

HOWARD

MAGAZINE

WINTER 2022

HOW EXTREME
WEATHER
AFFECTS AFRICAN
AMERICANS

—
HOWARD ALUMNI
IN THE FBI

—
THE NEW
CHADWICK A.
BOSEMAN COLLEGE
OF FINE ARTS



MAKING WAVES

Howard's Swimming and Diving Team Seeks to Bring More Black Athletes to the Sport

Perspective

HOWARD
BISON



SWIMMING & DIVING

■ **DIVING IN** — Freshman Isaiah Swilley from Bourbonnais, Illinois, takes a practice dive at the Burr Gymnasium Pool. Howard is the only HBCU with a Division I swimming and diving team. For more about the team's efforts to increase interest in the sport among African Americans, read the feature on page 28.

Photo by Tony Richards

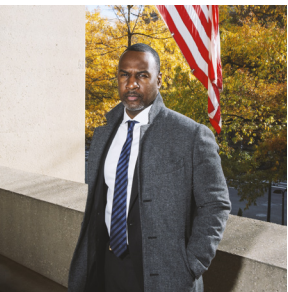




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Dear Howard University Community,

IN THE FALL, OUR EDITORIAL TEAM HERE IN THE OFFICE of University Communications received exciting news: the magazine had been nominated for four Folio magazine awards. We trekked up to New York City, where we met other nominees and colleagues from titles I’ve read, admired, and studied from cover to cover – National Geographic, Food & Wine, Forbes, Variety, People, Better Homes & Gardens, and AARP – as well as publications from other universities, such as Harvard, Columbia, University of Illinois, and University of Virginia. That night, we won awards in the three categories: best redesign; best cover for our Spring 2021 issue, featuring Kamala Harris, which was designed by Seattle Ellison (BFA ’17); and best single article for the feature “Using Trial to Overcome Tribulation” by writer Katti Gray about Howard’s vaccine trials. We also received an honorable mention in the best profile category for our tribute to Vernon Jordan, written by staffer Seth Shapiro.

Receiving the awards meant that Howard competes – and succeeds – on a national level (“international,” technically, since there were some Canadian magazines present, too). As a university, we are already receiving much recognition for our achievements, and the magazine, too, continues to receive recognition as a vehicle for sharing those achievements with a greater audience. We recently introduced two new vehicles: the magazine’s digital version, which comes with interactive multimedia, and The Dig, which is Howard’s new information and news website.

The real awards, however, are the correspondence I receive daily from the Howard community and beyond. Phone calls, emails, letters, packages, texts, and even in-person visits fill my day, with people offering everything from tidbits they read somewhere to timely and important topics. Our readers clearly recognize the value of Howard Magazine and want to help make it even better with each issue. For that, I am very proud.

If you haven’t already, please feel free to reach out to us 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 and, in my mind, always award-winning Bison stories.

Happy Winter,

Rin-rin Yu, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

HOWARD
MAGAZINE

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Photo by Rin-rin Yu

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First snowfall
of 2022,
Howard Hall

PHOTO BY RIN-RIN YU (4), JUSTIN D. KNIGHT (5)

From the President

Dear Howard University
Community,

■ AS A FLAGSHIP IN THE FLOTILLA OF HISTORICALLY Black colleges and universities, Howard attracts an excess of attention, from within and from outside the African American community. It is our responsibility to raise the banner of Black excellence ever higher so that it is easier to see and impossible to deny.

A more just and equal society is the end goal of what we want to achieve – it is not the initial step. First, and again and again, we have to change perceptions.

When our swimmers and divers don the Bison blue, they are representing far more than themselves, their team, and their school. They are standing in for the entire Black community. For those who falsely believe that Black people can't swim, this is definitive proof that we can. The same applies to Howard's aspiring doctors and lawyers, climate scientists and architects, accountants and financiers, intelligence and law enforcement officers. For every CEO who claims the pool of Black talent is shallow, we will continue to prove that they are simply looking in the wrong place.

It is vital that we combat stereotypes actively because prejudice and bias have the unfortunate power to turn falsehoods into reality. Any inaccurate perception can be supposedly proven right if the stereotyped population is never given a chance to prove it wrong. If Black children don't have access to a pool, if Black students can't get internships or jobs befitting their talents and passions, then false generalizations will become entrenched beliefs. Similarly, if Black individuals who suffer from the effects of climate change are blamed for their own hardship rather than seen as victims of forces that have made them more vulnerable to these disasters, then our society will remain blind to the systems and structures that reinforce racism and discrimination.

Howard has a unique responsibility to provide opportunities for talented Black individuals to uncover the truth, debunk stereotypes, and inspire children of color to believe that anything they can



“IT IS VITAL THAT WE COMBAT STEREOTYPES ACTIVELY BECAUSE PREJUDICE AND BIAS HAVE THE UNFORTUNATE POWER TO TURN FALSEHOODS INTO REALITY.”

dream they may also achieve. It is undoubtedly difficult to feel the weight of a community and its future prosperity upon one's shoulders every time one of us takes a test or sits down for an interview or dives into a swimming pool. But today's Bison are buoyed because the burden they carry is not theirs alone. It was borne by the giants who preceded them. And soon, it will be transferred to the next generation as they seek to make their own difference in the world.

Excellence in Truth and Service,

Wayne A. I. Frederick, MD, MBA

CHARLES R. DREW PROFESSOR OF SURGERY
PRESIDENT

GENDER ROLES

How Howard Advances Women

by J. JARPA DAWUNI, ESQ., PHD

■ CONSIDERING HOWARD UNIVERSITY'S legacy of producing leaders and its standing among historically Black colleges and universities, it was perhaps unsurprising that the first Black vice president of the United States should be a graduate from our institution. But I would contend that it was just as unsurprising that she was a woman.

The election of Kamala Harris (BA '86) to the vice presidency of the United States is testament to the principles upon which Howard was founded in 1867 and to the ability of our institution to spread its influence throughout society as well as to elevate those principles to all corners of our nation.

From Howard's very beginning, the institution has been accessible to all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Some of the first students at this institution, founded to educate freed slaves, were the white daughters of the members of the Board of Trustees. And today, 74 percent of the Howard student body is female.

Of course, we would be remiss to dismiss Howard's own shortcomings in the arena of gender-based equality. Prior to 2014, only one out of Howard's 13 deans were female. On our campus, a place of enlightenment and equal opportunity, there was a paucity of female leadership.

Fortunately, today, under the leadership of President Wayne A. I. Frederick, there are now 10 female deans out of a total of 14. This prog-



➔ J. Jarpa Dawuni, Esq., PhD, is an associate professor of political science and the founding director of the Howard University Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership.

ress was due both to an insistence on upholding our own values as well as to changes in our processes and procedures that reinforced and reflected those values. President Frederick has told all decanal search committees that he expects a recommendation of three finalists to be invited to campus. Additionally, if at least one of the finalists is not a woman, he would consider the search process unsuccessful.

It is important to recognize that Howard can be both an imperfect institution that is working to improve equality within our own campus and an inspiring institution working to insist on equality from society at large. This realization helped create our University's new Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership in October 2021. The vision of this new institution is to be a center of excellence for Black feminist consciousness, activism, and global leadership. The center is dedicated to strengthening the rich legacy and work that has already been done by the women of Howard and extending this rich legacy to impact our national and global communities.

There is much work to be done, and Howard is best positioned to lead these critical endeavors. The center's vast network of advisers includes female and male leaders across various industries. Our unique Global Council of Leaders includes women luminaries, diplomats, politicians, and more. The voices, perspectives, and qualifications we have assembled are unmatched. As we work to advocate for and advance the rights of women, I am confident that the center will help prove Vice President Harris' words to be true: "I may be the first woman to hold this office, but I won't be the last."

I have the utmost confidence that this center will become one of the most vital institutions ever to advocate for and advance the rights of women and create opportunities for our students to become global leaders with a feminist consciousness guided by the center's core values of resilience, integrity, service, and excellence. Let us work as one Howard, advancing gender equity for all women across the globe.

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

IN THEIR SHOES

HOW WILL YOU CHANGE PERCEPTIONS?

by KIERSTEN JEFFERSON



Jordan Toombs
SENIOR, VISUAL ARTS MAJOR
WITH A CONCENTRATION
IN E-STUDIO

"I want to change the perception of Black artistry. People think that we have to be struggling or marginalized in order to be successful. Let's change the narrative, change that perception. Let's actually accept and value the Black artistry that we already have within ourselves."



Margeau Pitters
FRESHMAN,
MARKETING MAJOR

"Some of my role models are in the film and media industries. I'm hoping to, in my career, transfer the skills that I'm learning ... to be a pioneer in an emerging industry that does not exist yet."

Julius Shanks II

FRESHMAN, ACTING MAJOR

"I plan to change the narrative of the acting major and just acting in general to show that Black artists are more than just a 'Black artist.' That we are able to be in any genre in any field and compete against anyone from any university because our training teaches how to tell our stories, and that's exactly what we need in the world right now today. To be able to tell Black stories – not about trauma, not about where we come from, but about the experiences and where [they're] taking us."



Madison Harris

JUNIOR, TV/FILM MAJOR

"I'm a film major because I want to change the narrative of African Americans in TV and film. I want less shows like 'Empire' and 'Power' and more shows like 'A Different World,' 'In Living Color,' 'Living Single' that show Black people in a positive light."



Sabreen Dawud

SOPHOMORE, JOURNALISM MAJOR AND ENGLISH MINOR

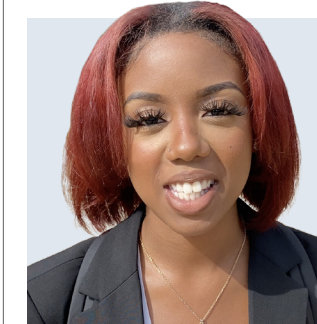
"As a journalism major, I aim to uplift Black voices through the stories that I tell. I really personally enjoy highlighting the adversities that Black people face as well as the joys that we experience. In my work, I love to involve Black experts, Black students, and Black people as a whole and their perspectives inside of my articles, and that's what I aim to do for the rest of my career. As an English minor, I aim to become a published author and ... share Black stories and elevate our voices."



Sydney Edward

FRESHMAN,
MARKETING MAJOR

"As a Black female trying to enter the marketing industry, I think the main goal is to change the perception of kind of lumping underrepresented groups all into one category and really recognizing the uniqueness ... especially in such a white, male-dominated industry."



Phillip Wells

MBA, MARKETING

"I want to increase exposure of different careers in the entertainment industry for students of color because we find that a lot of people don't really understand all of the aspects of the entertainment business. [I want to] increase exposure about careers as an agent, as a manager, as a publicist – those resources should be shared with students of color."





WELLNESS

THE GROWTH OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

by GISHAWN MANCE, PHD

■ **The funny thing about a professor's office hours** is that students don't usually stop by until the end of the semester when final grades are due. However, when I created and taught a course on childhood trauma during my first year at Howard University in 2015, the line outside my office quickly grew longer and longer as the semester progressed. Little did I know that many registered for my course less out of an academic interest in the subject matter and more in the hopes of finding some semblance of personal healing. A common greeting became, "Hi, Dr. Mance. I was thinking about what you said in class, and I think I need to

talk to someone." Students' requests to meet with me extended beyond my limited office hours. At the end of class, they would line up in front of my desk or walk with me to my next appointment. Since that first semester, the class has grown in popularity, with many students seeking to understand their own experiences or to enter the mental health field. Similarly, I have observed growing public interest and awareness around mental health over the past decade. Literacy around mental health has increased exponentially, coupled with the rise of public figures speaking openly and candidly about their challenges. In 2020, former first lady

Michelle Obama publicly shared her experience with low-grade depression. As a public figure and as a Black woman, her honest admission was pivotal to the discussion of mental health. Additionally, as celebrities

“

The drastic shift in how we lived our lives, with no end in sight, sparked many to seek therapy.”

such as gymnast Simone Biles, tennis star Naomi Osaka, rapper Jay Z, football player Brandon Marshall, and actress Taraji P. Henson (BFA '95) attract media attention to mental health, the notion of suffering in silence or shame is slowly dissipating. (Henson founded the Boris L. Henson Foundation to eradicate stigma around mental health in the Black community.)

Much of the focus on mental health has shifted from pathology to awareness and self-care. With 1 in 5 adults in the United States experiencing mental illness, there is growing acknowledgement of mental health as an aspect of overall health. Younger generations are much more vocal about mental wellness, especially on social media. Personal narratives are now more public than they have been in the past, which helps reduce stigma. Television shows, podcasts, social media and open conversations, along with a wealth of clinical research, have helped to shift the conversation and awareness of mental health in a positive direction.

Over the past year and half, many events – the pandemic, ongoing racial trauma, continuous fights for social justice – propelled mental health to the forefront. The drastic shift in how we lived our lives, with no end in sight, sparked many to seek therapy. As a practitioner, I experienced an uptake in referrals for therapy during the pandemic. Parents of adolescent clients often tell me that their child personally asked to see a therapist, a huge change from when I entered private practice over 15 years ago. Much like the line that formed outside my office, there's more demand and open dialogue around mental health, but there is still more work to be done.

➔ **GiShawn Mance, PhD** is an assistant professor, director of clinical training and a licensed clinical psychologist at Howard.

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

THE ARTS

Facing the Music

by

JEFFERY TRIBBLE JR., JD
(BA '08)

■ **AS THE PANDEMIC TURNED SCHOOLS** upside down and educational programs took a hit, music programs nationwide faced troubles.

It wasn't the first time music education had been trimmed back in many schools. As schools reevaluate their budgets year after year, music and the performing arts are often on the chopping block. But it's music that can sometimes be the answer, the path for these children, towards something bigger.

I grew up in a family of musicians. I had a diverse diet of music and was fortunate enough to take private percussion lessons starting at age 5. I was the section leader of the drum line in high school and later

at Howard, which had given me a music scholarship. Music was a real outlet and tool for me and my peers.

Studies have shown the benefits of music education: It not only creates musical skills, but also helps students develop proficiencies in regular academics. The connection between music education and stronger reading and math proficiency, enhanced verbal and language skills, stronger fine motor skills and auditory discriminations has been well researched. Schools that offered music education had higher graduation rates, attendance rates and standardized test scores. Music students learn to appreciate music and to express themselves; in many cases, they find a social group of simi-

“

IF WE PLACED AS MUCH EMPHASIS ON MUSIC EDUCATION AS WE DO ON SPORTS, WE'D BE ABLE TO CREATE ANOTHER OPTION FOR KIDS TO EXCEL.”



lar-minded peers. Especially in urban areas, it reduces truancy and the hours young people spend on the streets.

If we placed as much emphasis on music education as we do on sports, we'd be able to create another option for kids to excel. When you think about how sports scholarships often give opportunities to athletes, why not do the same with music? Young people need something to keep them focused and grounded, and sometimes music can be an entry point into higher learning.

During the pandemic, it became evident that children needed meals more than clarinet lessons in some communities. And many struggled to find Wi-Fi and bandwidth to keep up with their classes, let alone a music lesson. But music education is not so much an anchor as it is a sail. We cannot be so myopic about its value. On the contrary, we need to reimagine its value proposition in the community and recognize how much it can intrinsically change a child for the better, as much as any other academic or athletic achievement.

To become artistically excellent takes time and grit. We should applaud children when they perform their music, whether it's amazing or substandard. It's about the effort, the dedication and discipline to even get to that point. How we evaluate the short-, intermediate- and long-term outcomes of a music education matters. If a child can find middle C on a piano after a week, that's a short-term accomplishment demonstrating the child's aptitude has already improved. The long-term outcome is one that follows a journey of developing discipline and self-esteem, resulting in becoming a better student and a high school graduate. Music can effect that kind of change.

➔ **Jeffery Tribble, Jr.** is the president and CEO of Levine Music in the greater Washington, D.C. region and founder of The MusicianShip. Both organizations provide music lessons, performances, experiences and opportunities.

CAMPUS NEWS



STUDENT LIFE

A Howard Homecoming

■ HOWARD UNIVERSITY WELCOMED alumni back home for a week of in-person and virtual Homecoming activities in October, marking some of the first in-person events held on campus since the pandemic.

Themed “Remember the Times,” this year’s Homecoming reminisced about Homecomings past while celebrating the fact that students could create their own memories on campus this year.

Homecoming was kicked off with the crowning of the Royal Court in Cramton Auditorium, followed by a roaring pep rally in Burr Gymnasium. Other popular and familiar events included the Greek Step Show and Yard Fest, both held in Cramton Auditorium to manage crowd size and COVID-19 safety.

The annual Day of Service was held the Saturday morning before the big game and included activities across the Washington metropolitan area focusing on community beautification, health, education, and environmental justice.

The game itself took place in Greene Stadium against Norfolk State, where Howard alumni and students together cheered the Bison. Homecoming weekend concluded with the annual fashion show in Cramton Auditorium and a virtual Party on the Yard. ➡



REMEMBER THE TIMES

Howard was able to welcome alumni back to campus for the first time since the pandemic. Homecoming events included introducing Mr. and Miss Howard University and the rest of the Royal Court, the traditional fashion show, the Homecoming game against Norfolk State, and the Greek Step Show. For safety reasons, Homecoming activities were limited to students-only while the game was open to all.

HERSTORY

HOWARD RENAMES STREET TO LUCY DIGGS SLOWE WAY

■ IN HONOR OF ALUMNA AND FORMER DEAN OF Women Lucy Diggs Slowe, Howard renamed the 2400 block of 4th Street NW to Lucy Diggs Slowe Way as part of the Homecoming festivities.

Slowe made an impact on education, women's studies, organizational development, race politics, philosophy, and sports. She graduated from Howard as class valedictorian in 1908, where she was also president and a member of the Howard University Women's Tennis Club. She helped to transform teaching and learning wherever she worked. She created and led the district's first junior high school while advocating for equity in higher education. Eventually, she joined the faculty at Howard University as the first dean of women in 1922.

Slowe was the first Black woman to win a national title in any major sport and became a 17-time American Tennis Association champion. Additionally, she was a founder and first president of three national organizations, including Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. She also held leadership positions in several other national organizations.

Dean Sandra Crewe, PhD, spoke at the unveiling ceremony about Slowe's legacy. "At the School of Social Work, we have always stood on her shoulders," she said. "Today, we get to stand on her street."



AT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, WE HAVE ALWAYS STOOD ON HER SHOULDERS. TODAY, WE GET TO STAND ON HER STREET.”



CULTURE

‘Sankofa’ – a Film that Goes Back to the Past – Twice



Professor Haile Gerima's groundbreaking 1993 film, "Sankofa," was re-released on Netflix in 2021.

■ **FILMMAKER AND HU PROFESSOR** Haile Gerima's groundbreaking film, "Sankofa," received a restoration and re-release on Netflix this Fall, 27 years after its initial release. When Gerima first produced the film, it swept up awards and nominations, including from the Berlin Film Festival, African Cinema Festival, AFI Film Festival, FESPACO Pan-African Film Festival, among others. However, distributors bypassed the film, and Gerima chose to distribute the film himself. In the Fall of 2021, director Ava DuVernay's distribution company, Array, restored and brought the movie to Netflix for re-release.

The film tells the story of an African American model, Mona, who goes to Ghana on a photo shoot where she is suddenly transported back in time to the days of slavery. There, she tells the story from the point of view of Shola, a slave who lives on a plantation with several others. Gerima spent nearly two decades researching the trans-Atlantic slave trade before creating the film. Despite its limited initial release, "Sankofa" has remained an important piece of work in both filmmaking and African studies. With its availability on Netflix, the film has continued to receive praise and renewed interest from its captivating and rich storytelling.



TRIVIA

HU PROFESSOR COMPETES ON 'JEOPARDY!'

■ **John Harkless, PhD, associate professor of chemistry at Howard, recently competed on the "Jeopardy!" professors tournament, which aired December 6-17. In preparation for the game show, he studied previous questions, noted patterns, and brushed up on trivia in areas he was less familiar with, such as opera and geography.**

"Thanks to some less-than-perfect betting, I didn't get as far as I would have liked, but I gained a unique collection of new colleagues from schools and disciplines I never would have imagined when I started this whole thing," Harkless said.

Harkless volunteers as coach for the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge (HCASC), an academic quizbowl for historically Black colleges and universities. His advice for anyone interested in competing on "Jeopardy!" and similar quiz games: "Broaden your knowledge about things unrelated to coursework that you find interesting, and just focus on the clue in front of you in the moment."

ANNIVERSARY

WHUR CELEBRATES 50 YEARS WITH BEN'S CHILI BOWL MURAL

■ In honor of its 50 years of excellence in broadcasting and community service, 96.3 WHUR received a special mural outside the iconic Ben's Chili Bowl in D.C. It depicts the many voices, faces, and stories it has showcased over the years.

The radio station first hit the airwaves Decem-

ber 10, 1971 at 6 p.m. Five decades later, WHUR is highlighting its golden anniversary with a large mural of the many individuals that have kept the station going strong for half a century. "It's so fitting that this special WHUR mural is located outside the iconic Ben's Chili Bowl, which has been a staple

of the DMV community for decades," said Sean Plater, WHUR general manager.

The Washington Post gifted the radio station to Howard for \$1 in 1971. Since its inception, WHUR has become a powerhouse in the broadcasting industry, winning hundreds of awards for its vital role of serving the community.



TELEVISION

Howard Hits the Road with the Black News Channel

■ **HOWARD UNIVERSITY WAS RECENTLY FEATURED** in the premiere episode of a new series by the Black News Channel. The show, titled "Road Trip," highlights Black culture and excellence in various forms, including music, food, innovation, and education. The show's first stop was Howard University to chronicle the history, the students, and the academic programs that make Howard one of the top-ranked HBCUs in the nation. President Wayne A. I. Frederick; Lopez Matthews, PhD, historian and digital librarian; and student leaders from around campus were featured in the episode.



SCHOLARSHIP

ALUMNI ‘GIVE FORWARD’ TO HOWARD’S GRACE GRANT

■ When Eddie C. Brown (BSEE '61) came to Howard, his entire college career was made possible by an anonymous donor. He never forgot her generosity. Sixty years later, he and his wife, C. Sylvia Brown (BS '62), gave a \$5 million gift to Howard, “giving forward” to help students like himself pursue their college education without worrying about how to pay for it. This gift marks the largest alumni gift to Howard University in the school’s history. “I was blessed to receive my college education debt free, and I think it’s important to offer those less fortunate the opportunity to do so as well,” said Eddie. Though the Browns had contributed to Howard in the past, this particular gift supports the Graduation Retention Access to Continued Excellence (GRACE) Grant for students facing financial barriers. Eddie Brown is the founder, chairman, and CEO of Brown Capital



Management, a Baltimore-based asset management firm that is the second oldest African American-owned investment management firm in the world. “The GRACE Grant has helped to eliminate financial barriers to education for Howard students, and I am thrilled that the Browns were inspired to commit such a generous gift to this important fund,” said Howard University President Wayne A. I. Frederick. The Browns met on Howard University’s campus in 1957. Eddie came to Howard from Allentown, Pennsylvania as a student in the College of Engineering, and Sylvia came to Howard from King William, Virginia as a student in what was then the College of Liberal Arts. This story and their mutual love for Howard is what inspired the couple to contribute the historic gift in support of the GRACE Grant. This gift represents what Eddie says is not giving back, but “giving forward.” “We were very fortunate to be able to go to Howard,” Sylvia said. “I had student loans, and I know how hard that is. Being from a family of four, my parents

did the best they could, but that was never enough to pay for all the fees. And that’s been our mantra, to give to others and help them at least be able to get an undergraduate degree so they have a good foundation.” The GRACE Grant was established by President Frederick to help remove any financial barriers for students and encourage on-time graduation for students who successfully completed their freshman year. This need-based program, created in 2014, provides a 100 percent match for students who receive the maximum Federal Pell Grant and provides additional funding for those with an expected family contribution (EFC) of \$0. The impact of the GRACE Grant is clear. Since its inception, GRACE recipients saw an average 17 percent increase in retention and an average four-year graduation rate of 78 percent, a 32 percent increase compared to students in the same financial category who did not receive GRACE funds. “Our only hope is that students who benefit from our contribution do their best,” said Sylvia.

NOTABLE GIFTS

- Eddie Lam (MD '90) ➡ \$1 million to create the Dr. Eddie Lam Campus Enhancement Current-Use Fund
- Christopher Cross (PhD '19) ➡ \$4,000 for the Lavender Fund
- Kenneth Chenault ➡ \$2 million to support the Vernon E. Jordan Jr., Esq., Endowed Chair
- TIAA-CREF ➡ \$1 million to create the Roger W. Ferguson-TIAA GRACE Scholar Program Fund
- MNTN Digital, Inc. ➡ \$500,000 in support of the HU Golf Team Endowed Fund
- Lauryn Morris (BS '20) ➡ First alumni donor born in the millennium

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INNOVATION

Challenging Technology

School of Business Professor Doubles Down on Prepping More Black Men for Computing Careers

by JANELLE HARRIS DIXON

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



■ On the precipice of the new millennium, when Curtis Cain, PhD, was still an inquisitive middle school student, his grandmother bought him what was then a top-of-the-line computer from a home shopping network. He promptly dissected it to figure out how it worked. “I was big on taking things apart, but sometimes the reassembly didn’t go as planned,” he says, chuckling. Now as the first scholar in the Howard University School of Business to receive a five-year Faculty Early Career Development Award from the National Science Foundation – the most prestigious research honor for an untenured junior faculty member – the Atlanta native is examining the factors that influence Black men’s career trajectories in computing, informatics, and engineering (CIE). In the process, he’s shaping data and outcomes to improve their options in degree programs and the awaiting workplace. Cain’s research intentionally confronts a pervasive conundrum: The field says it wants diversity but remains rigid to change, expecting newcomers to assimilate instead of challenging itself to evolve and become more inclusive. “It’s easy to point to the

barriers – they’re right in front of us. It’s harder to propose tangible solutions and put the funding behind them to see them through,” explains Cain, who also taught software engineering to the initial cohort of students at Howard West, an academic partnership at Google’s Silicon Valley headquarters. “Companies pinpoint their lack of diversity as an issue with the ‘pipeline’ – meaning not enough Black people are interested in this work – when that couldn’t be further from the truth.” Inspired by his father, a retired Air Force chief master sergeant who built computers from scratch, Cain joined the faculty in 2016 as an assistant professor to raise up an ample CIE community of Black people. He’s careful not to discount the challenges of Black women but has focused his research to bolster retention and encourage the talent of Black men in the field – particularly recent graduates – to contribute to a truly competitive CIE workforce. Programming is great, he says, but there are sales engineering and other areas for young Black minds to explore like he once did when he was disassembling his home PC. “My preparation is not for them to get their first job. By virtue of being here at Howard, they’re probably going to get that. How are they going to get their second job? Because they’re not going to ask you what your GPA is or to see your transcript. They’re going to say, ‘Show us what you know,’” says Cain. “So, as we increase the number of folks going into those spaces, we need to increase the number of folks who are staying in those spaces. We don’t have a voice in the room if we’re not in the room.”

“MY PREPARATION IS NOT FOR THEM TO GET THEIR FIRST JOB ... HOW ARE THEY GOING TO GET THEIR SECOND JOB?”

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ECONOMICS

Supply and Demand

How Howard's Department of Economics is Paving its Own Path

by AALIYAH BUTLER

■ **\$10,911,640 AND COUNTING.** That's approximately how much the Howard University Department of Economics has earned in grants and awards in 2021 alone. Prestigious organizations, including the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, National Science Foundation, and many more have supported and trusted the Department of Economics to not only educate a new generation of Black economists, but to leave a mark on the country as a highly ranked, respected and productive department. How does one department accrue more than \$10 million for research? "Faculty members are encouraged to apply for grants," says Omari Swinton, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Economics. "Senior faculty members educate junior faculty members on the grant opportunities and application process to give them experience and build confidence in the research they have

“RELIEVING OUR STUDENTS OF THE WORRIES OF ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH FUNDING ALLOWS THEM TO SOLELY FOCUS ON THEIR ECONOMIC STUDIES



GRANTS RECEIVED

National Science Foundation

\$2,750,000

RECIPIENTS: Omari H. Swinton, PhD; Gerald Daniels, PhD; Jevay Grooms
CONTRACT TERM: 5 years
RESEARCH: AEA Summer Training Program & Scholarship Program

\$484,679

RECIPIENTS: William Spriggs, PhD
RESEARCH: Collaborative Excellence in Research: Skill Acquisition, Technical Change, and Differential Employment and Income Trajectories

Alfred P Sloan Foundation

\$1,400,000

RECIPIENTS: Omari H. Swinton, PhD; Andria Smythe, PhD
RESEARCH: Constructing a program to strengthen student recruitment and research opportunities, faculty development and training, and the department's infrastructure

Peter G. Peterson Foundation

\$1,250,000

RECIPIENTS: AEA Summer Training Program and Scholarship Program, Omari H. Swinton, PhD
RESEARCH: AEA Summer Training Program and Scholarship Program in collaboration with the Women's Institute for Science, Equity, and Race

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

\$4,500,000

RECIPIENTS: Haydar Kurban, PhD
RESEARCH: Housing and economic development research

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

\$248,961

RECIPIENTS: Gerald Daniels, PhD
RESEARCH: Impact of existing policies for forgiveness of student debt on racial wealth gaps

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through sub-award from Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-M)

\$250,000

RECIPIENTS: Haydar Kurban, PhD
CONTRACT TERM: 2021-2027
RESEARCH: Poverty and racial wealth gap

U.S. Social Security Administration sub-award through UW-M Center for Financial Security (CFS)

\$28,000

RECIPIENTS: Haydar Kurban, PhD
CONTRACT TERM: 2021-2022
TRAINING: Junior scholars intensive training workshops in May 2022, to be jointly organized by Howard University's Center on Race and Wealth and UW-M Center for Financial Security.

to offer to their students, the University, and the world. It is a nonstop learning experience on all levels." Swinton has been a professor at Howard University since 2007. Swinton teaches introductory, intermediate, and urban economics. His economic research interests include labor economics and education. In addition to overseeing the department's American Economic Association Summer Training Program (AEASTP), he is currently working on projects that examine the returns of investment in a college education, the obstacles to faculty diversity in higher education, and benefits of attending a historically Black college and university (HBCU). "The grant application process can range from 70-page proposals to 10-minute interviews and can take up to a year for selection," says Swinton. "Relieving our students of the worries of academic and research funding allows them to solely focus on their economic studies. ... Our goal is to have 100 percent of our students funded at the graduate level. We are truly grateful for those organizations who support and believe in our vision as well." Support for programs, such as the AEA Summer Training Program and Scholarship Program, provides students with intensive training in microeconomics, math, econometrics, and research methods with leading faculty. This development helps students solidify their technical skills in preparation for the rigors of graduate studies. As many as 20 percent of PhDs awarded to minorities in economics over the past 20 years are graduates of the program. As the only HBCU with a doctorate program in economics, the department strives to advance minorities in the field and to create an intellectual environment that will place the department at the forefront of the nation's thinking about economics issues on race and equity. In other words, they would like to keep the Mecca's tradition on defying the odds alive and well.

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

BIOPHYSICS

SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION IN SUGAR SHIELDS

by SARA WALSH

■ **Understanding the organization** in something as simple as sugars may hold the answer to building a defense against the onset of infections, including viruses. In 2020, Preethi Chandran, PhD, chemical engineering associate professor and director of graduate studies at Howard University, received a \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study the biophysics of viruses' "sugar shields," an external coating that surrounds a virus and makes it difficult for the body to fight against. More recently, Chandran and co-investigators Sergei Nekhai, PhD, of Howard University, and Seble Kassaye, MD, of Georgetown University, were awarded an additional pilot from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) – an honor for which Chandran received a personal congratulations from District of Columbia Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. Chandran speaks of her team's research with both measured excitement and a sense of urgency: "Right

now, we're trying to see if there are specific rules between how the sugars on the virus and the sugars on a host adhere to each other. These adhesion patterns could determine where the virus is going to feel comfortable and stay." Currently, the team's focus has pivoted to exploring how a pathogen's sugar shield allows it to maneuver through mucus. While Chandran is hesitant to make any predictions, her work has prompted her to contemplate how better understanding mucus and learning how to strengthen it could prevent the more intense and costly treatments necessary when viruses enter the body. Chandran's respect for nature is an integral part of her work. While her research could create means for reinforcing the mucus protection, she also believes that a better understanding of how nature

“Adhesion patterns could determine where the virus is going to feel comfortable.”



designed the mucus to protect us is critical in our rapidly evolving environments and lifestyles. Chandran takes a holistic perspective, saying, "Some of the stuff we unwittingly do may be weakening the mucus. Maybe we can prevent that from happening." With the most recent NIH pilot, Chandran and her team expanded the scope of their inquiry, examining how sugars on HIV interact with mucus. As a professor, Chandran is deeply grateful for her students' role in the research and readily admits, "I can't do any of this investigative research without them." When the undergraduates on her team couldn't meet this past year in the lab, she sought out innovative ways to involve them. Instead of examining how sugars present on pathogens modified the environment, she realized her students could test to see if the same principles held true in food. She ordered Amazon deliveries of guar gum, acacia, and locust bean gum (food grade polymers containing these sugars) to their homes. The study provided feasibility data and also boosted morale. Chandran's mindful process reveals her humility for her place in the wider web of discovery. When speaking of her work, she uses the story of the blind men trying to assemble an elephant by investigating different parts of its body, laughingly saying that her research is probably just the "tail of the story or the foot of the story." Chandran acknowledges, "By itself it might not make deep impact, but when you combine it with what other scientists are doing, it creates this whole picture that enables progress."

Vision

INSPIRING NEW KNOWLEDGE TO NEW HEIGHTS

Vice president of research Bruce Jones, PhD, shares his plans to elevate Howard to an R1-designated University and serve wild Alaskan salmon to celebrate.

by Christina Harper

■ **BRUCE JONES, PHD, HAS A PRIZED** history of transforming University research success. As vice president of the Office of Research, he is creating a research strategy that increases participation in grant-funded research activity. His office and leadership are at the crux of the University’s five-year strategic plan’s second pillar: “Inspire new knowledge.” The strategic priority of this pillar is to reward innovation in instruction, research, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and capacity-building that maximizes University impact. The innovation should challenge, enlighten, and inspire Howard faculty and students to change the world. While that’s no small feat, Jones is up to the task.

His passion for research began nearly 40 years ago while completing his academic dissertation at Columbia University in New York City. Jones landed his first research job as director at the state-wide Center for Educational Policy Analysis in the University of Missouri system. He’s since served in positions of increasing responsibility in Texas and Florida before joining Howard University just shy of four years ago. Now, Howard faces a pivotal opportunity to regain its R1 designation, constituting “very high research activity,” as identified by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education’s Basic Classification.



Q: Warm-up question. Favorite color?
A: Teal green.

Q: Favorite research activity?
A: The Office of Research sponsors Research Month that takes place each April. This event began as Research Day in 2013, [evolved] to Research Week in 2015, and, due to its popularity, [will] now [become] Research Month in 2022. Research Month is an incredible assembling around an array of research events to celebrate, recognize, and promote faculty and student research at Howard University.

Q: What are your proudest achievements?
A: [First], the establishment of a fully operational unified Office of Research to include our research development, research administration, intellectual property, and research regulatory compliance units. [Second], shattering the grant award record set back in FY 2004 at \$76.5 million by achieving \$92 million in grant and contract awards in FY 2021. [Third], Howard also had five faculty members win the prestigious National Science Foundation’s Faculty Early Career Award, an unheard-of accomplish-

■■■
TO THE TOP: The Howard Forward strategic plan includes a pillar to “inspire new knowledge” with a goal to reach an R1 research status.

ment to have this many faculty members win during the same year, from the same university. These accomplishments are a strong testament to our faculty, staff, and student commitment to research that aims to change the world for the better.

Q: What sets Howard apart as it relates to research?
A: Howard University’s mission and track record in its unwavering research commitment to solving sociopolitical and economic problems faced by historically disenfranchised individuals, groups, and communities. The strength of this research commitment has led to Howard being the only HBCU to have attained R1 status in the history of the Carnegie Classification System. It already has a competitive advantage as a premier institution of higher education with a rich history of research productivity that is unparalleled.

Q: Talk a little about implementing research targets across Howard’s 14 schools and colleges.
A: Howard is expected to attain its R1 status and to maintain this status while working to increase University participation in sponsored research. All 14 schools and colleges will take on research productivity targets to support the strategic goals of Howard Forward – the University’s five-year strategic plan. The targets and successful attainment of said targets will ultimately be



determined by the following six factors: the research vision held by the dean of the college/school; the college/school’s track record on the annual production and submission of research and training proposals; the shared research mission that is collaboratively established by the dean, faculty, and research staff in each college/school; the key programmatic research goals and strategies for the annual development and submission of research proposals and attainment of awards; the investment in the research infrastructure for each college/school as this relates to the recruitment, selection, and retention of research faculty, non-tenure stream research faculty, and post-doctoral researchers; and the investment by each college/school in research related pre- and post- support staffing commensurate with the growth of research awards.

“**HOWARD HAS DEEP EXPERTISE IN SCIENCES, MEDICINE, STEM, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY, AND PUBLIC POLICY, LIKE NONE OTHER.**”



Q: How will you celebrate when Howard University gains its R1 research designation?
A: [I will] celebrate our research faculty, students, and administrative leaders and honor those who came before us and made this possible. I’ll also have some wild Alaskan salmon, my favorite food, while playing a Gladys Knight and the Pips album and dancing to my favorite song, “Midnight Train to Georgia.”

Q: What is the future of research at Howard?
A: From a visioning standpoint, Howard is poised to continue to grow its institutional leadership on the national scene in several areas of research, based on the depth, strength, and the expertise of our faculty. Howard has deep expertise in sciences, medicine, STEM, social justice and equity, and public policy, like none other. We continue to produce students with prestigious national and international scholarships and fellowships based largely on University training. [In addition], the University [will continue to serve] as the top producer of minority medical students, Black undergraduate students who later earn PhDs, among many other highly ranked programs and specific accolades. We are positioned and will continue to build toward R1 status and build on our statute as the premier institution of knowledge, national thought leadership, and practice in a number of research-related disciplines.

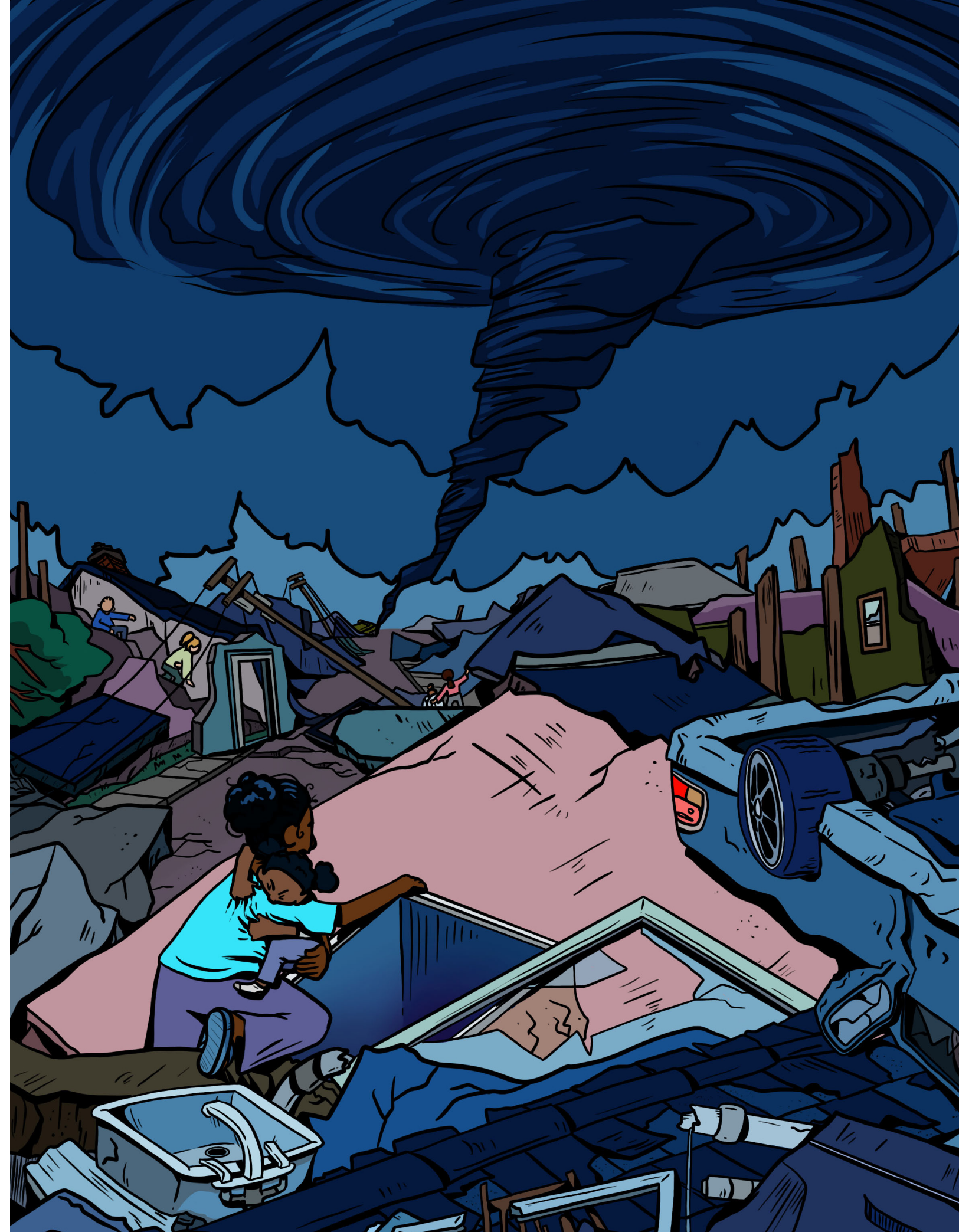
The Injustice

HOW EXTREME WEATHER DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

of Climate Change

by
SETH
SHAPIRO

Illustrations by
MICHELLE
MOORE



CLIMATE CHANGE IS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON that affects everyone on the planet – but it does not affect everyone equally. The consequences of climate change are as devastating as they are wide-ranging. From extreme heat to severe cold, from droughts to flooding, from wildfires to hurricanes and tornadoes, the fingerprint of climate change can be detected on an abundance of extreme weather events and environmental changes that disproportionately impact communities of color.

In the United States, the bulk of carbon emissions come from more affluent areas; but it is the poorer, under-resourced, oftentimes Black and minority communities that are bearing the brunt of a rapidly changing global climate – without benefiting from the consumption of resources that overwhelmingly contribute to it. When disaster strikes, it is those same communities that suffer the most and the longest; after others have rebuilt and moved on, Black communities are often still left reeling from the crisis.

“Climate change is the issue of our time,” says Terri Adams, PhD, a professor of criminology in the Department of Sociology and Criminology. “And Howard needs to be a leader in the fields of climate change and environmental justice because of the disproportionate impacts on communities of color.”

Not-So-Natural Disasters

IN HOWARD’S ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITY CLASS DURING the Fall 2021 semester, visiting assistant professor Michelle Dovil, PhD, Department of Sociology and Criminology, mentions to her undergraduate students over Zoom that she prefers to use the term “natural hazards” rather than “natural disasters.”

“When we say, ‘natural disaster,’ it lacks accountability for those who should be accountable, like government officials,” she says. Dovil’s issue with this language has less to do with its descriptiveness and more to do with what it seems to imply or omit.

The implication of nature-based language like “natural disaster” is that Black individuals living in communities that are hit by storms or other phenomena are either the victims of poor luck or their own bad choices. The term suggests that the resulting “disaster” is not a social construct, but a product of nature.

“But it’s not coincidence; it’s intentional,” she says. “We also have to acknowledge the social, economic, political, and geological vulnerabilities these communities might be facing prior to a disaster. It is ultimately the natural hazard coming into contact with a potentially vulnerable social condition that creates the disaster.”

“IN A LOT OF WAYS, [KATRINA] UNCOVERED THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF OUR SOCIETY.”



Stuck or Displaced

DOVIL’S PASSION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BEGAN, like many other professionals who work in this field, with Hurricane Katrina. She remembers watching TV coverage of the hurricane as a teenager and seeing images of people wading through chest-high water crying out for help – the vast majority of them African American. “I knew something was wrong,” she says. “In a lot of ways, [Katrina] uncovered the social fabric of our society.”

There are numerous reasons why the Black communities and residents of New Orleans were more vulnerable to the effects of a powerful hurricane and, as a result, represented a disproportionate share of the storm’s victims.

In the context of Katrina and other similar natural hazards, Dovil has studied a phenomenon she refers to as “place attachment,” an idea that captures why individuals might not evacuate in the face of an incoming natural hazard as well as why they might return to or continue to live in high-risk areas.

She explains that the act of evacuating requires

resources – a car, money, someplace to go. Simply put, many low-income Americans do not have the ability to evacuate, even if they believe it would be in their own best interest to do so. Whether to stay or leave is less of a personal choice and more of a decision that was made for them by factors beyond their control.

But even if they have the means to leave, evacuation still presents a risk that might be just as ominous as the incoming storm. For those who face job insecurity or the regular threat of job loss, they cannot afford to misjudge the severity or impact of the crisis. If they were to evacuate and the hurricane did not prove to be as powerful or devastating as predicted, they would likely be fired for missing work. During the spate of devastating tornadoes in December 2021, employees of a candle factory in Mayfield, Kentucky, were told they would be fired if they left to seek shelter at home. Eight employees were killed when the factory was struck by a tornado.

“[Place attachment] has a lot to do with dependency,” says Dovil. So much of their lives and livelihoods are directly tied to the place they live that,

to leave it behind, even temporarily, would be to risk losing it permanently.

For many Black individuals facing a potential disaster, their strongest means of insurance is themselves. Black families lag behind in homeownership rates at 44 percent, compared to nearly 74 percent of white families. Black homeowners have reported more difficulty getting insurance claims paid. Some whose homes were passed from generation to generation may not have home insurance. The only way to safeguard their familial wealth is to do whatever they personally can to physically protect the home from the ravages of the storm.

In addition to their social circumstances, Black communities are also disproportionately affected by virtue of their geographical location and environmental characteristics as well as the state of their local infrastructure. Prior to and after an extreme weather event, they are often displaced. The places they end up are more often lower-income, poorly resourced – and well positioned for devastation from the next nature-induced crisis.

Studies have shown that underserved populations are far more vulnerable in such events. A wildfire vulnerability index created by researchers at the University of Washington and the Nature Conservancy revealed that Native Americans are more susceptible to devastation from wildfires. African Americans were also among the list of those who would face harsher recovery. Other factors, such as housing, income, and health, were used to determine that these communities are more likely to struggle in the recovery from these natural events. And the poor air quality that arises as a result of wildfires has the potential to do long-term damage to residents in these communities who don't have the ability to move elsewhere.

Gentrification has relegated Black communities to dense urban environments that are more exposed to the ravages of extreme heat and severe flooding. The heat becomes intensified when it is reflected off the concrete and the asphalt. As many in these poorer communities don't have air conditioning or have to work outside, they are more susceptible to heat stroke.

According to Nea Maloo, M.Arch, lecturer in the College of Engineering and Architecture, introducing green spaces into urban landscapes could help offset some of the rising heat seen in cities.

In addition to increasing gentrification, Black communities also have to contest with what Bradford Grant, M.Arch, professor in the Department of Architecture, describes as a type of "reverse gentrification." Many inland Black communities are being displaced to live in areas closer to the coastal waterfronts that are more vulnerable to flooding and rising water levels, situations that are becoming more common and chronic with rising global temperatures.

Black communities are often situated in low-lying floodplains with poorer drainage systems. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Hurricane Matthew in South Carolina in 2011, Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas in 2017, and many more, Black residents were more likely to be in harm's way and to experience property damage.

"Segregation has been an instrument to divide this country, not only socially, but physically," Grant says. "The built environment is really about where people live and where they work in segregated systems."

Overlooked and Underserved

A 2018 STUDY ENTITLED "AS DISASTER COSTS RISE, SO Does Inequality" revealed that for white, affluent communities, natural hazards are actually profitable. To be sure, these events cause significant hardship and loss. But when looking at the total



DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

■ Howard's environmental studies program is only five years old. But "our program has included equity in its curriculum from its inception [and] it's been interdisciplinary," says Janelle Burke, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Biology and director of the Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies Program.

The program was conceived and created by a collection of faculty, of which Rubin Patterson, PhD, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, was one of the leaders. When Patterson arrived at Howard in 2014 as a professor in sociology, creating an environmental studies program

financial resources in these communities before an extreme weather event and after, they actually see an influx of wealth because of federal emergency funding and insurance payouts.

Many Black communities, on the other hand, see wealth decline after a crisis. The New York Times has reported that funding from the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) disproportionately goes to white survivors. Even when Black survivors encounter almost identical hardship, they still do not get equal amounts of funding.

In addition, Black residents are more likely to rent than to own and are less likely to have either renter's or homeowner's insurance. So when their property is destroyed, they are less likely to receive the financial compensation needed to recover.

Resilience in the Face of Vulnerability

"ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IS SOCIAL JUSTICE," DOVIL says. "It is a slow violence, but it is still violence against poor Black and brown people that have to deal with these [issues] every single day."

Part of the ability to resist further devastation done to the Black community as a result of climate change and natural hazards begins with recognizing that fact. When Rubin Patterson, PhD, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, first became passionate about environmental justice, he says there wasn't as much attention given to the field by other Black studies scholars and leaders.

"So many leaders in the Black community were focusing on other issues, and understandably so,"

was one of his top priorities.

"I was trying to advance environmental studies amongst members of the Black community," Patterson says. "Black people are disproportionately adversely affected by pollution and climate matters and the like, but less likely to be at the forefront of institutions addressing those concerns."

Patterson believed that if he could combine the subjects of African studies and environmental studies together, he could convey how important climate change is to students who have made social justice their personal mission and focus of their academic pursuits.

Faculty members who participate in the program represent

a range of disciplines, including African American studies, biology, chemistry, English, history, mathematics, sociology, political science, psychology, and physics. In the environmental inequality course, one of the program's core classes that was created and first taught by Patterson and is currently being taught by visiting assistant professor Michelle Dovil, PhD, Department of Sociology and Criminology, it's sometimes possible to forget the focus is on the environment.

"Part of the environmental justice conversation is labor exploitation, right. And so, we have to also deal with people going out and putting themselves

at risk [of pollution or exposure to natural hazards], just so they can pay rent, just so they can survive," Dovil says. "We also have to talk about affordable housing [and] the issue with the eviction moratorium." The curriculum also includes the digital divide, food insecurity, health care disparities, and more.

Patterson and the other faculty members are currently working to expand the environmental studies program. They want it to be more than just a concentration; they would like it to be a freestanding major housed within a brand-new department – the Department of Earth, Environment, and

Patterson says, mentioning criminal justice reform, education outcomes, and health equity. There was a misconception that environmentalism was focused merely on conservation and not on social justice.

But now, Patterson says, there is more attention given to the subject and broad recognition that environmental justice and climate change have wide-ranging consequences that require urgent responses to safeguard African American communities in particular.


However, Black Americans are still largely underrepresented in industries, like clean technology, that are important for mitigating the effects of climate change.

"A lack of pipelines of entry into these industries can leave the historically marginalized communities of color once again looking in from the outside," Patterson says. Without these pipelines, climate change mitigation efforts could simply recreate and reinforce existing social and racial inequalities.

There is an endless list of careers for which Howard is responsible for producing a disproportionate share of Black individuals in those professional ranks – doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, scientists, and more. However, Patterson wants to add more to the list – he wants Howard to produce a substantial share of Black environmental leaders and climate scientists, too.

"Preparing members of these communities to shape, implement, and manage the emerging clean tech industries is also a form of environmental justice," Patterson says. "That is what I want to contribute to at Howard University."

“IT IS A SLOW VIOLENCE, BUT IT IS STILL VIOLENCE AGAINST POOR BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE.”



Howard University is the only HBCU left with a Division I swimming and diving program, leaving the team with a responsibility to do more than just win competitions—it has to win over more African Americans to the sport.

Making Waves

by
SHOLNN FREEMAN
(MA '12, PHD '21)

Photos by
TONY RICHARDS



X

AVIER NTAMERE SAT PERCHED ON THE GUARDRAILS in the stands above the pool inside Burr Gymnasium during the Howard University home swim meet with American University last October, watching the swimmers compete. The 16-year-old high school swim team captain and his mother Ebony had traveled from Indianapolis to visit Howard's engineering program, tour the campus, and, on the last day of their trip, see what the Howard swim team had to offer.

And his attention was rapt. Ntamere noted the differences between a high school swimmer and an NCAA Division I athlete – the physical condition of the swimmers, the superior form. “The form overall is so much better. You can tell that they’ve been doing it for a long time, and not only that, but they really care about their team.”

Just like that, Howard University moved to the number one spot on Ntamere's perfect college choice list.

“My focus is on Howard. I want to go to an HBCU [historically Black college and university],”

he says. “It would be better than any other program that I’ve ever been in my entire life. When I see Black swimmers on Howard's swim team, I picture myself with them, cheering on my teammates, and swimming and getting records and accomplishing my dreams. I love seeing Black people excel against stereotypes and beating the competition.”

Since 2016, Howard University has had the only NCAA Division I swim program at any HBCU. That year, North Carolina A&T University ended its program, a women's-only team. Prior to the early 2000s, Florida A&M University, Maryland's Coppin State University, and Morgan State University had teams. As the last program standing, the co-ed Howard University swimming and diving team serves not only as the lone pipeline of high-caliber competitive Black swimmers but also as a beacon of Black swimming for the entire country.

According to a joint study by the USA Swimming Foundation and the University of Memphis with the YMCA, a staggering 64 percent of Black children under 18 lack swimming abilities and they

drown at three times the rate of white children. The pool in Burr Gymnasium and Howard's commitment to competitive swimming serve as a rallying spot for fighting drowning among children in the Black community. In some ways, HBCU retrenchment from the sport leaves to Howard the task of advancing the conversation about Black America's complicated relationship with the water.

The Howard swimming and diving program is blessed to have a supportive University administration, which has committed to maintaining the facilities the team needs, including major expenses like the filtration system and chemistry needs of the pool in Burr Gymnasium. Tashni-Ann Dubroy, PhD, Howard University's executive vice president and chief operating officer, served as honorary coach at the Howard-American University swim meet in October.

“It takes quite a bit of investment,” says Dubroy, who herself swam competitively in high school in Jamaica. “Dr. Frederick and the Howard administration have been committed because we know we have a unique place in the HBCU sports landscape with our program. Black students can excel academically and swim competitively at Howard University.”

Black Americans and the Fear of Water

IN WORLD OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING, THE RACIAL DIVIDE is clearly a problem. On the visiting side of the pool, the American University team appeared to be nearly all-white; while on the other side, the Howard squad was all Black. Lots of programs around the country look like American University, but not one has the look and feel of the Howard team. Howard opened the meet with a jazzy rendition of the American anthem, which was followed up all night with booming hip-hop.

The community impact of the Howard swim program is always present. At the meet, Yuvay Ferguson, PhD (BBA '03), assistant dean of impact and engagement at the Howard University School of Business, organized to bring to the swim meet her young daughters and more than a dozen kindergarten through third grade students from the Nation's Capital Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. The kids ate goldfish crackers and were given pom poms to cheer the Howard team.

“We want them to see something different – that Black people can excel at a variety of sports,” Ferguson says. She learned to swim as a child and thinks

“

As a people, we swam well, especially coming from the coast of Africa, where we had to swim for our livelihood.”

...

MAKE SOME NOISE
Team members offer swimming clinics and talk to local schools about the importance of swimming.

that early exposure can help people become more comfortable with water activities. One thing she noted was that many Black women were taught to avoid getting their hair wet. “Natural hair and protective styles are widely embraced today so, hopefully, that concern is no longer a factor for whether or not young Black girls will learn to swim.”

Howard swimmer Rianna Martin, an 18-year-old freshman biology major from Coral Springs, Florida, also challenges the hair notion. “I don't care. My hair is loose curls. I think a lot of Black people are scared for other reasons. If you get in, you'll be fine.”

America's history of segregation is generally pointed to as the reason why Blacks don't swim as much as white people. Ferguson spoke about an older family member who said she couldn't swim because Black people weren't allowed to go to pools.

Nicholas Askew (BS '01), HU's head swimming and diving coach, traced the lineage of this problem deeper into America's racist history. He and others reject the idea that among Black people, the fear of water is somehow genetic or intrinsic.

“As a people, we swam well, especially coming from the coast of Africa, where we had to swim for our livelihood,” Askew says. Here in America,



slave holders lived in fear that their property could escape through the water, and so they punished, beat, and threatened Black people for swimming.

“They forbid them from going to the waters, so we lost the skill,” Askew says. “There’s a difference between the myth that Black people don’t swim and the challenges we have. The challenges can be overcome with proper knowledge.”

As for the problem of Black women and their hair, he responds: “We have a team full of women with beautiful heads of hair of all textures. They talk about the challenges, but they have also found ways to manage.”

Askew also sees the lack of skilled swimmers among the Black population as a public health threat. According to research featured by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 34,315 individuals under the age of 29 died from drowning between 1999 and 2019 in the United States. The drowning death rate for Black Americans was 1.5 times higher than for white Americans; moreover, this disparity in drowning rates actually widened between Black and white individuals between 2005-2019.

“We need to place more value on swimming as a community and as a culture and escape the old mentality that Black people don’t swim,” Askew says. “The difference at Howard is that not only do we value swimming as a competitive sport, but more importantly, we see the lack of swimming skills and drowning as major public health issues.”

The team members volunteer their time teaching swimming skills and water safety knowledge to kids in the Washington area where swimming may not be accessible. Through a partnership with SWIM UP Foundation, the team members teach grade school kids from Southeast D.C. to swim and visit the school to talk about swimming as a sport. The team also hosts free clinics on campus for the greater community in which more than 500 participants have attended. Askew also ensures that his swimmers volunteer or participate in two major swim meets in the Black community. One is the Black History Invitational Swim Meet, held in D.C. The other is the National Black Heritage Championship Swim Meet, held in North Carolina. He says both are crucial as they represent a time when Black swimmers were not welcome at other swim meets; today, they serve as opportunities to grow the sport. “Never shy away from being an inspiration and increase exposure,” he remarks.

HIGH-PROFILE BISON SWIM TEAM ALUMNI

Andrew Young
BS ’51, H ’77
Civil rights leader, U.N. ambassador, and mayor of Atlanta

Dennis Hightower
BS ’62, MBA ’74, H ’96
Former president of Walt Disney Television and Telecommunications

Togo West Jr.
BS ’65, JD ’68
Former secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs

Stephanie Elam
BA ’95
Los Angeles-based CNN correspondent

Swimming at an HBCU

ON A RECENT NOVEMBER AFTERNOON, ASKEW HAD THE team run through high-impact drills in preparation for battles at mid-season and conference championships. The Howard University swimming and diving team practices in the afternoon amid hip-hop music trailing in. The team is large, with 23 men and 26 women. The majority of Howard swim team members are on academic scholarship, and the season goes from September to March.

Askew has been credited with bringing a fresh outlook to the program. He is a former member of the team; he was named MVP for three of the four years he swam. In the sport, while team-wide standings are critical for championships, individual athletes with fast-enough qualifying times have a chance to go to nationals to compete.

The Howard swim program attracts a lot of students like Daylon Daniel, a 19-year-old sophomore from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Daniel had been swimming since the fourth grade. He says he got serious in his sophomore year of high school when he was also running track. Eventually, he started to pour his energy into competitive swimming.

“I was a better swimmer [than runner],” he says. At practice, Daniel was focusing on the 500-yard free-style race, which is 20 laps in the pool inside Burr. “I always liked the idea of racing.”

Daniel knew he wanted to swim but also knew he wanted to attend an HBCU. Howard University had been on his radar because of its prestige and reputation. As he started doing college research,

A Winning Team

THE HOWARD PROGRAM HAS PROVEN TO BE AN INDISPENSABLE PLATFORM FOR THE WORLD’S BEST BLACK SWIMMERS.

■ **Ngozi Monu (BS ’01)** was a 2004 and 2008 Olympian, representing Nigeria. She focused on the 50- and 100-meter freestyle events and has been described as Nigeria’s most prolific female swimmer.

■ **Latroya Pina (BS ’19)**, a Cape Verdian swimmer, was a 2020 Olympian and still holds a number of college swim records. After qualifying for the Olympics last year, Pina told Howard Athletics, “I proved to the people of my country that there are no limits, and you can achieve anything. Having this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity is something I will truly cherish forever, and I’m extremely grateful to be a Black face in a predominantly white sport.”—SF



he learned that no other HBCUs had swim teams, and he began to work harder to get on the team.

Daniel says teammates encourage and push each other toward team and individual goals. He says the team has a strong sense of community, especially when the squad comes together to do community service work. At his first meet, the team conducted one of their swim clinics for kids. “I don’t think a lot of people have the opportunity to come learn how to swim and have the opportunity to come to a pool.”

Howard University senior Miguel Davis Jr., is captain of the Howard swim team. Originally from

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POWER PLAYERS
Miles Simon, Tif-fanee Moore, and Mark-Anthony Beckles are some of the swim team’s leading athletes.

D.C., Davis started swimming when he was about eight years old. He had followed a mixed martial arts teammate to a swim practice on a club-level team and started to focus on the sport every Summer, and he swam in high school.

“I felt good at it,” says Davis, who competes in the 100- and 200-meter breast stroke and the 100-meter free style races. “I realized I like to do my race by myself with no distractions or excuses. I don’t have to rely on someone else to pass me the ball.”

The Howard experience has opened his eyes to Black swimming – and the passion that African Americans have for the sport from all over.

“When I was younger, I didn’t think there were a lot of Black swimmers, but as I got older, I saw that there were more,” Davis says. He says the fact that Howard had the only NCAA Division I swim team at an HBCU was unacceptable.

“Looking at the Howard University recruiting list, they come from all over: Florida, Nigeria, many other international students from the Caribbean islands,” Davis says. “Why are we the only HBCU swim team? We can only house 45 swimmers. I am proud of what we do but also a little bit frustrated. We need to promote more spaces for Black people to do what they love.”

A Beacon for Black Swimmers

NTAMERE’S MOTHER, EBONY, LOOKED ON AT HER SON FROM a few rows away as he observed the Howard swim meet, trying to get a proper angle to record his reactions. “Xavier is cracking me up, he’s so excited. For him to be here and see a whole team of Black students, I think it’s so exciting for him – the idea that he wouldn’t be seen as strange or different,” she says.

Ntamere attends a public high school in Indianapolis, and there is no pool on the campus. He helped establish the swim team at his school last year and is a team leader. He has to travel to another school to practice. His mother says the school officials told the family that a good option for him involved driving out of his school district for 45 minutes to practice, alongside elementary school kids.

“It’s critical for our family that there is an HBCU option,” Ebony Ntamere says. “I don’t like that it’s the only option. I think there should be more options, and Xavier should be able to have choice. For us as a family, it’s at the top of our list that there be a swimming program to fit his needs. I haven’t seen him this excited about somebody else’s event, maybe ever.”

A CALL TO SERVE AND REPRESENT

Howard alumni at the FBI
make it their duty to protect the
country and invoke change.

by **Tamara E. Holmes** (BA '94)

WHEN MARCUS JOACHIM (BA '06, JD '09) WAS in his second year at Howard law school, he was selected to participate in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Honors Internship Program, a 10-week stint in the agency's Office of Professional Responsibility and later the Office of General Counsel. After the internship, he knew the FBI was where he wanted to build his career.

"I was in New York on September 11, and I remember the feelings and emotions that I had on that day," he says. The internship brought some of those feelings back to him. "I thought, 'I want to be part of something to counter threats to America,'" he recalls. That included, among others, cases involving his fellow African Americans.

Joachim understands that African American representation matters. He acknowledges that there is a history of tension between law enforcement and the

Black community. Even before the mass protests in the wake of George Floyd's murder by a police officer in 2020, 87 percent of Black adults said the U.S. criminal justice system treats Black people unfairly, according to a 2019 Pew Research Center study. "But the FBI does a great job of recognizing that history, not shying away from it, and moving forward," he says.

Indeed, in a 2015 speech, former FBI Director James Comey admitted, "At many points in American history, law enforcement enforced the status quo, a status quo that was often brutally unfair to disfavored groups." One way the agency has sought to rectify the past is by recruiting more people of color.

For some Howard alumni, one of the nation's most well-known law enforcement agencies has proven to be a place where they can effect change from the inside, be of service to the country and excel professionally. Joachim is one of them. He believed his

Howard education would be an asset in a career in law enforcement, where he could make a difference.

"I knew the education, cultural awareness, interpersonal skills, and critical thinking skills I learned while at Howard would translate into becoming a successful FBI special agent," he says.

Assessing Threats, Saving Lives

IN 2009, JOACHIM ATTENDED SPECIAL AGENT TRAINING at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, and afterwards was assigned to the Los Angeles FBI Field Office working on national security matters. Later he served as supervisor of a national security, counterintelligence/cyber squad, and today he is chief of the FBI's Economic Crimes Unit (ECU), which oversees financial fraud investigations.

While perceptions of the FBI are often shaped by Hollywood, from movies like "The Silence of the

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**PROTECTING
THE NATION**
Special Agent Marcus Joachim was inspired to join the FBI because of 9/11.



Lambs” or television shows like “Criminal Minds,” cases aren’t so tidy as to be solved within an hour or two. Yet, there are many memorable moments, says Joachim. For example, as a team leader for the FBI Los Angeles Crisis Negotiation Team, Joachim traveled across the world helping families of kidnap victims by negotiating their loved ones’ release.

He was also part of an investigation into the theft of proprietary information from a U.S. manufacturing company by an individual looking to sell the data to China. The investigation was successful and the perpetrator arrested and prosecuted.

“There is no regular day in the FBI; it just depends upon what your role is,” Joachim says. “But that’s what makes it so exciting.”

Special agent Ashley N. Marshall (BA ’11) agrees that no two days are the same. For example: “Some days we’re out on surveillance, some days we’re doing interviews,” she says. She particularly enjoys challenging perceptions of what an FBI special agent looks like. Some people don’t believe that a special agent can be Black, let alone a woman, she says. Currently, women make up 20 percent of special agents; 1 percent are Black – two figures that the FBI is working to increase.

“I had a situation where I went into an interview, and a guy looked at me and said, ‘Oh, who are you? Are you the record keeper?’” Before she could formulate her response, the agent who accompanied her – a white male – said, “No, she’s a special agent just like me, and you’ll respect her and give her the same respect that you give me.”

Peeling Back the Curtain on Diversity

HAVING PEOPLE SEE THAT BLACK PROFESSIONALS WORK at the FBI is one reason why it has been important



for Marshall to support the agency’s diversity efforts by volunteering at recruitment events.

With Black employees making up only 4.6 percent of special agents as of November 2019, a group of Black former FBI agents that calls itself the Mirror Project criticized the FBI’s lack of diversity and has called on the agency to do more to recruit and attract Black agents. In a letter sent to FBI Director Christopher Wray in September 2020, the former agents wrote that their goal was to “creat[e] a strategic plan that will drive the FBI to establish systemic processes that significantly enhance minority recruitment, hiring, retention, leadership development training, and promotional opportunities at all supervisory and senior management levels.”

Overall, of the agency’s 36,892 employees, 3,985 are Black, according to the most recent data from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

The lack of diversity may also be a factor in the distrust some Black Americans have of the FBI. For example, one may wonder if the FBI can be trusted to review police shootings of unarmed Black men and women when the majority of agents are white.

However, concerns about law enforcement aren’t new, says Special Agent Christopher Bridges (BA ’10), who is based in New York. Bridges remembers there being a stigma surrounding law enforcement and police when he was growing up.

Though Bridges is aware that there are people who still feel that way, he sees himself as being part of the solution. By working at the FBI, he hopes that he can reduce the stigma and be an agent of change and inspiration both within the organization and the community he serves. “There’s always going to be law enforcement,” he says. “How can there ever be improvement or change if we’re not a part of it?”

For its part, the agency has made a concerted effort to ensure that it is more reflective of the population it serves. For example, in 2016 the agency launched its Diversity Agent Recruitment Pro-

gram. The agency is also hosting diversity agent recruitment events across the country in a bid to attract more women and people of color.

The FBI also has an Office of Diversity and Inclusion and each month it spotlights a different nationality or culture, points out Wendi S. Lindler (BA ’89), a human resources specialist with the agency. In April 2021, the FBI appointed Scott McMillion, who had served for years as the chair of the agency’s Black Affairs Diversity Committee, to the role of chief diversity officer.

A Myriad of Ways to Serve

WHILE THE FBI IS KNOWN FOR ITS AGENTS, THERE ARE A host of other career paths to pursue in the agency. Lindler, who majored in psychology, joined the human resources department in 1991. Her office makes sure workplace policies are up to date and conform to federal regulations in such areas as health, staffing, and compensation.

Though Lindler’s father was a special agent, she points out the many job opportunities at the FBI outside of law enforcement. In addition to her own role in human resources, the FBI needs scientists, financial professionals, administrative staff, writers, information technology professionals, and psychologists, to name a few. “Pretty much any field that you could go into, you could probably find a job

“**I STARTED PREPARING MY MIND AND BODY, GETTING MYSELF READY TO BE AN AGENT.”**



at the FBI,” Lindler says. Ultimately, all roles are supporting the agency’s mission to protect Americans and uphold the Constitution.

Takisha Black (BA ’12) was a student at Howard when she began her FBI career. “There was a posting for an internship with the FBI in 2010, and one of my criminal justice professors mentioned it to me and said I should apply,” says Black, who had a double major in anthropology and administration of justice. In 2011, she was accepted as a student workforce trainee (intern).

Today, Black is a management and program analyst, a role in which “you have an open floodgate to do a variety of different job duties within the bureau,” she says. One day she could be handling administrative tasks, such as setting up meetings, organizing documents, tracking data, and creating procedural documents. Another day she could be writing reports, leading projects, conducting research, analyzing data, briefing employees and managers, and developing recommendations for leadership in support of enterprise-wide changes to business practices.

Before taking on that role, Black was a personnel security specialist, where she conducted background investigations for the agency. Ultimately, she wants to become a special agent.

Marshall also held other positions at the FBI before becoming a special agent. An international business major at Howard, Marshall interned for a year at FBI headquarters in downtown D.C., and immediately after her internship, the FBI hired her full time in support staff. In that role, she performed administration and operational tasks within the agency. “I was supporting the FBI mission not on the streets like agents do, but in the offices.”

After taking a job as an intelligence analyst at the National Security Agency, “I started preparing my mind and body and getting myself ready to be an agent,” she says. That included running regularly around outdoor tracks in D.C. to strengthen her body for the physical endurance tests she would have to pass to become an agent. In February 2019, she achieved that goal, working in the Los Angeles office.

Special agent Bridges, who majored in radio, television, and film, had an ROTC scholarship through the Air Force while at Howard. After graduating, he commissioned into the Air Force as a 2nd lieutenant nuclear and missile operations officer. During this time, he discovered that he had an interest in criminal justice and earned his master’s degree in it. One of his squad leaders suggested he pursue options at the FBI. In May 2019, he started at the agency.

“Being an FBI agent is a call to serve,” he says. “It isn’t just a life. It’s a lifestyle.”

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

Bottom: Takisha Black (left), Christopher Bridges (right), pictured with FBI Director Christopher Wray; top: Wendy S. Lindler. Page 37: Ashley N. Marshall





THE ART OF

The new Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts ushers in a new era of Howard talent.

EXCELLENCE



by Rin-rin Yu
PHOTOS BY KIRTH BOBB

■■■
ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE
The new Chadwick A.
Boseman College of
Fine Arts is taking its
education to a new level.

HOME AGAIN
Dean Phylicia
Rashad, once a stu-
dent within these
walls, now leads
the new college.

In

CHILDERS HALL, SEVERAL ROOMS ARE SEALED OFF TO contain the noise within; a courtesy so that the acting students aren't disturbing the art students and the music students aren't disturbing each other. Though students need their own space to practice, there is more binding them than dividing them: the University, by reestablishing the College of Fine Arts, is demonstrating the significance of bringing them together as well. This time, it even has an official name: the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts, named for the late Academy Award-nominated actor and Howard alumnus, who fought hard to bring the college back. "I'm excited [to have a] real whole community within the College of Fine Arts," says Mikki Taylor (MFA '02), professor of fashion design.

"Now we're dealing with people who understand what we do," says Connaitre Miller, associate professor of music and vocal jazz coordinator. When the school was in the College of Arts and Sciences, she says, "We were lumped in with a group of people that didn't necessarily understand what we did as artists."

While the arts have a long and cherished history at Howard, the reestablished college right now has the energy of a start-up. There are new facilities to be constructed, greater funding flowing into the program, and bold ideas flying left and right.

Phylicia Rashad (BFA '70, H '09), who was hired in July 2021 to be the new dean of the college, says, "After 26 years of being dormant, now [the College of Fine Arts] lives and breathes again, and [it] will grow again."

A Look Back at the College of Fine Arts

IN SOME WAYS, 2021 AT HOWARD FEELS A LOT LIKE 1961, when the College of Fine Arts was first established following a decision by the Board of Trustees to merge the School of Music and the Department of Art and Drama.

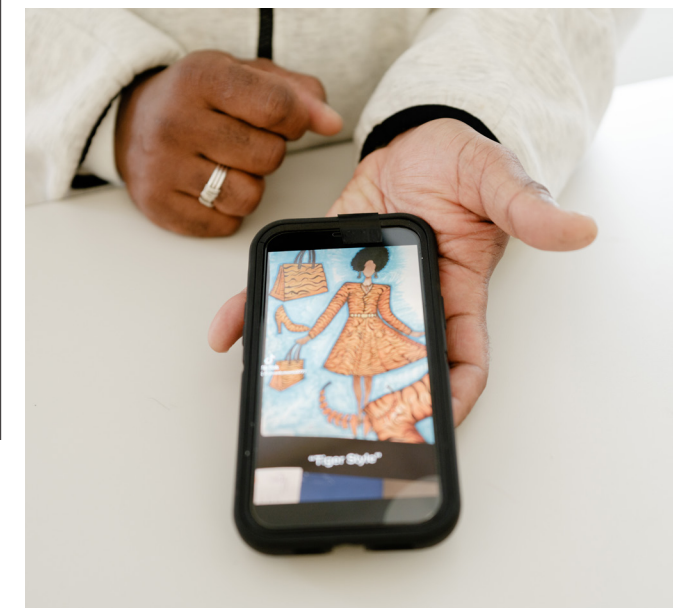
"Operating for the first time as an integrated unit under one roof, the School of Music and the Department of Art and Drama achieved effective first year evidence of 'togetherness,'" the Howard University Annual Report of 1961 read. "Joint faculty meetings were entered into with enthusiasm and creative thinking by the entire faculty."

This "togetherness" helped build the college into a foundation of creative force with shared ideas, ease of collaboration, and funding that flowed easily into research and projects. During the next few years, the college saw much physical transformation; new facilities were built, including Cramton Auditorium and Childers Hall, the Ida Aldridge Theater, art and dance studios, a recital hall, a library, a lounge, and an art gallery. It was a far cry from when art classes were held in the engineering school or when the art gallery shared space in the basement of Rankin Chapel and, later, within Founders Library.

The college produced great talent for the better part of three decades, graduating many alumni who enjoyed wondrous success in their fields and worldwide. High-profile faculty came through the doors to teach.

But by the 1990s, the federal government made a concerted effort to reduce the deficit by cutting back on spending, and the cautious approach impacted institutions dependent on federal appropriations, including Howard. Howard also acknowledged how expensive the College of Fine Arts was: Its per capita cost of \$13,209 was one of the highest of any school or college in the Division of Academic Affairs, the result of having to fund expensive operations like the art gallery, the choirs, and the bands as well as the theater and its performances.

By 1996, as part of Howard University's Strategic Framework for Action, the College of Fine Arts was folded into the new College of Arts and Sciences. "It took years to build a College of Fine





"I think that this was a microcosm of that sentiment," says Forbes, the executive producer of New York's famed Apollo Theater. She calls the decision shortsighted, especially "at a school which outputted some of the most notable Black creatives in the world."

Though the protests in 1997 did not bring immediate change, Forbes, Boseman, and others remained in touch with the administration long after they graduated, working to bring the college back. In early 2018, their efforts finally came to fruition. Boseman was present for the announcement but passed away in 2020 from colon cancer before the college was officially reactivated.

"I think it's just fitting—it makes me teary-eyed thinking about it—naming the college after our brother who never stopped fighting for it," says Ta-Nehisi Coates, best-selling author and professor in the College of Arts and Sciences, who was also Boseman's classmate.

A Unified Existence

"THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS SHOULD BE A REPOSITORY OF knowledge and a center of academic [and] artistic research for everyone in the world," Rashad says. "People should be able to come here and find out, and know, and see ... what has been accomplished by African American people as artists and teachers and scholars."

She has been talking with and listening to facul-

PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COME HERE AND FIND OUT, AND KNOW, AND SEE ... WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE AS ARTISTS AND TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS.

Arts that had full accreditation in each department," Rashad recalls, who was on the Board of Trustees when the decision occurred. "And that was changed within half an hour."

The student body did not take the news quietly. In pure Howard tradition, the students, Chadwick Boseman (BFA '00) among them, lobbied hard to bring the college back. The students interrupted the Charter Day ceremony that March of 1997 and later occupied the Administration Building.

Kamilah Forbes (BFA '98) was one of the protestors. She felt the decision reflected a lack of prioritization of arts and culture at Howard, which in turn reflected how the country undervalued arts and culture as well.

ty in order to shape a larger vision for the college. The wish lists are extensive. They include piano keyboards, computers, mixers, large format printers, graphic design programs, professional rhythm sections for singers, in-house video production, instrumentalists, electronic music lab, a commercial music program, a Summer jazz camp, a rhythm workshop, art exhibits, theater trips, ensembles, and more.

For Larry Cook, assistant professor and coordinator of photography, staying competitive in the market is essential for Howard to succeed among art schools nationwide. He is hopeful about the ability to invite high-profile visiting professors and to fund unique student projects.

CREATIVE MINDS

A piano student takes a practice break; an acting class in progress; a fashion design student at work.

"The difference is we have a larger budget, and with that, being able to address various needs ... with a greater sense of urgency," he says.

A bigger budget, however, should not coincide with a larger tuition bill for the students. According to music theory professor Richard Desinord (BFA '10), besides trips and research opportunities, "the most important thing I would like to see ... [is] helping [students] pay for school."

Bringing what's relevant to Howard is also key, Miller says. "Many students ... come to America to study gospel music," she says, citing Berklee School of Music in Boston as a popular option. "I'd like to see us start a gospel music program so they can come here."

In 2020, courses were updated to "reflect 21st century standards as well as create courses to lead in this changing society," notes Robin Harris, master instructor in theater arts. She is most excited about collaborating across disciplines. "We are now at the convergence of 'possibility' and 'opportunity.'"



Just being a re-formed college was enough to convince junior Eric January, a painting major, to transfer to Howard. "Seeing that Chadwick [Boseman] finally got honored and [with] Ms. Rashad being here and having a college where so many alumni came from, I said, 'I have to be a part of that.'"

The Legacy of Chadwick Boseman

CURRENTLY IN THE PLANS ARE NEW FACILITIES AND student funding. And behind much of the vision is the legacy of Chadwick Boseman.

A new, state-of-the-art Center for Arts and Communication is currently in the works. It will house space for the College of Fine Arts, the Cathy Hughes School of Communications, the architecture program, and WHUT-TV and WHUR 96.3FM. The space includes studio-based learning environments, classrooms, offices, and more. The design intends to create modern, interdisciplinary collaboration while maintaining Cramton Auditorium and Ira Aldridge Theatre.

Acknowledging the iconic performance Boseman played as King T'Challa in Disney/Marvel's "The Black Panther," Walt Disney Company's executive chairman, Robert A. Iger, has personally taken it upon himself to lead fundraising efforts that will build the new center and the college's endowment.

Video streaming service Netflix also established a \$5.4 million endowed scholarship in Boseman's name, awarding full scholarships to students that cover their four years. The students who were selected "exemplify exceptional skills in the arts reminiscent of Mr. Boseman" and have a financial need. So far, four students have earned the scholarship.

The college's reformation has also started attracting other partnerships. Another recent scholarship includes the Capri Holdings Fashion and Merchandising Scholars Fund, established by Capri Holdings Foundation for the Advancement of Diversity in Fashion, in an effort to advance equality and promote change in the fashion industry.

According to Rashad, there's no doubt that Boseman's presence is strong at the college. "The vision of this school actually arises from remembrance of him," she says. "He carried a lot within himself. He was curious ... he was strong. And you see this in his work. He was always well intentioned and purposeful."

Rashad hopes that his legacy carries on within the students who occupy the college named for him. "Learning doesn't stop in four years," she says. "Howard [is] ... a gateway to adulthood in the world. I want the students to leave here confident they can go anywhere in the world and do anything."



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ALUMNI

We Are One

BISON FAMILY

ARCHIVES

The Class of 1982

■ FORTY YEARS AGO, the Iran-Contra scandal is underway; Muhammad Ali fights his last fight; the Vietnam Memorial is unveiled on the National Mall; "Cold Sunday" on January 17 plunges temperatures to record lows with D.C. at -5 F.





CAREER

IN PURSUIT OF PHILANTHROPY

Antoine Bethea's retirement is only the beginning of his new career.

by EDWARD HILL

■ MANY NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE (NFL) veterans spend their retirement playing golf, becoming broadcasters, or enjoying the good life.

Howard University's Antoine "Deuce" Bethea (BA '06) is the exception and has become a difference-maker after ending his career playing professional football.

The former HU standout, whose accolades include Black College All-American, Super Bowl champion, Pro Bowler, and two-time Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year, among others, retired at the beginning of 2021 after 14 years with the NFL. Bethea, who got the nickname "Deuce" after

wearing the No. 2 jersey for the Bison, has since embarked on a series of pursuits, including philanthropy, business, mentorship, speaking, and writing.

"I realize that this is not about accolades, tackles, and interceptions," says Bethea, alluding to the new chapter in his life. "I watched my parents help many in the community where I grew up in Newport News, [Virginia], so it motivated me to do what I can do to make a difference."

Looking at his resume and accomplishments during his NFL career, Bethea sees a connection between that and what he has embarked on in his retirement. "It's all using your platform the right way," he says. "My NFL career allowed me the resources and exposure to be able to take on some of these projects."

For example, Bethea partnered with the city of Newport News to create an outdoor basketball court with lights. The court is near the Denbigh Community Center where he grew up.

"Growing up there, I had a love for both basketball and football," Bethea says. "One of the things that I noticed was that kids don't play outside like they used to." Since the court's installation, he says, "it has been tremendous. Now everyone can practice and have games there."

When COVID-19 came along, he continued to work with his community. "We found out about how kids in the neighborhood were not getting meals, so we decided to feed the kids," Bethea says. "We distributed hot meals every day." He and his wife, Samantha (BBA '06), also launched the Safe Cover Initiative, a 21-day rent relief fundraiser for families in Newport News, Norfolk, or Hampton, Virginia, who were facing eviction. Additionally, the Bethea Family Foundation Annual Scholarship offers scholarships to two senior students in the Newport News Public School system.

He is also mentoring young people and touching lives with his speaking engagements. Bethea created the

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I WATCHED MY PARENTS HELP MANY IN THE COMMUNITY WHERE I GREW UP IN NEWPORT NEWS, [VIRGINIA], SO IT MOTIVATED ME TO DO WHAT I CAN DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

AB41 Speaker's Series, "Bet on Yourself," where he partners with several schools and nonprofit organizations to teach life skills to young people. His book, "Bet on Yourself," is a narrative on how to make it to the highest level of competition by overcoming odds, working hard, preparing, and believing in yourself. It is a motivator for those who face various obstacles in their lives and how to overcome them.

The book was published in 2018, but some circumstances prompted him to make some adjustments.

"We added a deluxe addition to address some of the issues that young people face in their lives," Bethea says. "COVID-19 certainly played a part in the decision."

In May 2020, Bethea teamed with nine-year NFL veteran Darius Butler to co-host a podcast, "Man to Man." "We talk ball," says Bethea. "But we get into other topics, such as what is happening with Black and brown young men and father-son relationships."

His next venture was on the business side as he opened a sports

bar in his hometown. "The idea was to open a sports bar similar to 'Cheers' [the former TV series], where people could come and eat and have a good time watching sports on TV."

Known as a big advocate of HBCUs, Bethea says, "We are on campuses where historic trailblazers walked. We now have high profile professional athletes, like Chris Paul, who have started initiatives that support HBCUs."

Bethea says his Howard University experience and the impact it has had on his life is invaluable.

"I would not trade the experience," he says. "I made the right choice. When you attend Howard University, you meet people who are some of the top leaders in the world, whether it is in politics, entertainment, education, sports, or law. It continues to produce great people, and I am always proud that I am an HU graduate."

➔ Edward Hill is a retired sports information director at Howard University.

GOING LONG
Antoine Bethea's post-retirement career centers around community service.



ENVIRONMENT

How Good Energy Affects Environmental Justice Issues

by UMARAH MUGHNEE (BA '16)

■ ■ ■

POSITIVE ENERGY
Colin Parris creates digital technology solutions for power-generating assets to be more efficient.



■ THE CONCEPT OF “ENERGY” IS SO simple but so complex at the same time. For Colin Parris (BS ’85), senior vice president and chief technology officer at GE Digital, he describes “energy”—more specifically, the transition to renewable energy—as an inevitability. At GE Digital, Parris is in the business of saving the planet by creating digital technology solutions for power-generating assets to become more efficient. This includes dealing with things like MRI machines in health care, jet engines in aviation, and stabilizing carbon from power plants for cities, just to name a few.

Parris explains his interests through a foundational concept he learned at Howard. “I was always fascinated in how things work. But not in the sense of taking apart everything,” he says. “More about relationships. ... If you want to see how things work, they have to be in places where they work.”

This can be seen with GE’s latest development called the Digital Twin Initiative, a living and learning

model that takes the physical understanding of a system—the data—and puts it together in a way to predict outcomes before they occur.

Parris says that one of his biggest concerns is environmental justice. In particular, he mentions how minority communities are affected by energy poverty, meaning they lack access to sustainable energy, especially during times of extreme weather, like extreme heat, extreme cold and storms, or during large-scale crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

To combat this issue, Parris is working with the Digital Twins Initiative to successfully lower the cost of energy. For example, after a hurricane devastates an area, an electric bill that would usually be \$100 a month might shoot up to \$300 a month. The initiative adapts to this event by collecting data from the devastated area, such as temperature, population, carbon emissions (just to name a few), and from similar events that happened prior. This allows for the production of a duplicate machine that is built and optimized with the goal of lowering electricity costs and mitigating potential system failures, also known as a “twin machine.” Along with other factors, this allows GE to successfully lower the leveled cost of energy from 10 cents to 3 cents.

Parris is also looking to help the field move forward by ensuring the next generation of professionals represents the diversity of American society. “This new emerging science [computer science with digital technologies] is a place where they don’t look at you by the color of your skin,” he says. “They look at you for what you could really do in this area.”

Children tend to lose interest in science and mathematics around the age of seven, eight or nine. At this point in his career, Parris is highly focused on the educational component of his field and looks to be a guide for the change he wishes to see in the field. “We need engineers who look like us to lead the way.”

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM HOWARD TO HOLLYWOOD

by MISHA CORNELIUS

■ When **Layne Eskridge (BA ’04)** launched her production company, POV, in 2020, she did so with diverse storytelling in mind. She also had the training, experience, and a network of Black talent and industry creatives to bring along with her.

“It’s really important for there to be more of us behind the camera,” says Eskridge. “That’s where the decisions are made. I’ve been doing this for 14 years, and I’m just now going out on my own. It’s been a mix of opportunity and getting in the door, but you shouldn’t be discouraged by that. There’s a lot of opportunity there.”

When she secured an investment from Endeavor Content earlier this year, she says it was the kind of deal that is critical to achieving equity in the industry.

“I tried a lot and had a lot of experiences,” Eskridge says about her career. “I liked being a connector and giving people a chance. Even in my career, I love saying ‘yes!’ Saying ‘yes,’ and then being right, and having the world receive it.”

And the world of television seems to say ‘yes’ back. Throughout her career, Eskridge has worked with some of the top media companies and world-renowned writers and producers. Most recently, she worked as a creative executive at Apple, and before that, she was a development executive at Netflix, overseeing production on shows like “Ozark,” Spike Lee’s “She’s Gotta Have It,” and Ava DuVernay’s “When They See Us.” She was an executive for Ellen Degeneres’ company A Very Good Production and worked as a member of Universal Cable Productions.

Now she’s venturing off on her own as the founder of the film and television production company POV. Its mission is to tell stories with people of color and women at the center of genre tales. POV takes on classic storytelling from a different perspective, as its name would



“ HOWARD REALLY AFFIRMED MY BELIEFS THAT BLACK PEOPLE AREN’T A MONOLITH.”

suggest. Upcoming projects include a limited series based on the best-selling book, “The Plot,” starring two-time Oscar winner Mahershala Ali. Having received multiple offers from pitching the project alone, Layne says the demand for the project was unexpected and represents a career highlight. She’s also developing a project called “The Fox” alongside Howard alumnus Brian Chamberlayne (BA ’04) set to feature actor Andre Holland.

Eskridge’s passion for television started at an early age. She grew up being engulfed in movies and television and re-

calls attending every opening night with her father, who was passionate about theater and the arts. As an undergraduate student in the Cathy Hughes School of Communications, Eskridge appreciated Howard as a welcome change and the place where she launched her career as a successful television executive committed to sharing diverse stories.

“Howard really affirmed my beliefs that Black people aren’t a monolith,” Eskridge says. “Culturally, I got to experience students from Africa and the Caribbean. Even the students from the coast, like Los Angeles, walked to the beat of their own drum. But it also reinforced that I never really saw my experience reflected in movies and television. It was either experiences I related to, but with white characters, or it was a Black experience that wasn’t necessarily my own. My mission was to broaden the portrayal of people of color on screen. Howard helped me figure out my lane.”

NETWORK

The Room Where It Happens

Mahiri Wise (BA '09) makes a career of connecting people

by ANDREA ADERETI

■ **With the world continuing into a digital space**, there's one thing that Mahiri Wise (BA '09) knows is essential to maintain: the human connection.

When he first came on board at Google in the Fall of 2019, the company needed to be creative about how it would continue to share content, access its Google experts, and introduce new product details. Wise wanted to create more access to resources and insights, so developers felt equipped to innovate using Google's technology.

With his experience working in entertainment and events and facilities management, Wise had the ability to connect with people and bring the right people to the table. His skills opened the door to quick successes in his new field of developer marketing at Google Cloud.

"Shoutout to Mecca," he says. "I know and understand what I'm good at; I get to walk into a room with a sense of humility, knowing where that line also ends."

Among his ongoing projects include the launch of the Google Cloud Collective with Stack Overflow, where he reaches developers where they naturally gather. This allows more exposure of available resources, leading to faster industry solutions and an enhanced user communication network. He is also creating standardization in the event planning process that provides heightened consistency for internal and external partners when working with the international events planning team.

Wise is committed to increasing representation in Black and Latino communities in the world of developers. He hopes to bring opportunity and education to those who aren't typically represented and lack the resources to consider the possibilities of a career choice such as this. "It's about opening the doors. Letting folks know the

door exists. If they knew the door was there, they would go," Wise says.

According to Wise, Black Americans are entering corporate America ready to do great things. Still, they are often confronted by a lack of cultural diversity and disconnected experiences from their counterparts. So how does he help fellow Black developers learn to navigate these spaces? Wise

“**IT'S ABOUT OPENING THE DOORS. LETTING FOLKS KNOW THE DOOR EXISTS.**”



says it's about building a community. "We not only represent ourselves, we represent the community, and as a Bison, it's a community of excellence."

Wise stresses it needs to be more about the education and conversation behind diversity and inclusion to build a pipeline for the business. "The best minds are in these underrepresented communities, and we have to tap in. Identifying those communities, supporting those communities, and then reaching out to those communities is critical to the success of Google."

He credits Howard for teaching him the confidence he has when he encounters a challenge at work. "When I walk into a room, I walk into it with Black privilege," he says. "I walk into [it] knowing that if it's a problem I don't know how to solve right now – give me an hour, the end of the week, and I will get this done. That level of 'I can do anything,' I attribute to my Howard experience." Wise says that this mentality has led him into rooms far earlier than some of his colleagues. "Sometimes, the performance can speak louder than words."

CLASS NOTES

'70s

Edna King (BSN '75) and husband G. W. King Jr. recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Portland, Maine, which was also the 50th state they have visited in addition to the 62 countries they have traveled to.

Drake Dillard, AIA, NOMAC (M.Arch '76), recently received the Robert Kennard FAIA award for excellence in diversity, equity, and inclusion with the AIA LA chapter. He is a senior project manager at Perkins & Will.



'80s

Jill Louis, J.D. (BA '87), was appointed to Thrivent's board of directors. Thrivent is a diversified financial services organization. She is currently managing partner at an international law firm in Dallas.

Edward J. Clemons Jr. (DDS '86) was named president of the North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners.

'90s

Patricia Bradley (BA '94, JD '01) is the new vice president for inclusion and institutional equity at Towson University.

Andre Palmer, PhD (BS '95), was named associate dean for research in the College of Engineering at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

Donni Turner

(JD '98) recently became a legislative counsel in Colorado Senator Michael F. Bennet's office.

'00s

Steven Myles (BA '05, DDS '10), known as "Dr. Smyles," was recently featured in *The Washington Post* about his dental practice for low-income patients at Bread for the City's new Michelle Obama Southeast Center.

PROFILE

Peggy G. Carr (MS '79, PhD '83) was recently named commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education by President Biden. She had spent more than 20 years with NCES, serving as acting commissioner and as association commissioner for assessment. She made significant contributions to its most visible program, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), by raising its stature as the gold standard of assessments worldwide.

Prior to NCES, Carr served as the chief statistician for the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education. Carr is a published researcher in the field of student achievement and equity. She has over a decade of experience teaching graduate-level courses in statistics and research methodology at Howard University, where she had earned her PhD.

Jenea Robinson-Dean (BA '07) married Kenneth Edward Dean on June 18, 2021 in Philadelphia. She is currently the owner of Marsh + Mane, a natural beauty supply and lifestyle boutique.

Britney Norman (BA '08) married David E. Coleman on April 4, 2021 in Philadelphia. She is the principal of her own marketing consultancy agency, BE Creative Marketing Studio.

'10s

Camonia R. Graham-Tutt (PHD '10) was recently promoted to associate professor of community health at University of Hawai'i West O'ahu. Her role, among other responsibilities, includes educating state residents about becoming COVID-19 contact tracers.

Andrew Morris III (BS '12, JD '15) was recently appointed professorial lecturer at George Washington University School of Law and named Top 40 Under 40 by the National Black Lawyers Association. He works at Events DC, providing legal and contract services, notably in the development of Howard's Truth and Service Football Classic.

Ashley Jordan (PHD '17) became president and chief executive of the African American Museum in Philadelphia.

PROFILE
Howard Family Tree

Since 1919, 10 members of **Maziwandile "Themba" Masimini's** (BS '99) family have attended Howard: his grandfather, **Robert Cannady**, and great aunt, **Mary Cannady** (BA '43); his mother, **Barbara Cannady** (BS '65), and uncle, **James Cannady** (BA '74); his brothers, **Zwelethemba Masimini** (MA '90) and **Mpumi Masimini**; his two nieces, **Aliya Evans** and **Ayanna Evans**. Nephew **Josiah Crute** is currently a senior. The family also has a lineage in the football team: Robert, Themba, Mpumi and Josiah all played. "Howard is extremely dear to me; it's the legacy of my family," Themba says. "Howard is in my blood – literally."



CORRECTION from last issue: Tiera Williams (BBA '17) was recently crowned Miss Black New Jersey USA 2021 and will be running for Miss Black USA in 2022.



Christopher Livingston (BA '15) and **Karyn Nicole Kennedy** (BS '17) were married on May 1, 2021 in New York's Central Park. Livingston is at New York University School of Law and Kennedy is pursuing her master of public health at City University - New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy. She is also the campus pantry coordinator at the Food Bank for New York City.

Virgil Parker (BA '21) was recently recognized for his community service by the 100 Black Men of Greater Washington, D.C. as an outstanding Collegiate 100 Howard Alumnus as well as by the mayor of Rochester, New York as an ROC Hometown Hero. Parker is a Fulbright Scholar in Canada conducting research on ways to strengthen U.S. women-owned and minority-owned companies' trading relationship with Canada.

In Memoriam

ALICIA J. PETERSEN, PHD

■ ALICIA J. PETERSEN, PHD, TAUGHT URBAN politics and public policy for more than 10 years in the Howard University Department of Political Science. She also oversaw the department's former community development program and minor before her retirement in 2016. She was immensely loved by the many students she mentored; her classes were especially popular among political science and economics majors and minors in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Petersen's work on the community development program extended well beyond the classroom. Her efforts at connecting the department to the local community led to the establishment of many internships for hundreds of Howard students. She annually organized a Community Development Day event at Howard that brought together many DMV region community organizations to engage with students and to provide internship and employment opportunities.

During the Clinton administration, she was appointed executive assistant to the deputy under secretary for rural development, where she worked on housing issues in the Lower Mississippi Delta and the Colonia regions. She also served as special assistant to U.S. Congressman Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, focusing on equity in agriculture for Black farmers. In 2010, Petersen served as executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus Political Education and Leadership Institute.



■ **Brin Hawkins, PhD** (BS '64, MSW '66), September 16, 2021.

■ **Priscilla "Prissy" Lorraine Ryder** (N. '66, MEd '82), October 22, 2020.

■ **John L. Clark Jr.** (MSW '67), April 3, 2020.

■ **Ali Salahuddin** (BA '70), July 22, 2021.

■ **Sylvia Patricia Royal** (N '70), September 15, 2021.

■ **Carlton Fraser** (MD '75) November 21, 2021.

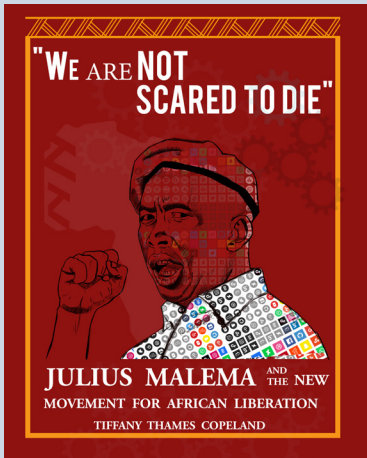
■ **Angela (Angie) B. Edwards** (BS '80) August 23, 2021.

■ **Christa Beverly** (BA '83) was a civil rights lawyer who actively advised her husband, Prince George's County executive Rushern Baker III (BA '82, JD '86), in his political career. They met at Howard. Beverly was a government affairs director for the United Negro College Fund and worked as a congressional staff member.

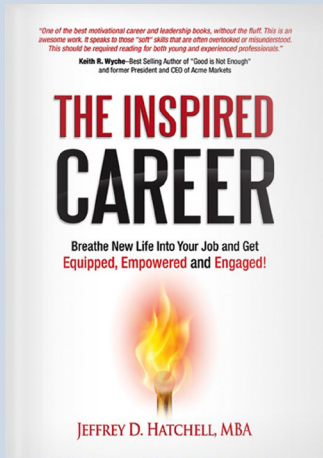


BISON BOOKSHELF

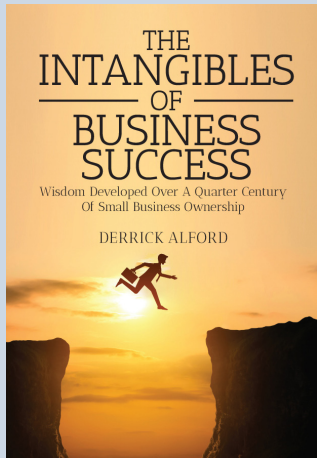
BY SETH SHAPIRO



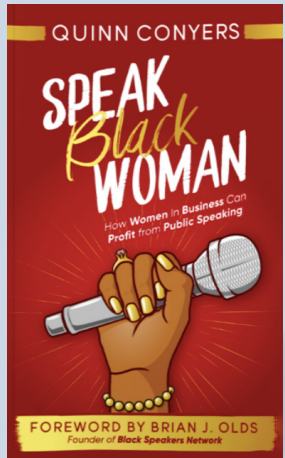
■ **“We Are Not Scared to Die: Julius Malema and the New Movement for African Liberation”** by Tiffany Thames Copeland (PhD '20). Julius Malema, the leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters party, is battling to achieve the justice and equality that are still being denied the South African Black majority – 25 years after the end of apartheid.



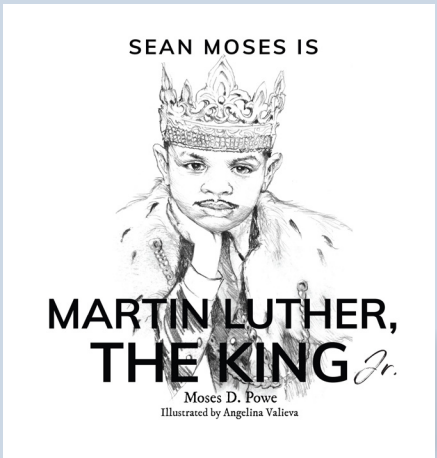
■ **“The Inspired Career – Breathe New Life Into Your Job and Get Equipped, Empowered and Engaged”** by Jeffrey D. Hatchell, MBA (BBA '90). Every person has strengths – but they often struggle to take advantage of them in the workplace. For those who want more out of their career, this book will help all people transform personal



■ **“The Intangibles of Business Success: Wisdom Developed Over a Quarter Century of Small Business Ownership”** by Derrick Alford (BBA '85). Often in business, the intangibles are overlooked. This book provides the wisdom, guidance and case studies to ensure that no business owners miss the key details necessary for business success.



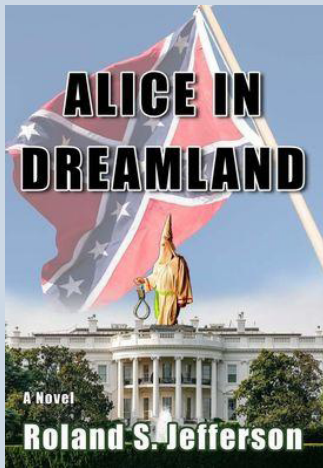
■ **“Speak Black Woman: How Women in Business Can Profit from Public Speaking”** by Quinn Conyers (MA '08). It's important for Black women to use their voice – and also monetize their public speaking engagements. This book will guide women to expand their audience and ensure they are being compensated for their time, effort, and impact.



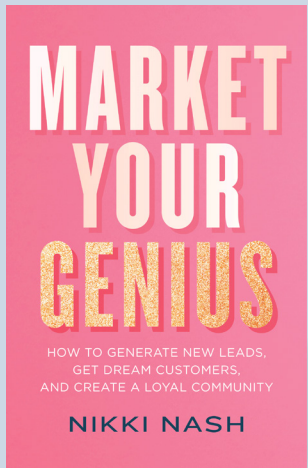
■ **“Sean Moses Is Martin Luther, The King Jr.”** by Moses D. Powe (BS'99) is an uplifting picture book about the story of Sean Moses and his experience portraying Black leaders as a student in the public school system, including MLK, a man for whom Moses believed the word “king” was more than just a last name – it was a title.



■ **“Black Was the Ink”** by Michelle Coles (JD '06) juxtaposes the struggles of the modern-day Black community and the Reconstruction era when a Black teen from present-day Washington, D.C. finds himself seeing the world through the eyes of a Black statesman in 1866.



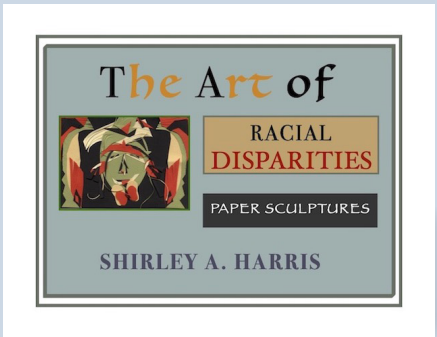
■ **“Alice in Dreamland”** by Roland S. Jefferson (BS '92). A Black prostitute in Los Angeles uncovers the details of a forthcoming white nationalist insurrection on a stolen USB flash drive. This fast-paced, thrilling plot that could affect the future of America traverses the globe and the highest levels of political power.



■ **“Market Your Genius: How to Generate New Leads, Get Dream Customers, and Create a Loyal Community”** by Nikki Nash (MBA '11). Whatever your area of expertise, everyone has a story to tell and an audience eager to hear it. Nash details how to leverage your personal brand to create a profitable business.



■ **“Life, I Swear: Intimate Stories from Black Women on Identity, Healing, and Self-Trust”** by Chloe Louvouezo (BA '07) uses the media of language, art, and design to tell the stories of 25 prominent Black women who have an important message about transformation and growth.



■ **“The Art of Racial Disparities, Paper Sculptures”** by Shirley Harris (MFA '07) was born from an obsession with creating paper sculptured images. Harris takes readers on a journey exploring perseverance in the face of racial injustice and the need to return to one's roots.

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

NEW BEGINNINGS

BY

LaTasha Murphy (BA '14)

■ **THE EXCITEMENT SPREAD ACROSS THE CAMPUS.** Students were dressed in Bison blue caps and gowns, ready to close out one chapter and begin the next on their journeys. It was Commencement Day, a day that my classmates and I had awaited for so long.

I was not a traditional student and did not take the typical route to Howard after high school. Instead, I went to community college and worked to save up to go to a four-year college. I lived off-campus and most of the people in my class were years younger than me. Our commonality, however, was that Howard University was a place that we all admired and wanted to graduate from. That day had finally come.

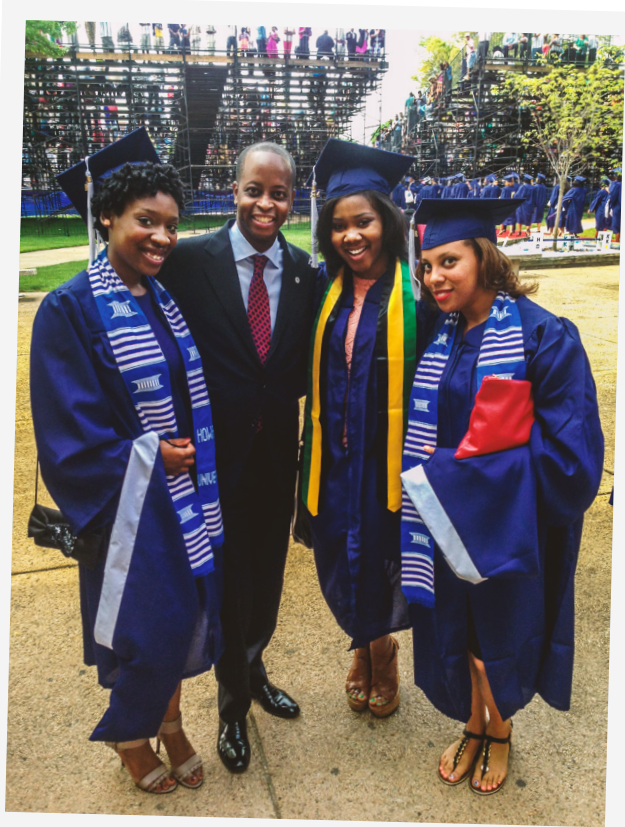
It was Saturday, May 10, 2014, and the weather was perfect: not too hot, not too cold, sunny,

blue skies, no sign of D.C.'s humidity yet. As I walked in Greene Stadium to line up with my fellow graduates from the School of Communications, I could see nervousness, excitement, and fulfillment on the faces of my peers, all for many reasons: some excited to move on to the next chapter and others nervous because they weren't sure what the next chapter would be.

As we began to walk towards the yard to hear our commencement speaker, Diddy, we spotted then-interim president, Dr. Wayne A. I. Frederick. He was wearing a dark suit and tie in Howard blue-and-red, his pin placed in his suit collar, a wide and welcoming smile on his face. Although I had worked at Howard University while I was a student, I had never met Dr. Frederick. Yet he saw our group standing around in our cap and gowns and came over to congratulate us on our successes. We were both caught off-guard and thrilled at the same time: our interim president was taking interest in us and our individual pursuits, especially during such a momentous and busy day. He chatted with us about our future plans and about our time at Howard. We then asked to take a photo with him, and he obliged, enthusiastically.

Commencement has a way of bringing people together, not only because it was the day that all graduates of that year from different schools and colleges gather to confer their degrees, but because it marks the making of a new day. It was the start of many new beginnings for us. Some of us were going off to start our careers. Others were going back to school to pursue their next degree. This was not the last time I would have the opportunity to chat with Dr. Frederick, as I continued to work at Howard for the next several years, but it was the last time my classmates and I were together in the same place before we moved on. However, at that moment and onward, we were, and still are, Bison forever!

➡➡ **LaTasha Murphy** (BA '14), *standing right, is the chief of staff for the communications division at National Geographic Society.*



Moving Howard Forward With A Charitable Bequest

A charitable bequest can help sustain Howard for years to come.

You can make a bequest to Howard by including language in your will or living trust. You can also designate Howard as a beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy.

Benefits of a Bequest to Howard

- » It costs you nothing during your lifetime.
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- » You can give more to Howard than you thought possible to support scholarships, schools and colleges, or programs you care about.

Dr. Lynn A. Green graduated from Howard University with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. The rigorous coursework prepared her for the University of Illinois College of Medicine. Dr. Green included Howard University as a beneficiary of her estate. Her future gift will be used to establish the Lynn A. Green, MD, MPH Endowed Scholarship Fund to support students majoring in chemistry.

"Howard means a great deal to me, and I am proud to be an alumna. I want this gift to symbolize my commitment to moving Howard forward, ensuring my support for years to come."

— LYNN A. GREEN, MD, MPH | LA BS '72

For more information on bequests and beneficiary designations, contact Quina De Laine, Planned Giving Officer at 202-238-2518 or quina.delaine@Howard.edu.

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