disasters she has studied, such as Hurricane Katrina, the Chile earthquake in 2010, and the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011, “this is the first in our lifetime that an event has impacted the whole world on this scale,” Adams says.

Some years are particularly memorable, such as the year one gets married, has a first child or loses a loved one. The year 2020 will be one of those unforgettable periods, but for many, it will go down in infamy as a time of loss, struggle, isolation and pain.

After so much suffering, it is understandable that as the pandemic lessens its grip, some may be anxious to return to the way life was before. Yet the pandemic left such an indelible mark that some things will never be the same.

A Disaster of Epic Proportion

NOT DID THE PANDEMIC AFFECT the entire planet, but it also took place over a series of months, unlike a weather event or terrorist attack that unfolds over a matter of days or hours. “The people who dealt with Hurricane Katrina could get away and see that life was still normal someplace else,” Adams says. However, the COVID-19 pandemic was a threat that no one could escape.

Then there was the trauma on top of trauma. People of color were already dealing with the reality that they were more likely to become seriously ill or die from COVID-19 than white people. Then on May 25, 2020, the murder of George Floyd by a police officer set off a racial reckoning that led to nationwide demonstrations and, for some, utter emotional exhaustion.

The pandemic and the racial unrest “served as a perfect storm to depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder for some people,” says JaNeen Cross, MSW, DSW, an assistant professor in the School of Social Work. “I think, as a community, individuals are still dealing with the residual effects of the trauma that occurred with the pandemic.”

Bracing for What's Next

TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE PANDEMIC MAY AFFECT us in the coming months and years, it helps to know how people respond to disasters. Some people want to take action because it gives them a sense of control, says Adams. Others try to deny the seriousness of what is happening or go into escape mode by dulling their senses with food, drugs or alcohol.

Disasters also cause some people to come together. “During times of crisis, we look for ways to reaffirm our culture. That makes us feel less vulnerable ourselves,” says Adams. In fact, Adams believes the pandemic was a factor in motivating so many to take to the streets to protest police violence. “People wanted to connect with something larger than themselves, because we were all in this state of unprecedented uncertainty,” she says.

As time passes, we will see that the pandemic has sparked new norms. While it has created new challenges, it may ultimately bring about new blessings. Here’s what we might expect.

...

PRESENT FUTURE

Robert Cosby (below) speaks with grandparents who cared for kids through the pandemic; Terri Adams (right) studies the pandemic’s emotional toll.

BOTTOM: RIN-RIN YU; TOP: JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



“

DURING TIMES OF CRISIS,
WE LOOK FOR WAYS
TO REAFFIRM OUR CULTURE.
THAT MAKES US FEEL
LESS VULNERABLE OURSELVES.”



Anxiety Will Continue

THERE IS A LOT WE STILL DON’T KNOW, SAYS TYISH Hall Brown, Ph.D., MHS, associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

People are trying to figure out how to keep themselves and their families safe, Hall Brown says. Children under the age of 12 still can’t be vaccinated, and some people are hesitant to take the vaccine because they aren’t convinced it is safe.

Others have chosen not to take it because the vaccines have been politicized, Cross points out. In fact, 43 percent of Republicans refused to take it compared to 5 percent of Democrats, according to an April Monmouth University poll.

Those groups are vulnerable during COVID-19 spikes, Cross says. Then there are those who are vaccinated but worry about the risks when others around them are not. Once the flu and cold season begins, flu symptoms often mimic COVID-19 symptoms, Cross adds. People may wonder if they are dealing with the flu or COVID-19, which could spark even more anxiety.

“There are still so many things that are up in the air for the [new] school year that I think there’s going to be a high level of anxiety for some people,” says Hall Brown.

Timelines Will Differ

WHEN IT COMES TO RESUMING “NORMAL” ACTIVITIES, everyone won’t be on the same page. Some are still masking and avoiding crowds. Others are booking hair appointments and planning trips.

Those on the slower timeline may experience anxiety when family members call to say they are coming over. They may also feel pressured or guilt if they miss an event like a birthday party or baby shower because they aren’t ready to engage, Cross says. The person who is ready to move forward may feel disappointment when others don’t share their enthusiasm. “That can then trigger sadness and isolation,” says Cross.

Kids May Continue to Suffer Educationally – and Socially

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH WAS FIVE TO 10 percentile points lower in 2020 than in 2019, according to NWEA, a Portland-based company that creates testing solutions for students. “Data shows nationally that children have regressed for the most part in public education over this last 16 to 18 months,” says Robert L. Cosby Jr., MSW, M.Phil., Ph.D., assistant dean for administration in the School of Social Work and director of the Multi-disciplinary Gerontology Center, which studies and provides support to the minority elderly community.

The School of Social Work provides support to a community of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren through its Grandfamilies Program. When public schools were shut down because of the pandemic, students in the program were hit with a number of challenges. Some didn’t have laptops for virtual learning. Others didn’t have a dependable Wi-Fi connection. In some cases, grandparents were unfamiliar with technology and could not provide assistance.

While School of Social Work faculty called the grandparents to see how they could help through a Gerontology Center Friendly Visitor program, the long-term effects on the students’ education remains to be seen. Nationally, those who have resources to hire a tutor, for example, will likely fare better, Cosby says. Capital One, a GrandFamilies program partner, donated laptops to each family to help students complete school assignments.

Not only will students have some catching up to do when it comes to schoolwork, but some may

have some catching up to do socially.

“A lot of kids have lost about a year of socialization,” says Hall Brown, who specializes in child and adolescent psychology. “Some students are feeling like they are behind socially and that they’re not going to have friends. For those students, it’s going to feel like starting all over again.”

Parents can be proactive about talking to their children about the return to normal activities and asking how they can be supportive, Hall Brown says. If their children appear to be struggling emotionally, parents should consider enlisting the help of a mental health professional.

Seniors May Be Grief-Stricken

IN THE MIDST OF THE PANDEMIC, THOSE 65 AND OVER accounted for 80 percent of COVID-19 deaths, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Feelings of loss and grief may be particularly high among those who lost family and friends in 2020.

Seniors also may have been particularly isolated, as that population was explicitly told that it was too dangerous to go out during the pandemic, Cosby points out.

Some of the feelings may just be coming to the surface, says Cross. “We’re seeing people who used defense mechanisms to get through the pandemic. Now that things are calm and they don’t need that defense mechanism, now they’re feeling exhausted and overwhelmed.”

Of course, grief is not just relegated to seniors. “Whether it be the loss of a loved one, the loss of things that they used to be able to do or the loss of financial stability, those losses will likely stick with a lot of students,” says Hall Brown.

Those who are struggling with grief may benefit from mental health services, Hall Brown says. Some may get the most comfort from group sessions where they can talk to other people and process what they are going through, while others may find a few individual therapy sessions useful.

Short-Term Health May Suffer

WHILE THE PANDEMIC RAVAGED ON, MANY PEOPLE put off going to the doctor because they feared being exposed to COVID-19, Hall Brown points out. As people go back to regular medical appointments, there may be health issues that have worsened during that time.

On top of that, sleep was thrown off, for many, and some people didn’t get the exercise to which they were accustomed. Then there were the pandemic pounds – some dubbed the “COVID 19” as a quip to

Permanent Changes from the Pandemic

FORGET ABOUT GETTING BACK TO NORMAL. THESE PANDEMIC CHANGES MAY BE HERE TO STAY

■■■

Side hustles selling mask fashion accessories.

Top infectious disease doc

Anthony Fauci says face masks could become seasonal.

■■■

Workplace privacy.

Cubicles crowded together may be a thing of the past, as newly configured office spaces are more spread out and separated by partitions.

■■■

More trips to Barbados.

With 82 percent of executives OK with remote working, employees no longer need to live near the office.

■■■

Doctor visits via smartphone.

There was a 154 percent increase in telehealth visits during the last week in March 2020 from the year before, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

■■■

The resurgence of the Wakanda Forever salute.

With people still wary of COVID-19, the handshake loses its appeal.



the “Freshman 15” – that were packed on as people baked and snacked their way through quarantine.

“Our health has been impacted physically and mentally as a result of COVID-19 restrictions,” says Hall Brown.

Some Will Start a New Life

SOME PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE WHAT’S KNOWN AS post-traumatic growth, says Adams. This is when people become reflective and actually grow because of a lifechanging experience. “People start to reassess their lives and how they show up in the world. And then they start to think, ‘What do I want to do from this point forward?’” says Adams.

Some may change jobs. Others may launch that business they always dreamed of. Some may choose to end a marriage or leave a situation that has become intolerable. For these people, the pandemic will become a springboard to a new way of living.

Remote Work Will Bring New Freedoms

THE YEAR 2020 SAW REMOTE WORKING BECOME THE norm. Some Howard alumni took advantage of the new freedoms. After learning that the government of Barbados was allowing tourists to work remotely there for up to a year with a special visa, Jamila

“

I THINK, AS A COMMUNITY, INDIVIDUALS ARE STILL DEALING WITH THE RESIDUAL EFFECTS OF THE TRAUMA THAT OCCURRED WITH THE PANDEMIC.”

White (B.A. ’94) made a post on Facebook seeing if anyone wanted to go.

That led to a private message thread and then a Facebook group called Barbados Black Pats. White ended up going to Barbados, as did many fellow Bison – some she knew, some she met for the first time.

“With Howard people and the Black expat community, it felt like freshman year at Howard where everyone was new and was looking to make friends,” White says.

A survey by research firm Gartner found that 82 percent of company executives planned to allow employees to work remotely at least some of the time even after the pandemic ends so workers can look forward to working from wherever they want.

People Will Be More Accepting of Mental Health Services

ONE BRIGHT SPOT IN THE PANDEMIC: THE WORLD IS focused on the importance of mental health, notes Hall Brown. “I don’t think I’ve discussed mental health as much previously as I have in this past year and I love it,” she says. Schools and companies are implementing mental wellness programs. “So many people are now making it more of a priority than they ever have before,” she adds.

Howard is doing its part to spread awareness. In 2020, the Howard University Department of Psychiatry, in partnership with the D.C. Department of Behavioral Health, launched the COVID-19 Recovery & Resiliency Project, an initiative designed to educate and provide short-term psychological support to frontline health care workers and D.C. residents who need help during the pandemic.

Telehealth Could Decrease Health Disparities

THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT US NEW WAYS OF LIVING AND getting things done. To minimize physical interaction, health professionals leaned more heavily on telehealth services to visit with patients using technology.

“We’re really thinking about how we can deal with health disparities, particularly related to cost and access,” says Cross. “Now we know that even post-pandemic you can get the support that you need even though you may not be equipped in terms of transportation.”

Long-Term, There Will Be Better Coping Mechanisms

DESPITE THE CHALLENGES CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC, many people found new ways to cope.

“A lot of what we do, as therapists and mental health providers, helps people rethink what support looks like and how to utilize and access it through technology,” says Cross. “Yoga online, stretches, meditation practice, mindful practice, Bible study, prayer groups online, happy hours online. We’ve learned that self-care is not a request. It is a requirement.”

Some also may have learned that they were stronger than they thought. After all, they survived what Adams calls a once-in-a-lifetime disaster.

That may be one of the biggest lessons of them all. “The human spirit is resilient,” Adams says.



Howard University
medical researchers
and practitioners serve
as a bridge between
the Black community
and public health.

In Health Care We Trust

by **Otesa Middleton Miles** (B.A. '94)





MONICA PONDER, PH.D., MS, MSPH, FELT disappointed in public health leadership when she saw her hometown of Albany, Georgia in the news as COVID-19 first surfaced in the United States. As an epidemiologist and assistant professor of health communication in the Department of Communication, Culture and Media Studies, Ponder was especially sensitive to the news stories that kept centering on the families she grew up around for an outbreak in Albany after a February 29, 2020 funeral. She felt the overall public health response was slow, that there was such lack of information on this new virus, and that the country's long history of racism and health disparities put this majority-Black community at heightened risk—all information of which the media failed to mention.

"When you have these issues of inequity that have never been solved and you add an epidemic or a pandemic, it illuminates what has always been there," says Ponder, who is the lead researcher on a \$2.3 million grant examining racism in COVID-19 crisis communication. "There is already a high level of distrust in the community, and this compounds that."

Ponder, like many other Howard University researchers and medical providers, hopes her work will increase the Black community's trust in the overall health system in order to improve health outcomes and address racialized trauma. When engaging with health care, Black people often face

overt racism as well as unconscious bias. Black patients are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes, twice as likely to die from diabetes and 30 percent more likely to die from heart disease than white people, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Atlanta, 79 percent of the patients hospitalized with COVID-19 were Black; only 13 percent were white, according to the CDC.

Howard University has assumed a leading role in health care, simultaneously working to build trust in the medical system while also uncovering and dismantling racism and biases that have been embedded within it. Through the years, Howard researchers have examined health care statistics to uncover and understand inequities experienced by the Black community while other leaders have conducted outreach to build relationships between the Black community and the health care establishment.

Building Credibility

FUNDED BY THE CDC FOUNDATION, PONDER'S PROJECT, Racial Ethnic Framing of Community-Informed and Unifying Surveillance (REFOCUS), examines the way many factors—including stereotypes, stigma and structural racism—impact the health of populations that have been historically marginalized. "Howard University is a great place to uncover hard truths," Ponder says. "I'm so grateful to be at Howard because I can speak unapologetically about health disparities and its linkage to historical trauma and everyday racism. Howard is a voice for the underserved. On top of COVID-19, we had a very tense year in terms of racial violence. As a health communications scholar, I am interested in what communities can do when the crises seemingly never end."

At Howard University Hospital, understanding the reasons some patients don't fully believe public health messages helps staff connect with patients. More skepticism exists when initiatives are led by the U.S. government and not a local, trusted expert, says Cynthia Livingston, community relations director at Howard University Hospital. "If your doctor, whom you've seen for years, makes a recommendation, you're more likely to trust them," she says. Because it has developed relationships and has a highly respected reputation, the hospital has long served as a leader and reliable provider of care in the Black community. "When I grew up in the District of Columbia, my relatives came here from the country when they needed major health

A COLLABORATION
William Southerland (below) views the communities he serves as partners.

care because the providers identified with them. Freedmen's Hospital—Howard University Hospital's predecessor—was the place to go."

One way Howard University Hospital works to maintain its credibility in the community is by continuing longstanding relationships with area places of worship. Hospital experts participate in health and wellness fairs, provide screenings on site, partner in hosting events and lead discussion groups. "The faith community is the hub of any community—the Black community in particular," Livingston says. "If their pastor or minister says something, they are more apt to act on that."

Livingston says, when discussing the Black community's distrust of the medical community, many people mention the famous unethical Tuskegee syphilis study of Black men, which ran from 1932 to 1972. Researchers didn't properly inform or gain consent from participants and then infamously withheld treatment. The last study participant died in 2004, with the last widow passing away in 2009. Similar

instances of historic harm—including decades of unauthorized use of cancer cells from Henrietta Lacks, a Black woman in Baltimore—coupled with current racism, lack of funding, bias and barriers to adequate health care add to the distrust. "Now, unless people are given information by a known, credible source, they aren't going to participate," Livingston says.

In many research projects, Howard University serves as that credible source. According to William M. Southerland, Ph.D, principal investigator of the Howard Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) program, building trust requires Black communities to be a priority. "We maintain a dialogue with the communities we serve, we view them as partners, we make sure the research we do is pertinent to their interests and that community members see themselves as important stakeholders of our research efforts," Southerland says.

Howard is one of 21 U.S. schools in the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities-funded RCMI program designed to increase the number of researchers from underrepresented populations, reduce health disparities and address concerns related to minority health. The program supports Howard researchers as they move from being junior scientists to senior faculty and provides critical core facility and infrastructure support to Howard research projects. Some of Howard's major research projects focus on prostate cancer, diabetes, sleep and sickle cell anemia. "Additionally, in conjunction with our community engagement initiative, we have worked with BlackDoctors.org and the National Urban League to support national town halls on vaccine education in the Black community," says Southerland, who is also professor of biochemistry in the College of Medicine.

Black institutions, such as Howard, serve an important role because the people leading and conducting the research are intimately tied to the people and issues being studied. "We live and work in the Black community," Southerland says. "These are our neighborhoods. If I can solve something that impacts Black folk, I'm helping my family, my buddies—I'm helping myself."

Making a Connection

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE BLACK COMMUNITY and the health care establishment isn't always seen in health campaigns, says Tamara McCants, PharmD and assistant professor in the College of Pharmacy. Often, ads promoting health initiatives or urging people to get vaccines don't address the real concerns, which is patronizing and does more harm, McCants says.



THESE ARE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS. IF I CAN SOLVE SOMETHING THAT IMPACTS BLACK FOLK, I'M HELPING MY FAMILY, MY BUDDIES – I'M HELPING MYSELF."



JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

BREAKING BARRIERS
Monica Ponder is examining racism in COVID-19 crisis communication to confront bias in health care.

“It can drive hesitancy and mistrust,” says McCants. Also, efforts that pop into a community in times of crisis often don’t understand the audience well enough to deliver a well-received message. “It’s not one conversation. It’s not one ad,” says McCants, who is also chair of the District of Columbia Board of Pharmacy. “We have to relate to the community and to the vulnerable populations.”

For example, simply hosting COVID-19 vaccine clinics in hospitals or medical centers in certain neighborhoods may not be enough to encourage participation if the members of the community have reservations and experience other challenges, McCants says. “First, the basic needs in life need to be met before ancillary needs are addressed.” Then, she says, the clinics need to be convenient in location and time. “We have to meet them where their access points are—in churches, community centers, neighborhood pop-ups—and be connected with the block mom and community leaders.”

McCants is faculty director of the Capitol City Pharmacy Medical Reserve Corps, a collaboration between the College of Pharmacy and the DC Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration, which partners with communities, schools and local elected officials. Established in 2013, it is

the nation’s only pharmacy-based medical reserve corps. It recruits and trains volunteers to provide pharmacy-related services during emergencies. “We are building the infrastructure so that if any health information needs to go out to the community, we’ve already created those touch points in places like community pharmacies and local service organizations—where people already are.”

Unfortunately, what McCants sees often in communications aimed at the Black community is victim blaming. For example, she says, messaging about COVID-19 vaccines are aimed at Black people and other underserved communities that haven’t been vaccinated. However, McCants says, these messages don’t acknowledge successes in the community; don’t mention the other communities that haven’t been vaccinated, such as white evangelical Christians; and they don’t acknowledge the systemic reasons people may have for not getting vaccinated. “COVID-19 is an unprecedented health care emergency. However, this is not the only health care emergency that we are experiencing.” Failing to recognize that makes many outreach efforts and campaigns featuring Black celebrities without meaningful data “disrespectful” she says. “We can digest scientific information and make intelligent decisions.”

Like McCants, Earl Ettienne (B.S. ’91), BSc Pharm, MBA, LP.D, associate professor and director of graduate programs and industry partnerships in the College of Pharmacy, considers pharmacists the most accessible health care professionals and a central part of overcoming these barriers.

“People speak with their pharmacist about anything because of ease of access and established trust,” Ettienne says. “Community pharmacy in particular allows a continuity of care with the pharmacist serving as a ready bridge that supports physicians’ directives and improves adherence. Pharmacists meet people where they are. ... We have to break down barriers to good and culturally relevant care. That’s what we do at Howard. People trust the Howard product and they trust Howard practitioners.”

Ettienne says there needs to be more attention on the way health information is communicated. “We can’t ignore the role of the media,” he says. Some media images perpetuate negative stereotypes, which can set up adversarial encounters instead of inviting trust. “If the only time I hear from you is something punitive, why would I be open?”

The solution? “When we put people first, we have much better results,” Ettienne says. Nine out of 10 Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy, according to NACDS and

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT (2)



WHEN WE PUT PEOPLE FIRST, WE HAVE MUCH BETTER RESULTS.”

CDC data. That number changes when race and income are factored. “The pharmacy penetration is less in poorer communities, and this affects health care delivery,” Ettienne says. “We have an obligation to even the playing field and Howard is the solution.”

Access is Key

ETTIEENNE RECOUNTED A STORY WITH AN OLDER ADULT patient from his previous position at what is now called CVS Health, where he served as senior pharmacy supervisor responsible for 35 stores. She didn’t take her medication as prescribed and her health worsened. When Ettienne talked to her, she said she didn’t trust her doctor nor the medicine. Ettienne assessed the scenario and felt this was a perfect teaching moment. He called her doctor with the patient and staff pharmacist present to discuss her fears. The physician appreciated the call and appreciated the value of a pharmacist supporting his overall goals. “The barriers fell away. We closed the loop, and she was much more adherent in the following months,” Ettienne says. “Howard University has done a remarkable job of creating professionals who look like the community, who can access the community and create pride.”



IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Earl Ettienne says community pharmacists are a bridge between physicians and patients.

MORE THAN A SMILE

■ **Disparities in dental health** among African-Americans are also a major concern, the results of which are evident beginning even in childhood. According to research from the University of Southern California, untreated dental cavities in African-American children are triple that of their white peers by the time they reach their teen years. Among adults, untreated tooth decay in those 20-64 and total tooth loss among those over 65 are double in African-Americans than in white Americans of the same age groups.

Why? “Studies repeatedly show that African-Americans do not visit the dentist as frequently as their white counterparts, and for those that do go, often their level of treatment is inferior,” says Andrea Jackson, DDS, M.S., FACP, FACD, FICD, dean of the Howard University College of Dentistry. Only 3.8 percent of dentists identify as Black and, like their medical school counterparts, Black dentists overall report higher average educational debt than all dental students.

Lack of insurance coverage and cost are also factors for some. “This imbalance of care is also evident regarding even more serious oral health matters,” Jackson says, including lower five-year

survival rates of oral pharyngeal cancers among African-American men.

In response, the College of Dentistry has been reaching out to underserved communities to provide dental care where it’s needed. The school works with Remote Area Medical (RAM) to visit rural areas around the U.S. as well as overseas. It has worked with the National Dental Association on its grassroots program health initiative and also sends students to various health fairs on weekends. To drum up interest in the profession itself, the college partners with area schools to introduce children to dentistry by providing preventive services and through other interactive programs.

“I feel that having more underrepresented minorities in dentistry and health care in general will help in closing the gap and addressing the health care needs of the underserved,” Jackson says. “It is well documented that patients prefer to be treated by those who look like them, and health care providers are more likely to practice in the communities where they are from or at least dedicate some of their practices to treat patients with disadvantaged backgrounds, especially when they came from these communities.”—RIN-RIN YU



STAYING LOCAL
Cynthia Livingston says skepticism forms when information is not delivered by a trusted community source.



...

THE LONG GAME
Coach Puryear (right) makes sure Howard's golf team focuses on skill as well as the sport's history.

HERMAN SHELTON

BY WINTER 2021, HOWARD UNIVERSITY HAD its first Division I men's and women's golf teams. They had funding: a seven-figure gift provided by NBA player Stephen Curry that would sustain the program for six seasons. They had a head coach: Samuel G. Puryear Jr. was hired to lead both teams in April 2020. They had players: six on the men's team and five on the women's team. They had equipment: Howard-branded golf bags and Bison-emblazoned golf apparel.

However, both teams' seasons had been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic – the men's to Spring 2021 and the women's to Fall 2021. But the challenges introduced to their competitive schedule did not stop the teams from proudly representing the University when they took to the course to hone their games.

"People actually don't know a lot about Howard at all," says Morgan Taylor, a sophomore math major and secondary education minor from Ellicott City, Maryland. Even though the women's team couldn't be together during the Spring 2021 semester, she still carried around her Howard golf bag as she went out to the course to practice. She would reg-

ularly field questions from the other golfers on the course about Howard, providing her an opportunity to talk about "what Howard stands for."

"We're ambassadors for sure," says Everett Whiten, a junior marketing major from Chesapeake, Virginia. "Being able to represent one of the best HBCUs when we go out to the golf course is a great thing."

Even during its abridged inaugural season, the men's team was able to showcase how Howard's devotion to excellence translates to the game of golf in going 3-0 in head-to-head team competitions, earning victories over the Naval Academy and Georgetown University. In the MEAC (Middle Eastern Athletic Conference) Championship, the team had an impressive showing, taking a lead into the final day of the tournament before settling for a third-place finish. And in the final tournament of the season, the PGA (Professional Golf Association) Works Collegiate Championships, Howard golfer Gregory Odom Jr. won the individual title.

"We are incredibly enthused by where the program sits today," says Kery Davis, Howard University athletic director. "We look forward to a bright future for both our men's and women's teams."

HOWARD'S FIRST DIVISION I MEN'S *and* WOMEN'S GOLF TEAMS REMEMBER *the* HISTORY *of the* SPORT *as* THEY WORK TO MAKE ITS FUTURE MORE **DIVERSE *and* INCLUSIVE.**

by Seth Shapiro



Athlete Ambassadors

Know Your History

DURING PRACTICE ROUNDS AND COMPETITIONS, coach Puryear made sure the men’s team focused on golf. But off the course, he made sure they understood the history of the sport in the African-American community.

“A lot of today’s young people are really far removed from a lot of the old great pros back in the day,” he says. “If you don’t know your history, you’re not going to be able to carve out the future you’re interested in.”

Puryear wanted to ensure his golfers understood just how difficult it was for African-Americans in the generations before them to be granted access to golf courses and find opportunities to play. Barred from most courses because of the color of their skin, Black golfers were only permitted to caddy for other players, not to play themselves. In the first half of the 20th century, African-American communities built their own courses, though they often lacked the same resources as all-white courses. It wasn’t until 1961 that the PGA tour lifted the “Caucasian-only” clause from its bylaws. Even today, only 3 percent of recreational golfers in the U.S. are African-American. On the PGA tour, there are only three Black men and one Black woman, according to a National Golf Foundation 2019 report.

“If you really understand that struggle,” Puryear says, “you will have a huge appreciation and a high level of gratitude for having access to a lot of these golf courses.”

Puryear would often tell his players stories about the “old pros,” African-American golfers who either played on the all-Black golf circuit or who helped to desegregate professional golf. On one car ride



with the team, Puryear called James Black, one of the first Black golfers to play on the PGA tour. Puryear put Black on speaker phone so he could talk to the players about his experience as an African-American in the sport of golf and offer his advice for the young Black players today.

“I think [knowing] the history of the game is very important. [Otherwise], you can really take [all that we have] for granted,” Whiten says. He appreciated the opportunity to speak to Black and hear stories about the African-American legends in golf. “That was somebody who paved the way for us.”

■■■

LEAVING HER MARK
Morgan Taylor wants to be a role model for aspiring Black golfers.

Illuminating Howard Golf’s Illustrious Past



TOP STORY GOLFER: -- Moving forward, last year's toughest competition, these six standard bearers carry the hopes of Coach Torgin for CIAA and area domination. From left -- Gervin Brookington, Joseph Logan, George Tyler, Edward Riley, Eugene Hill, Peter Wilcher.

■ **As Howard golf enjoys prominence on campus once again, today’s teams have a chance to excel in honor of those who came before them who didn’t have the same opportunities.**

Howard’s first men’s golf team was formed in 1958. The Division I category wasn’t created until 1973, but that doesn’t mean Howard’s early golf teams were not high-level competitors. In fact, in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, the team was one of the best to compete in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA). In 1969 and 1970, the men’s team won back-to-back CIAA championships,

and one of its golfers, Calvin Brockington, was named MVP of the conference in both seasons.

“They had unbelievable success,” says Paul Cotton, a former Howard wrestling coach, a former member of the Board of Trustees and a bit of an amateur Howard historian.

Women’s golf only existed as club teams and classes; it wasn’t until Title IX legislation passed in 1972 that more emphasis was placed on female athletics.

When Howard joined the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) in the 1970s, there were budget restrictions that limited the number of sports at

affiliated universities. As a result, the first iteration of a men’s Howard golf team disbanded in 1975. It wasn’t until 2014 that the MEAC reinstated golf.

But the 45-year absence of golf at Howard shouldn’t obscure what the golfers were able to accomplish representing the University and what they could have achieved had they played in a different era.

“We had multiple folks that may have had the skill set [to play professionally],” Cotton says about the Howard golfers in the ‘60s and ‘70s. “But they didn’t have the resources [to make it].”

JORDAN JIMENEZ (2)

Standing Up When You Stand Out

DESPITE THE MANY BENEFITS HOWARD GOLFERS enjoy by playing today – access to top-tier courses and high-quality equipment among others – they are accustomed to feeling uncomfortable on the golf course.

“Growing up, on my [golf] teams and at my tournaments, I was the only [Black person] out there,” Whiten says, who transferred to Howard in Fall 2020 from Hampton University, where he also played on the golf team. Competing at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) has been a critical part of his collegiate golf experience. “I really love being on all Black teams. ... It gives me a greater joy to be amongst people [who] look like me.”

Hearing the stories of the discrimination faced by Black golfers inspired Howard’s student-athletes to work even harder – so they could succeed themselves and provide greater opportunities for the Black golfers who would come after them.

“I’d love to be that role model for Black golfers in generations to come so that they can see me on the tour and say to themselves, ‘That girl can do it; so can I,’” Taylor says. She aspires to play on the LPGA tour and to start a golf academy that would provide resources for underprivileged and underrepresented individuals to learn how to play the sport. “I want to inspire [other Black people] to grind and love the game as much as I do.”

Whenever Edrine Okung, a senior computer information systems major from Uganda, steps onto the course, he always keeps in mind the people who might be looking up to him. “When I’m playing golf, I’m representing a big community who are going to be inspired when they see me advance to a top level,” he says.

Howard’s golfers are working to dispel the lingering belief that golf is a “white man’s game.” In their minds, it’s a vital endeavor for reasons that extend far beyond the world of golf.

A Game of Connections

GETTING HOWARD STUDENTS ONTO THE GOLF COURSE was always about more than sports. Practice rounds at the golf course were important opportunities for the players to hone their short game and fine tune their putting. But they were also able to meet and make connections with a wide range of people.

“That’s been the most important part with this opportunity,” Taylor says. “I’ve been able to network with people that I probably would have never been able to meet.” She met executives from Callaway Golf company, Disney and more. Okung did an internship with Callaway Golf the Summer after the first season.

During one practice round of golf, the Howard athletes were paired with non-Howard players, in-

cluding business owners and members of the community. Whiten and some of the other members of the team even met President Barack Obama on the chipping green before a practice round.

“I want to let our students have access to entrepreneurs and champions of business,” Davis says, “giving them an opportunity [to be seen as] the best and the brightest future leaders in this country. Sometimes, the only thing that stands between a student having an opportunity is access.”

With their Howard University golf bags and gear, they talk to people on the course about Howard and HBCUs. They talk about the history of the game of golf and what the Black “old pros” had to deal with just to play. They showcase the best of the African-American community and the levels of excellence Black individuals can attain when given an opportunity.

“Our students [are] ambassadors for the sport in underrepresented areas,” Davis says. “[Howard] accepts the challenge of being a banner institution.”

■■■

ON THE FAIRWAY
The teams golfed with NBA player Stephen Curry at the Bison at the Beach Inaugural Golf Classic at Pebble Beach this Summer.



REPAINTING

Three Howard alumni are leading the charge to broaden the palate of New Haven's once white-dominated arts and culture scene

BY KATTI GRAY

THE TOWN



CREATING A NEW
[ART] HAVEN
Howard alumni
Lisa Dent, Anthony
McDonald and
King Kenney

MISTINA HANSCOM/LOTTA STUDIO, LLC.



■■■
DIVERSITY AS AN ART FORM Lisa Dent, executive director of Artspace New Haven, focuses on artist development.

AT THE GALLERY LISA DENT (BFA '92) HELMS IN THE city regarded as Connecticut's arts capital, a major exhibit in 2020 examined the New Haven Nine, members of the Black Panther Party accused of the 1969 murder of a purported FBI informant.

The socially distanced, masked audience for "Revolution on Trial" at Artspace New Haven included art-lovers of various races, says Dent, the gallery's first-ever Black leader. But the audience didn't mirror New Haven, where people of color comprise 56 percent of the population. If a representative sample of residents didn't turn out for a show whose themes resonate in today's racially charged times, that owes to Artspace's history of not welcoming them in.

"It was clear that people needed to be invited in ways that didn't exist before. Going forward, how do we create a space where they feel they belong?" asks Dent, executive director of Artspace.

When she started that job in Spring 2020, she became the first in an all-Black triumvirate of theater and arts executives, all hailing from Howard, who were hired to move New Haven's arts and culture sector into a more diverse future. In Fall 2020, King Kenney (MBA '17) became the first Black marketing and communications director at New Haven's vaunted Long Wharf Theatre, winner of Obie, Pulitzer and Tony awards and incubator of plays that ascend to New York City's Broadway. And in April 2021, Anthony McDonald (BFA '10) became the first Black vice president and executive director of the Shubert Theatre, another of New Haven's esteemed art houses.

Diversifying the Artists – and Their Audiences

NEW HAVEN ITSELF IS AT A CULTURAL CROSSROADS. "Older, white audiences are dying here. If we don't open the door and get more diverse patrons to support us in the community, we won't be here much longer," says McDonald, who'd been a playhouse manager in New York City before the pandemic shuttered Broadway and eliminated his job.

In New Haven – where the city's first Black arts and culture director uses terms like "anti-racism" during public discussions – those three Howard alumni say they are seizing opportunities rarely afforded African-Americans in a mainstream arts world where whites still dominate. They are, they say, being given the rare chance to shift and enlarge the conversation about what constitutes art; to cultivate art patrons of color; and to feature more artists of color presenting their particular world views. That kind of change requires an approach that white leaders of these art spaces hadn't considered before and likely could not achieve on their own, the three say.

"You are seeing people trying to change the optics," Kenney says, referring to his mainly white colleagues at Long Wharf. "But they think that just by putting up a show people will come. What they don't understand is you have to go into the community to make that kind of real-world change."

Historically, theaters tend to market toward affluent, white communities, Kenney says. Programming that highlights non-white talent sends the theaters "scrambling to find an audience that is unaware of their existence."

He continues: "From a marketing standpoint, the default is to go to Black churches when producing 'Crowns.' Or if they produce 'The Joy Luck Club,' they will go to the nearest Chinatown or seek out partnerships that introduce them to members of the AAPI community. That said, it's not enough to introduce yourself to a community in that way

MISTINA HANSCOM/LOTTA STUDIO, LLC. (2)

and then disappear. You have to market all your programming to BIPOC communities, mindful of the fact that they are not monolithic."

Kenney, McDonald and Dent have made forging relationships with a wide swath of city residents their top priorities. They've made seemingly small overtures that, over the long haul, can have a big impact. For the first time, for example, the Shubert Theatre co-sponsored the last New Haven Caribbean Festival, prominently displaying the theatre's logo during that event. The Shubert hosted a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinic. "That was a way we could give back to the community and say 'Thank you. I want to see you in the theatre, so



IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO A COMMUNITY IN THAT WAY AND THEN DISAPPEAR. YOU HAVE TO MARKET ALL YOUR PROGRAMMING TO BIPOC COMMUNITIES, MINDFUL OF THE FACT THAT THEY ARE NOT MONOLITHIC."

let me help you get vaccinated," McDonald says.

Marketing director Kenney has been pushing the limits of what his predecessors deemed suitable to stage at the Long Wharf. A Black comedy show, for example, would draw a packed house of Black people, he says. Matter-of-factly, he reminds his Long Wharf colleagues that their past staging of "Satchmo at the Waldorf," about the pioneering trumpeter Louis Armstrong, drew such a diverse group of theatergoers that its run was extended.

"When you put someone like myself at the table, it changes the conversation," Kenney says. "I hope the people who hired me are saying 'We know what we've gotten ourselves into.'"

Beyond the College Crowd

ARTSPACE'S DENT SAYS THAT THE THREE OF THEM ARE trying to learn precisely what potential art patrons in New Haven desire from the city's arts venues. She describes New Haven as a town-and-gown city, where the well-heeled host arts fundraisers with few minorities present, even though New Haven also has its share of well-to-do Black, Latinx and other residents of color.

She also describes New Haven as a straight-up college town, facing particular challenges in sustaining the arts.

"Not only is there Yale, but four other undergrad

institutions [are] in the city," she says. "While it is diverse, it's also a very transient population. One of the challenges many art spaces have had over the last 20 years is 'How do we stay in the minds of people as they are moving to other parts of the country? And how do we center the stories of artists who live here full time? How are we going to be an inspiration to people outside the city who visit?'"

Since she landed in Connecticut, Dent has been circulating through BIPOC neighborhoods in the city and talking up Artspace as a center dedicated to emerging artists and boundary-breaking art.

"I'd say, 'Artspace,' and they'd scratch their head," Dent says. "So many of them had never heard of



ATTRACTING AN AUDIENCE King Kenney plans to reach a wider draw to the Long Wharf Theatre.





BEYOND THE BOX OFFICE Anthony McDonald aims to mix up the shows at the historic Shubert Theatre.

it,” says Dent, who previously worked as a curator and gallerist before focusing on artist development. If they had, “they didn’t feel like Artspace was for them. I know how to change that. ... [It] doesn’t mean shuttling school children through the door once a year. It means showing the public the complexity and beauty of the diaspora coupled with a welcoming and inclusive environment.”

Kenney, who’d been marketing director at Duke Performances at Duke University, says New Haven’s racial and class diversity are much of what attracted him to the job. He’d spent the last several years job-interviewing at arts organizations that he doubted were ready to do more than pay lip service to creating diversity, equity and inclusion in the arts world.

“We have such an opportunity to do great things here,” Kenney says. “Across the country, so many of us are dealing with imposter syndrome because we get to these arts organizations that do not position us to succeed and end [up] performing five white plays anyhow. ... I don’t have to do that where I am.”

“In this field,” Dent says, “you’re always trying to find the right place to work, not just as a curator, but where the institution is interested in structural change and you are seen as a complete human being.”

And that, McDonald says, “doesn’t mean doing one or two Black shows a year, when you’re putting up 30 shows. If we have 30 shows, 15 or 20 of them have to be diverse ... if the entire community is going to see itself on stage. And this cannot be happenstance.”

The trio says they feel emboldened and supported in their work. The city of New Haven’s director of arts and culture sits on the Shubert’s board of directors. She was the first person to dial up and congratulate Kenney about his new job.

“We are creating our own cohort, so that, in these places of power, we can have each other’s back,” McDonald says.

Dent agrees. “We are having very different conversations right [now]. I am having to help my board understand that all of the people with incomes that would allow them to participate in a fundraiser or board membership are not white. ... We could fill our board with more people of color who have the income and the influence to support our programs. This is where the opportunity lies for New Haven. What we are doing here could be a model for the rest of the country.”

Says King: “We’re about to partner and collaborate in some very different ways.”

Coming Attractions



THE THREE BLACK

Howard alumni who’ve been tapped, since early 2020, to helm or hold key positions at the Long Wharf Theatre, Shubert Theatre and Artspace New Haven said arts patrons should expect to see New Haven, Connecticut’s arts get, if you will, even more mixed up – more fully reflective of the people who occupy this land.

They will be dish-ing some breakout stuff. The Shubert’s Fall and Winter 2021 lineup, for example, includes reproductions of Broadway’s “Anastasia” and “Hairspray,” but also “The Hip Hop Nutcracker,” replete with dancers of that genre and a DJ.

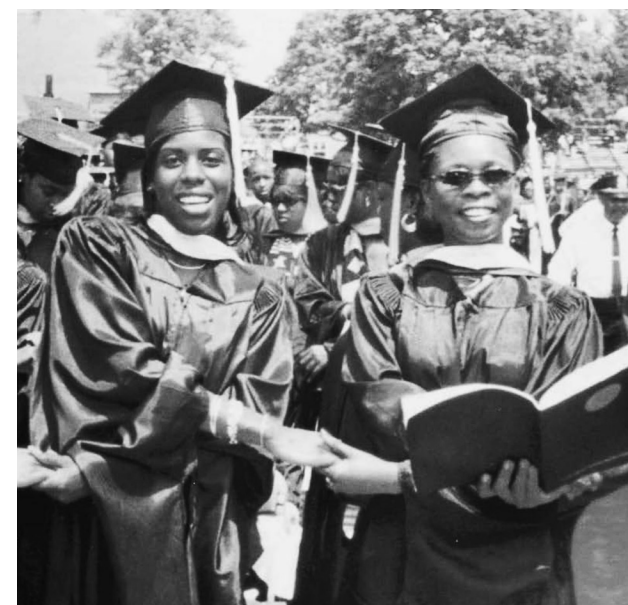
Artspace’s annual festival, called City Wide Open Studios, was renamed to Open Source to provide space to for more than just privileged individuals. Open Space encourages all members of the artmaking BIPOC community to feature their work, both virtually and in person.

MISTINA HANSCOM/LOTTA STUDIO, LLC.

ALUMNI

We Are One

BISON FAMILY



ARCHIVES

The Class of 1991

■ **THIRTY YEARS AGO** the world watched as Rodney King was beaten by police in Los Angeles. People protested the Persian Gulf war on the National Mall. Sharon Pratt Dixon (B.A. ’65, J.D. ’68) was elected the first woman African-American mayor of Washington, D.C.



JOURNALISM

INNER CURIOSITY

by VINCIA NE NGOMSI

■ ■ ■

STORYTIME
Kia Mikkia Natisse is co-host of National Public Radio's podcast "Invisibilia."

■ **Kia Mikkia Natisse** (B.A. '05) has a knack for telling stories, relying on her own innate curiosity to identify topics that resonate with listeners. As co-host of "Invisibilia," a podcast created by National Public Radio (NPR), she spends her days discussing whether rich white elites should surrender their wealth to Black individuals as a form of reparations or about a Summer camp designed to confront race. These days, Mikkia Natisse' days are spent "over-communicating" with her team and looking just about everywhere for new features other outlets haven't covered. According to Mikkia Natisse, that discovery happens when looking for a certain subject leads her to come across another idea. Essentially, it's her childlike curiosity at work and her habit of questioning everything. The intention is to capture the information, understand

it and illustrate it to her audience. Take reparations, for example. Mikkia Natisse felt like reparations was a solution and remedy to a lot of modern problems that, for a long while, seemed fringe and unlikely. She had a hunch that someone would try to make reparations happen on their own, so she set out to research individual reparations efforts in 2019, but never found anything substantial enough for a story. A year later and by chance, Mikkia Natisse was researching stories and came across a reparations effort in Vermont. Not only was she taken aback by the conditions and scale of what activists created but also by how unapologetic they were about what they were asking for and why. "It made for a compelling story that I view as sort of a petri dish experiment of what reparations in America might feel like," Mikkia Natisse says. Howard set the foundation for Mikkia Natisse's storytelling. Being the only Black person in her high school classes back in Buffalo, New York led to isolated moments of the Black experience. Howard, however, was a place where Mikkia Natisse could explore her identity. Seeing others with similar backgrounds contributed to an invaluable, foundational confidence she wouldn't have received anywhere else. Natisse started her career in reality television. However, she felt "morally bankrupt" and "siloed from reality," leading her to walk away after three years in the trade and enroll in graduate school. In 2015, she earned a master's in individualized studies from New York University. After stints in art residencies working on digital narratives, her penchant for storytelling began to take shape. The pride she developed at Howard has persisted and continues to catalyze the stories she tells today. "It's not just what you tell but how," she says. "Perspective is everything when it comes to storytelling, and it's important to have experiences normalized and [to] establish the baseline of reality."

SERVICE

A Mom's Fight for Social Justice

by TAMMARA SUTTON

■ It wasn't **Depelsha McGruder's** (B.A. '94) intent to start a world-renowned organization dedicated to social justice. But with the repeated cases of police brutality and murders of Black boys and men in America, she knew that she had to make a call for change. As a mother of two young Black boys herself, one of whom has a disability, she experiences overwhelming fear for their lives while raising them in a world where individuals like Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, George Floyd and more were murdered because of the color of their skin. In 2016, McGruder started a Facebook group to express her vulnerabilities and fears as a mother of Black sons. Within 12 hours, the online group grew to more than 21,000 members. And then to more than 170,000 members. She realized this was a group with passion and power in numbers. It soon became Moms of Black Boys United, Inc. (MOBB United) and its sister organization, MOBB United for Social Change. MOBB United is dedicated to building a community of resources and support to help moms of Black sons navigate their lives while fighting systemic racism and negative perceptions of Black boys and men in America. "Sharing what I was feeling in that one moment connected thousands of moms around the country and sparked a movement. Seeing the power of that has led me to become more vulnerable in all aspects of my life," McGruder says. Fighting for racial equality was familiar to McGruder. Growing up in Georgia, her parent's activism in civil rights demonstrations during their youth in the 1960s became her cultural backdrop and catalyst for choosing to attend Howard and pursue an early career in

broadcast journalism. "My experience at Howard taught me that no matter what environment I'm in, I belong," she notes. Although they met seven years after their Howard graduation as working professionals, McGruder and her late husband, David Neal McGruder, Esq., (B.A. '93) were both dedicated to social impact. Like his wife, Mr. McGruder was known for his pursuit of service, not only as a

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AT HOWARD
TAUGHT ME THAT
NO MATTER WHAT
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criminal defense and employment attorney, but also as former national fundraising chair of the Howard University Alumni Association. Through their work and the scholarship that was started in his name following his untimely death last December, the McGruders have left a lasting legacy of social justice and a dedication to service in the community. McGruder's desire to change the world has been her mission since she was a child. McGruder has held a number of prestigious positions. She was a longtime executive at Viacom as well as the COO of New York Public Radio. Now, she is the COO at the Ford Foundation, which she calls a "utopia" given its \$16 billion endowment. "Our goal is to give away hundreds of millions of dollars every year to solve the problems of the world." It is clear that the cornerstone of her career has been grounded in her purpose and mission to have an impact on changing perceptions and ensuring a better future for Black people. "No matter what opportunities I've been given, it's not about the title or largest portfolio," she says. "I always view the work that I do through the lens of making the largest impact."



INTERNATIONAL HEALTH

The Miracle of Medicine

by SARA WALSH

■ During **Naina Bhalla's** (M.D. '02) first assignment for Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), a boy from South Sudan arrived at the hospital. He was near death. He'd fallen into an open fire during a seizure, suffering burns from face to toe. The hospital didn't have a general surgeon, and the operating room was used for C-sections. Bhalla and her team made do with what they had, starting him on antibiotics and IV fluids, estimating the amount he required. She didn't think he'd survive.

Yet, after several months of care, he left the hospital healed. Bhalla marvels at the outcome. "I like to say that medicine is a science, but there is also a portion of it that isn't necessarily science. There's the science to medicine, but there's also the miracle of medicine."

For more than a decade, Bhalla has immersed herself in the raw wonder of MSF health care, where sometimes patients can heal and thrive despite limited staff and resources. This dynamic is part of the reason why Bhalla, an internal medicine hospitalist in the San Francisco Bay Area, dedicates three to six months each year to work in places that most nongovernmental organizations and medical institutions do not go.

Today, Bhalla continues to "seek" – a word she uses frequently – this mix of medicine and miracle. Besides South Sudan, she's worked in Ethiopia, Congo, Madagascar and Jordan. After a two-year pause in 2015-2017 while she prepared for recertification exams in pediatrics and internal medicine, she was "hungry" to return to her



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mission. She requested placement in a refugee camp setting. Following the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, Bhalla worked in Bangladesh, specifically to manage MSF's operations in the camp's set-up. Later, she worked in an Ebola treatment center in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Bhalla took part in both the first big rollout of the clinical trials for different treatments for the virus and the initial large-scale community immunization vaccinations. And more recently, she led the medical team at MSF's trauma hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, the only one in the area that offers free care for surgery, hospitalizations, mental health, physical therapy and prostheses.

Bhalla advises Howard medical students and new graduates to follow the call to practice internationally and to hold onto the ideals that sparked their careers. "It's worth the effort, even just one experience," she says. "It's life-changing as an individual, but it's also life-changing as a professional."

ADVOCACY

THE POSTPARTUM REVOLUTIONARY

From comedian to accidental social advocate, Angelina Spicer reveals her postpartum recovery and how she is assisting with legislative changes that will help other mothers.

by LATASHA MURPHY (B.A. '14)

■ As a regular sketch performer on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and on "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" for eight years, stand-up comedian **Angelina Spicer** (BFA '03) felt like she was well on her way to making a name for herself in Hollywood. What she did not anticipate, after giving birth to her daughter in 2015, was losing her sense of humor to postpartum depression and anxiety.

"I was trying my best, 'cause listen – we're Bison. We don't take no for an answer; we press on, regardless of adversity. Regardless of the circumstances. We *press*," Spicer says. However, pressing on was no longer an option, and Spicer found herself feeling trapped, alone and depressed for nearly eight months. "And for that whole eight months, I didn't find anything funny. ... I couldn't find the humor in it because I was so in a funk." Her therapist then encouraged her to check into an in-patient facility.

After being in the psychiatric ward for 10 days, Spicer realized that the information she received from her friends and family about life after having a baby was "all a lie!" Which prompted her to theme her stand-up special, titled "Waldorf Hysteria," as "They All Lied." Spicer took a year to focus on her mental health, and, in addition to her comedy work, she started advocating for women's health rights initiatives in the state of California. With the help of her social media channels, nonprofits started asking her to be a spokeswoman for a comprehensive legislation package of three bills:

expanding screenings for new moms, training medical professionals on how to administer screenings, and creating a database of referrals for doctors and patients. After helping successfully pass those bills in California, she was asked to lobby on Capitol Hill for similar federal legislation, which is when she teamed up with another powerful Bison – then Senator Kamala Harris.

This year, she launched her "Postpartum Revolution Road Trip" comedy tour through several

cities, which included a screening of her comedy special plus panel discussions with local survivors and medical professionals.

Spicer is also creating a documentary about postpartum depression and her journey of advocacy and comedy. She is currently crowdfunding the project. "I want to really create a project that's not triggering to moms, that feels like the conversation where moms don't feel like they've been lied to," she says, noting that she gives the "hard honest truth, but with laughs and with hope, not from despair."

Spicer credits her time at Howard as to why she is able to keep advocating for herself and these important pieces of legislation. "Howard prepared me to reach beyond what I thought was my bandwidth to really soar. And if it had not been for the preparation that [my professors gave me] I would have folded a long time ago in Hollywood."

➔ Visit [AngelinaSpicer.com](https://www.angelinaspicer.com)





GLOBAL

Representing in the R.O.C.

by RIN-RIN YU

■ When **Ambassador Candice Pitts (PH.D. '14)** was appointed to represent the country of Belize in the Republic of China (Taiwan) in March 2021, she anticipated meeting diplomats from all over the world. To her surprise, she met someone from a place they both called home: a fellow Bison, **Ambassador Jasmine E. Huggins (J.D. '96)**, representing Saint Christopher and Nevis.



I WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED TO DISCOVER ANOTHER HOWARD ALUM SERVING IN THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY."

Huggins had been in Taiwan since she helped establish the embassy in 2008.

"I was pleasantly surprised to discover another Howard alum serving in this beautiful country and pleased at the far reach of Howard's educational footprint," recalls Huggins.

Both are working on developing bilateral relations between Taiwan and their respective countries in areas such as trade, tourism, education, health care, agriculture, infrastructure and social developments. For Huggins, her favorite part about Taiwan, after 13 years, "is the warmth and friendliness of the people. Their humility and gentleness belie a strength that has allowed them to survive and thrive even under the most difficult circumstances," she says.

Since her arrival in March, Pitts has been immersing herself in the culture – visiting various cities, trying local foods (white fungus sweet soup is one of her favorites), participating in annual customs and learning basic Mandarin. It's a change from her Howard days in Locke Hall in a department that she says many scholars and famous names came through to "continue to help forge the ways the world recognizes and identifies HU."

"While [my] encounter [with Ambassador Huggins] is serendipitous," Pitts says, "I imagine we are merely meeting and fulfilling those unspoken and additional cultural, social and political expectations and responsibilities all graduates receive upon our graduation from Howard University."

CLASS NOTES

'80s-'90s

Keith L. Henderson

(**B.A. '86**) was named chief compliance officer at Syracuse University, where he manages the compliance program for the university's 13 schools and colleges.

Greg Sampson (B.S. '91), vice president of engineering, systems and products for Springboard Collaborative, led one of the winning teams at the Schmidt Futures' Tools Competition, an education technology grant competition in response to pandemic at-home virtual learning.

Stacie Burgess (B.A. '93, M.A. '96) was recently named vice president of communications for Fenway Health. She is the first African-American to join its leadership team.



PROFILE

Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D. (M.A. '95) became chancellor of Rutgers University-Camden on July 1, 2021. He leads the southernmost campus of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, with more than 7,200 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in 39 undergraduate and 29 graduate programs.

Tillis recently served as interim president of the University of Houston-Downtown, where he also served as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and was named M.D. Anderson Professor in Hispanic Studies. Fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, he is a noted scholar in Afro-Hispanic studies and has co-edited several books and publications. In 2009, he received a Fulbright fellowship to Brazil. Tillis is a first-generation college student who earned his master's degree in Spanish literature from Howard University.



CLASS NOTES
(Continued)



PROFILE

Erika Gentry (B.S. '92) celebrated the recent HU graduation of her oldest daughter, **Erinn Gentry (B.S. '21)** in Houston with her family, including her uncle, **Kenneth King (DDS '84)**, who began the Howard legacy; her college sweetheart and husband, **Wyatt Victor Gentry III (B.B.A. '93)**; her uncle's daughters, **Joan King Jefferson (B.S. '95, DDS '09)** and **Emily King Neal (B.S. '95)**; her sister, **Caroline Dennis Williams (B.A. '05)**; and her youngest daughter, **Elise Gentry**, who is a freshman in the class of 2025. "[My uncle] often told me, 'You need to go to Howard.' And I did, sight unseen."

Joseph Hill (M.A. '94) recently joined the board of trustees for Herzing University, an accredited, private, nonprofit institution with locations in seven states and online. He is managing partner of Jbrady5, which specializes in strategic leadership consulting; diversity, equity and inclusion; and community engagement projects. He is also a board member at Virginia Union University.

'00s

Sufiya Abdur-Rahman (B.A. '01) was awarded the Iowa Prize for Literary Nonfiction for her forthcoming memoir, "Heir to the Crescent Moon."

Cherri Gregg (J.D. '02) recently joined WHYY in Philadelphia as an on-air afternoon host. She was most recently a community affairs reporter at KYW Newsradio and host of "Flashpoint with Cherri Gregg," a weekly public affairs radio program and podcast.

Jocelyn Gates (B.S. '03) was recently named senior associate director of athletics for Ohio State University. Gates will provide administrative oversight to Ohio State's football program while also serving as liaison to the offices of compliance and student-athlete support services.

The Reverend **Robert C. Wright (B.A. '04)** recently joined the board of directors for Habitat for Humanity International. He is a bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta.

Akadius Berry (B.B.A. '05) and **Tamra Berry (B.A. '05)** welcomed their second child, Langston Ahmad Berry, on May 20, 2021 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Langston Ahmad was delivered by Caudrean L. Avery-Benjamin (M.D. '04). Langston Ahmad joins big sister, Zora Avery, age two.

Kenneth White (B.A. '06) was recently promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Air Force. Fewer than 8 percent of military make this rank.

Ruth LaToison Ifill (B.B.A. '09) became president and CEO of the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, a nonprofit membership association comprised of over 100 foundations and corporate giving programs in the Washington region. She was serving as its interim president and CEO.



PROFILE

Gharun Lacy (B.S. '99) was named the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) deputy assistant secretary and assistant director for the DSS Cyber and Technology Security Directorate. The Cyber and Technology Security Directorate is a crucial part of the Department of State's law enforcement and security strategy that brings together cybersecurity, technology security and investigative expertise to enable the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Lacy spent more than two decades as a security engineering officer in the foreign service, most recently as director of the Countermeasures Program in the Office of Security Technology and as regional director for security engineering for the Middle East and North Africa. He studied mechanical engineering at Howard.

'10s

Ashley McQueen (DDS '12) was recently highlighted by American Dental Association's New Dentist News about how she gives back to the community through her work at the Lonestar Family Health Center, a federally qualified health center.

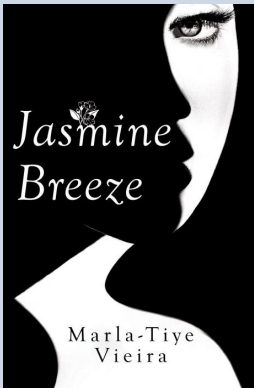
Tierra Williams (B.B.A. '13) was recently crowned Miss Black New Jersey USA 2021.

Kanhai Farrakhan (M.D. '18) was recently honored with the Haffenreffer Family House Staff Excellent Awards at Rhode Island Hospital. The award recognizes residents, chief residents and fellows in their final year of training. Farrakhan is a PG3 senior resident in the internal medicine residency program.

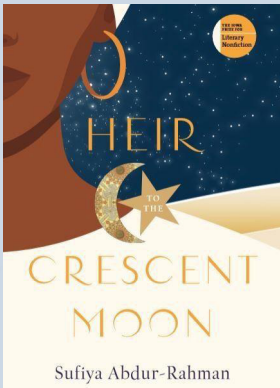
Gabrielle Gray (Ph.D. '20) is a Provost's Postdoctoral Fellow with Emory University's College of Arts and Sciences. Her research and teaching focuses on race and politics.

BISON BOOKSHELF

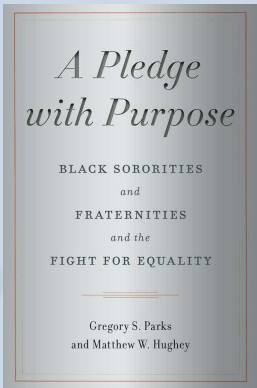
BY SETH SHAPIRO AND RIN-RIN YU



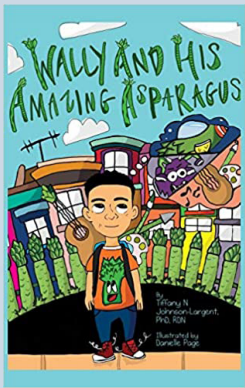
■ **“Jasmine Breeze”** by Marla-Tiye Vieira (B.A. '92). A lyrical, globe-trotting novella that takes its biracial and bisexual protagonist from Louisiana to Morocco as she seeks to combat her inner – and outer – demons.



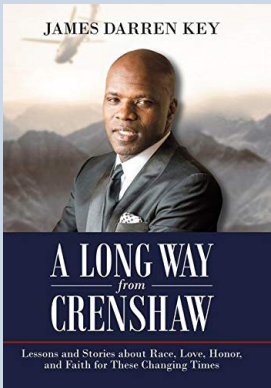
■ **“Heir to the Crescent Moon”** by Sufiya Abdur-Rahman (B.A. '01). Awarded the Iowa Prize for Literary Nonfiction, the writer examines her Muslim heritage, an identity she yearned to realize even as her father tried to distance her from it.



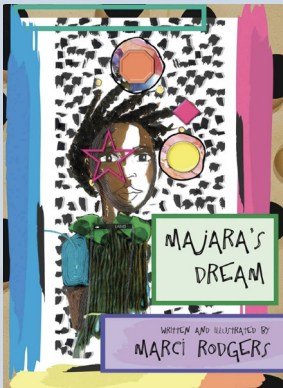
■ **“A Pledge with Purpose: Black Sororities and Fraternities and the Fight for Equality,”** co-authored by Gregory S. Parks (B.S. '96), explores the impact of the Black Greek letter organizations in the fight for racial justice and economic equality.



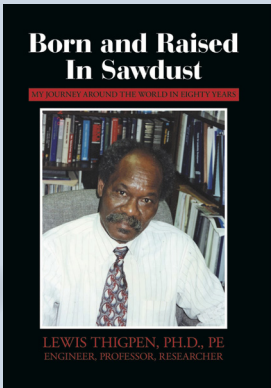
■ **“Wally and his Amazing Asparagus”** by Tiffany N. Johnson-Largent, Ph.D., RDN (M.S. '05, Ph.D. '11). Young Wally discovers that asparagus is more than just delicious and nutritious, but also makes a great sword for battling giants.



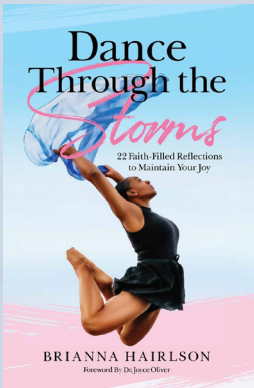
■ **“A Long Way from Crenshaw: Lessons and Stories about Race, Love, Honor and Faith for these Changing Times”** by James Darren Key (M.Div. '92, D.M.I. '96) highlights stories from growing up Black in California in the 1970s and '80s.



■ **“MaRaJa's Dream”** by Marci Rodgers (B.B.A. '05) chronicles her life as she evolved from a child who loved art to one of the youngest and most sought-after African-American costume designers today.



■ **“Born and Raised in Sawdust: My Journey Around the World in Eighty Years”** by Lewis Thigpen, Ph.D., PE, (B.S. '64) is the autobiography of retired Howard engineering professor emeritus who grew up during the Jim Crow era.



■ **“Dance Through the Storms”** by Brianna Hairlson (B.B.A. '12) inspires and guides readers who may feel like there is no hope during or after the storm.

➡➡ To submit a book for consideration in **BISON BOOKSHELF**, please mail a copy to
Howard Magazine, Office of University Communications, 1851 9th Street NW, Washington, DC 20059

GLORIA RICHARDSON (B.A. '42)



■ **GLORIA RICHARDSON WAS A CIVIL RIGHTS ICON** and revolutionary activist. Amidst the towering male figures of the 1960s, Richardson stood in no one's shadow. As much as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X helped define two separate poles of civil rights activism, Richardson came to represent another distinct wing of the movement.

Richardson graduated from Howard University in 1942 with a degree in sociology and a mission to unapologetically and without compromise demand the satisfaction of the Black community's basic needs. It was her unyielding insistence that Black individuals needed better health care, safer housing and steadier employment that helped distinguish her from some of the other civil rights leaders of the era.

Richardson made a name for herself beginning in 1963 in Cambridge, Maryland. She became the chairwoman of the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee, an offshoot of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. That year, Richardson led a series of protests demanding improved living conditions for Black residents of Cambridge. The protests attracted backlash from white residents and became increasingly volatile. The governor of Maryland called in the National Guard, which ultimately retained a local presence for an entire year.

Over the course of these protests, Richardson became a public figure of the civil rights movement, gaining fame and prominence for her fearlessness in the face of violent oppression. In one iconic moment, captured in a photo-

graph, Richardson pushes aside the rifle of a National Guard member who got in her way. That simple gesture personified the courage that fanned the flames of her passion and emboldened every step she took as a public leader.

Richardson negotiated with politicians across every level of government as well as leaders in the White House to reach a deal that would help end segregationist practices and provide federal housing aid to the Black community. She ultimately signed a deal, but she did not offer her support of it publicly and the plan ultimately did not pass as it lacked support from both the white and Black communities.

By 1964, Richardson stepped back from the national spotlight and stepped down from her leadership role with the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee, leaving space for other leaders to step up. She would continue to advocate for the rights of the Black community for the rest of her life.

■ **Perry A. Smith** (B.A. '55, M.Div. '58), April 16, 2021. He was a civil rights advocate who worked alongside Martin Luther King Jr. Rev. Smith was one of the Freedom Riders arrested multiple times in the civil rights struggle.

■ **Otto Beatty Jr.** (B.A. '61), May 14, 2021. A lawyer and former member of the Ohio House of Representatives, he served for 18 years in the legislature.

■ **Robbie Doris McCauley** (B.A. '63), May 20, 2021. An actress, director, writer and educator, McCauley received an OBIE Award and a Bessie Award for outstanding achievement in performance for her play, "Sally's Rape." She also wrote a one-woman play called "Sugar" about her personal struggle with diabetes.

In Memoriam

'40s

Marietta Crichlow
(B.A. '41, M.A. '56),
October 28, 2020.

'50s

Alice Sonja Johnson Hilfiker, Ph.D., (N. '51), June 6, 2021.

Nora Nita Evans
(N. '53), August 29, 2020.

Harold E. Mavritte
(MD '55), March 22, 2021.

'60s

Rosalind “Roz” Joyce Leverett Phoenix Dixon
(B.A. '60, M.A. '67),
June 19, 2021.

Otis Benjamin Young Jr. (B.S. '61),
June 9, 2021.

Legrand L. Hall
(BSPharm '63),
May 30, 2021.

Robert Foster Cephas (B.S. '66),
May 9, 2021.

'70s

Herman Anthony Chesley (B.A. '75, MBA '92), April 9, 2021.



DINING TOGETHER

BY

Siobhan Stewart (B.A. '19)

■ THE CAFETERIA FELT MASSIVE. TWO LEVELS filled with friend groups talking about current events, pop culture, weekend plans, what they learned in class and everything in between.

I often looked around Bethune Café, or “the Caf” as it was called, as I ate my turkey sandwich and yellow cake with chocolate frosting. With my headphones in, trying to look preoccupied, I would think to myself, “Will I ever find my group here?”

I had always been talkative and outgoing, but during my freshman year in 2015, I struggled to find my place at Howard. I joined clubs, attended study groups, nervously struck up conversations with classmates. But the cafeteria was where I felt the most homesick. When the few friends I had were busy, I ate my meals alone. A simple task that quickly became a daily stressor. I felt lost and quickly became shy, introverted and filled with self-doubt.



➡ **Siobhan Stewart** (B.A. '19)
works at Mastercard and
lives in Connecticut.

It took me a bit of time, but eventually, I met two girls – Jess and Troi – who welcomed me with open arms. The cafeteria was no longer an obstacle. By my junior year, we became a thriving trio. At that point, I lived in the Towers and experienced the upperclassmen luxury of having a kitchen in my dorm suite. I didn’t visit the Caf once that entire year.

By my senior year, when I lived off-campus, the Caf was a distant memory. Troi lived on campus in the Towers and had a meal plan, consisting of only dining dollars for her senior year. This meant she could eat at the Caf, get a snack from the C-Store, grab a smoothie from Jazzman’s or stop by the Punchout.

During our Spring semester, Troi and I had a break between classes at a similar time. One day, while talking about how we hadn’t eaten at the Caf in so long, Troi suggested we go for old time’s sake. Her treat. We quickly turned this into a twice-weekly lunch tradition.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, we would sit in the same spot and discuss current events, pop culture, weekend plans and everything in between.

As graduation drew closer, we would reminisce on our time at Howard. I would quietly look around the Caf and remember the lost freshman I once was. Full of confidence, once again outgoing and sitting across from one of my best friends – I had finally found my place.

The Howard University Legacy Giving Society

The Howard University Legacy Giving Society is an impact-driven group of alumni and friends who have shared their intention to include Howard University in their estate plans.

Individuals who include Howard University as a beneficiary in their will, trust, retirement plan and/or life insurance policy and provide documentation are thanked and recognized as members of the Howard University Legacy Giving Society.

Legacy gifts have significant impact on Howard University students, faculty and staff. They secure the University’s future as well as support initiatives that are most important to individuals. They include and are not limited to scholarships, endowment and research.

What will be your Howard University legacy?

For information on how you can become a member of the Howard University Legacy Giving Society, please contact Quina De Laine, planned giving officer at 202-238-2518 or quina.delaine@Howard.edu.

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This represents general information only and should not be construed as legal, financial, accounting, or other professional advice. Please seek professional assistance to determine how any giving approach discussed here might impact your situation.

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