MADAM V.P.

How Howard Helped Kamala Harris Climb the Steps to the White House
A CELEBRATION OF FIRSTS — A dazzling rainbow of fireworks lit the night sky over Washington, D.C. on January 20, 2021, celebrating the inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. Harris, a Howard alumna, became the first African-American, South Asian-American and woman to hold the vice presidential office. Photo by Chuck Kennedy.
As the new chief communications officer for Howard University, it is my honor to introduce our reimagined, redesigned and still beloved Howard Magazine.

The reemergence of the magazine represents our commitment to modernizing, uplifting and telling all the stories of Howard University. These pages are filled with narratives that celebrate the Howard community, near and far. Though our campus is largely empty and quiet these days, Howard is louder and prouder than ever. We are overjoyed to have so many Bison share their voices with us and represent Howard in hospitals, schools, corporations, startups, nonprofits, the White House and more, all furthering our University’s mission of truth and service. We’re reminded that it’s the people who create the spirit that is Howard, not the bricks and mortar we had to leave behind in the wake of the pandemic.

It’s crucial to capture these important moments on paper and online for others to read. With the guidance of our new editor-in-chief, Rin-rin Yu, we’ve been able to share these stories across our community and beyond. Much of her job, above anything else, involves carefully listening to the thoughts, emotions and lessons in everyone’s stories. She works diligently with our writers, many of whom are Howard alumni, in translating those thoughts and feelings into the words and images that you see here in this magazine.

Soon, we will welcome students, faculty and staff back to campus, and I can’t wait to hear their voices reverberating across the illustrious Yard. If you have any ideas, suggestions, thoughts or memories you’d like to share, please drop us a line at magazine@howard.edu.

Excellence in Truth and Service,

Frank Tramble, MPS

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Dear Howard University Community

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Frank Tramble, MPS

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Rin-rin Yu, MSJ, MBA

**DESIGN**

Baseline Creative Group

**VIRTUAL HOWARD**

When the pandemic sent everyone home, Howard worked quickly to bring them back – online.

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Frank Tramble, MPS

**VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

Frank Tramble, MPS

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**COVER ART**

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**BACK COVER**

Commencement 2021

Photo by Oscar Merrida
From the President

Dear Howard University Community,

The Howard University motto of “truth and service” seems to convey a sense of humility; we simply pursue the truth and use that truth to serve our community. But there is actually an audacity to those principles. To pursue truth when there are those who seek to obscure reality requires unflagging courage. To promote service that appears to compete against others’ self-interest requires uncompromising dedication. And to do what is right when there are those who champion what is wrong requires undaunted leadership.

With the world on the brink of change as we work to put the coronavirus pandemic behind us, we should be thinking less about a return to normal and more about a redirection into something entirely new. The Howard University community knows all too well the powerful forces of inertia that weigh down and hold back social progress. Especially when feelings of nostalgia for a lost year will compel society to reflect backwards rather than look forward, it is our distinct duty to ensure that we as a country move in the right direction.

As an institution and as a community of individuals, Howard has a responsibility to lead the change—and we are leading it.

As an institution, when we saw the disparities in how African-American men and women were suffering from the pandemic, we called it out as wrong and led the efforts to make it right. We stood up COVID-19 testing centers in Ward 7 and Ward 8 in Washington, D.C., and made the tests free to anyone, even at a time when most people needed a doctor’s note to get one. We established a vaccination center within the Howard University College of Medicine to ensure that Black men and women could get vaccinated when so many in minority communities were being overlooked in vaccine distribution.

As individuals, members of the Howard family are everywhere, advocating for social justice, proposing solutions to make our society more just, and leading the work that is making justice happen in our society. We are in corporate boardrooms fighting for greater diversity and inclusion. We are in the health care system fighting for more equitable medical access. We are in state houses fighting to protect the vote. And we are in the White House fighting to help America realize its founding values of freedom and justice for all.

This is what Howard is all about. Our students don’t come to the Mecca to get a degree—they come here for an education, an experience that awakens their purpose in life. From within our nation’s capital, Howard has a historic responsibility both to hold our government to account when it falls short of its promises and to partner with our government so that it may live up to its highest potential. Since our founding by federal charter in 1867, we have worked to achieve a more diverse, equitable and just society. Our students, faculty and alumni are more than leaders; we are more than visionaries; we are more than missionaries. Howard summons, molds and disseminates community-shapers, history-makers and world-changers whose impact is measured not by the headlines we make, but by the truths we reveal and the service we provide. At Howard, excellence is not the exception—it is expected.

Excellence in Truth and Service,

Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA
Charles R. Drew Professor of Surgery
President
Mood Swings

Law professor Justin Hansford talks about the shifting tides of politics following Biden's victory

by RIN-BIN YU

Q How does Biden's presidency compare to, say, Obama's?
A The Biden administration is the most outspoken in American history on racial justice. That includes President Obama, who said on record that he would have faced backlash for being as outspoken on race as Biden is now. Let's hope that Biden's words will be followed with action.

Q What happened between Obama's election and Biden's election?
A I worked on the campaign in 2008. The election was unmatchable. We were literally crying with joy when Obama won. When Biden won, we were crying with relief. The energy is different now.

In 2008, I thought Obama was basically going to lead a revolution in racial justice. That’s not what happened. Now we know that we constantly have to agitate to push elected officials to work on our agenda, even when it’s our own candidate who is in office. In between elections, just following politics in the news and complaining on social media won’t cut it. Our enthusiasm for elections only makes sense if the outcomes improve our everyday lives. And that only happens with our follow-up.

Q If Obama didn’t create the change in 2020, what did?
A It had more to do with George Floyd’s killing. These were the largest protests we’ve ever had in American history. [People] had never taken to the streets in those numbers before. Then we moved from protest to politics in the fall. In Georgia, thanks to Stacey Abrams, the shift from the streets to the polls got us some big wins. The movement matured in front of our very eyes.

Q How will the two main political parties keep up?
A The corporate-centrist view of politics will be difficult to maintain in 2021 — for Republicans and Democrats. There’s just not widespread energy behind it. Republicans shift from corporate-centrism to just Trumpism. The Democrats are going to have to evolve or face a war within the party, and that could easily allow Trump to reemerge. It’s a big risk if they don’t change.

Q What did we learn from Trump’s presidency?
A Constitutional theorists and scholars are saying that we need to reinvent our governmental structure. Do we have enough controls in place? Congress consistently has been frozen by partisanship to a standstill and unable to fund itself. Donald Trump showed all the different flaws of the presidency. Are the courts going to save us? The Constitution? Big changes are necessary.

Q How does the current political climate affect the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center?
A This summer, we have five Fellows. Our enthusiasm for elections only makes sense if the outcomes improve our everyday lives. And that only happens with our follow-up.

Q What did Biden do to change in 2020, what didn’t?
A We have been caring for people who are extremely ill with a disease that we are just learning to manage. Personally, there are a lot of moving parts, including caring for our hospital staff and our physicians and making sure they have all the resources they need to make the best possible decisions for our patients. Howard University Hospital ... [has] established a partnership based on trust in the community, and they knew we will give them the care they need during this difficult period.

SHELLY MCQODAL-FINKETT, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer of Howard University Hospital

“We have been caring for people who are extremely ill with a disease that we are just learning to manage. Personally, there are a lot of moving parts, including caring for our hospital staff and our physicians and making sure they have all the resources they need to make the best possible decisions for our patients. Howard University Hospital … has established a relationship based on trust in the community, and they knew we will give them the care they need during this difficult period.”

THE HOWARD HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY REFLECTS ON THE PANDEMIC

IN THEIR SHOES

The Howard health care community reflects on the pandemic

“Wtih the viability of the business was at the forefront of my mind every waking moment. In the beginning we had five full-time employees, and I felt personally responsible for their livelihoods. The hurdle was convincing the public that it was safe to come to a clinic. We had to change our marketing strategies and take advantage of all financial supports that were available to us, and we had to take drastic actions on costs. Today we are seeing the results of pivoting our marketing to promote a safe environment, and slowly patients are starting to come in.”

ONOLEO MAEKOUDUNNI (M.B.A. ’03, founder of Triumph Therapeutics, a pediatric outpatient therapy clinic.

“Getting ready to serve is that sense if the outcomes improve our everyday lives. And that only happens with our follow-up.

“Really there were a lot of people who were concerned about my health and safety because of the past atrocities that have been done on Blacks … I did my own research. It’s always good to know information for yourself. Now a lot of people use me as a stepping-stone. Although they were skeptical, they saw me as someone that looked like them and that I was okay.”

DARNELLA MCGREGER-NELSON (B.A. ’09), Howard’s first COVID-19 vaccine trial volunteer. Her volunteering was featured in The New York Times.

“‘My sister contracted COVID. She had to quarantine with my parents in their small apartment in the Bronx. They had to take time off of work, and it affected everything – the rent, the bills. I constantly have to check back home to see how my family is doing, especially my mom and dad … because they are older. [While] I can’t be back at home helping out … I can be down here at Howard helping out, especially communities of color and people who look like me. It makes me feel like I am contributing something larger at a time like this.”

MCCKATEY MINTY, BS student, College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, from Bronx, New York. She is volunteering at the Howard COVID vaccine clinic.

“As an internal medicine doctor, I generally see patients with a wide range of conditions, but since COVID I’ve been seeing mostly patients with the disease and fewer patients with other conditions. The benefit to me is that we are helping the community in this critical time. We are constantly looking at new research and data that comes in to inform patient-care decisions.”

MIJAN PEARL, M.B. (B. ’14) is an in-patient faculty member of the internal residency program at Luminis Health at the Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis, Maryland.
RESILIENT BLACK LOVE AMONG CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

BY BAHYIYAH M. MUHAMMAD, PH.D.

In research, children of incarcerated parents (COIP) are often demeaned, vilified, stigmatized and labeled as future prisoners. I was very uncomfortable with how research was oversaturated with negative outcomes and rarely mentioned the stories of these children who defied odds and even became community leaders. These missing narratives mirrored stories I knew to be true in my own family and among individuals I trusted and loved. To me, we were all a part of one big fragile community.

When I set out to explore these children’s experiences as a doctoral student in 2005, I knew that speaking directly to the children themselves would help realign research by providing more realistic perspectives of what their lived experiences really were. Through my dissertation study, “Exploring the Silence Among Children of Prisoners,” I was blessed to meet many resilient children who were young, empathic, faithful, intelligent and Black. These children and others have empowered me to continue this scholarship, regardless of the negative feedback from individuals who argue that a prism of deficiency should remain standard. I have learned that much more can be learned in research from asset-based rather than deficit-based thinking, meaning focusing on subjects’ strengths rather than their supposed deficiencies, especially when considering the collateral consequences of parental incarceration on children and young adults. I captured dynamic, detailed and inspiring narratives of success through almost 200 hours of interviews as told by 75 young adult COIP. These young adults were successful in many areas of their lives and provided national context for a qualitative study entitled “Children of Incarcerated Parents: Pathways to Resilience and Success.” This national study of COIP made possible by the Center for Advancing Opportunity at the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, highlighted the importance of fully understanding how COIP successfully navigate young adulthood and beyond. Findings show that COIP success pathways are unique, innovative and sometimes nontraditional. These pathways provide information and hope about proactive ways in which policymakers, practitioners and researchers and other children of incarcerated parents can be supported along the winding journey of life.

Many of these children attended historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and described that experience as being a steppingstone to their current success. The HBCU campus was a place where they felt safe and protected from the outside world that labeled them by their parents’ mistakes. Furthermore, many of these young adults attributed their success to their incarcerated parents, described as mentors who provided more realistic context for a qualitative study their lives and provided national context for a qualitative study their incarcerated parents, described as mentors who parented from behind the wall. During the interviews, the COIP shared longitudinal experiences as professors, lawyers, graduate students, research scholars and leaders in their communities. They are politically engaged and active citizens on their college campuses. They supported their siblings and built loving support networks for their incarcerated parents. Even in the midst of all these accolades, the COIP who participated in the study are honest, humble, self-reflective, trustworthy, authentic and eager to reach out and support others in similar situations. It is a true travesty to limit COIP to what research hypothesizes they will become. We can learn so much more from listening to children of incarcerated parents and empowering them to dream, achieve goals and blaze paths forward.

In order to increase understanding of COIP successful navigation young adulthood and beyond, findings show that COIP success pathways are unique, innovative and sometimes nontraditional. These pathways provide information and hope about proactive ways in which policymakers, practitioners and researchers and other children of incarcerated parents can be supported along the winding journey of life.

Increasing the Number of Black Physicians

BY ADETONWA VICTOR OWOSEN (B.S. ’18)

Before I even wanted to become a physician, I knew I needed to root my career in serving others. So during my time at Howard University, I found ways to serve the communities I cared deeply about. I spent my last two college years volunteering in Detroit elementary schools, collecting educational supplies for young Ghanaian students, and caring for patients in South African clinics. When I finally chose to pursue medicine, my decision was rooted in the desire to combat health care inequalities for Black people around the globe.

Perkins its focus on service is the reason Howard contributes so greatly toward educating future Black physicians. Howard University is a top producer of Black undergraduates who consistently graduates the most Black physicians every year nationwide. As a Howard student, I was surrounded by Black physicians everywhere I turned — from interacting with the school administration to shadowing at the institution’s safety net hospital. The presence of Black role models fulfilled a mental imagery for what I could become and heavily influenced my decision to pursue medicine.

The importance of Black physicians cannot be overstated. Multiple studies have shown that Black patients feel more comfortable when cared for by Black physicians and are also more likely to engage in treatment decision-making. Two studies from 2018 and 2019 found that Black physicians more often choose to both work in and pursue research that benefits underserved communities. Additionally, Black physicians act as critical role models for young Black students who, like me, dream of one day caring for patients too.

Despite the clear contribution of Black doctors, as a country we are failing to produce an adequate number of Black physicians. In 2018, the American Association of Medical Colleges reported that only 5 percent of all active physicians were Black, whereas Black people make up 13 percent of the U.S. population. There are many reasons the U.S. has been unsuccessful in this regard. Our country’s long history of racism has resulted in policies that make it more likely for Black people to live in poorer neighborhoods, work lower-paying jobs, and attend schools that are less funded. These factors decrease opportunities for Black students to have the educational resources and finances needed to pursue a medical career.

In order to address the lack of Black doctors in medicine, this country must first address the policy-driven inequities that affect Black communities. Young Black students who aspire to become physicians need well-funded schools and neighborhoods to have a fair shot at achieving their dreams. Our government must increase its funding for HBCUs, who take on the responsibility of educating a large bulk of Black students who enter medical school.

On the other side, our medical institutions must put forth efforts to not only recruit Black students, but also provide a space where they can thrive. If we value the contribution of Black doctors, then this country must make increasing their numbers a priority, because our communities depend on their work.
how we view ourselves and each other, specifically, how we promote and enact anti-racism in all facets of life.

My dissertation, titled “Decolonizing the Raci(al/ity): Imagination in Literary Studies,” examines how race ideology inadvertently reifies racism in African-American literary studies and society. I present a representative literary theory, writer and pedagogy to help free the field from the strictures caused by racism. As a scholar-activist and activist-scholar, I hope to influence and inspire tangible and sustained change in all aspects of life and help make systemic racism into a problem of the past in the United States.

I always placed a lot of emphasis on the spiritual, emotional, political, social and cultural power of literature, in part because both literature and education continue to save me. I went from dropping out of high school (because I chose homelessness over living in that house-never-turned-home) to being the chosen undergraduate student commencement speaker four years later. At Howard, I finally began to see myself for who I am. It was primarily because of the patience and support of my adviser, Dr. Dana Williams, as well as other faculty, students, books and the continued expansion of my knowledge that I could more completely heal from my traumas and view my differences as gifts.

I joined a community of people who learned to speak from my perspective, even if they disagreed, and made life-long connections. I learned to harness the power of a degree in English literature and not to underestimate the power of the knowledge I gained. I also learned never to underestimate myself.

In my effort to be “perfect” and “earn” my parents’ love, I threw myself head-first, metaphorically, into school and eventually into my most prized collection of bookshelves, using my hair to maintain her death grip. I was 13 when she swept the kitchen floor and ordered me to eat the pile of dirt and crumbs with a death grip.

My parents’ love, I threw myself head-first, metaphorically, into school and everything reading and writing. Ironically, the bookshelves she turned into a weapon held my most prized collection of encyclopedias and “Goosebumps” books.

Books enabled my escape, often equipping me with the fortitude, resilience, strength, love and hope I would not receive elsewhere. I read voraciously, wrote just as often, and imagined a better life, a better world. Once I lived to see 16, I knew that I was destined to be a change agent, voraciously, wrote just as often, and would not receive elsewhere. I read voraciously, wrote just as often, and imagined a better life, a better world.

In May, I graduated, with distinction, from our prestigious Howard University with a doctorate in English literature, specializing in African-American, American and Caribbean literature. Literature necessitated my reimagining of the world (of my world), my ability to believe that there was more than abuse, hatred and trauma. It helped shape my life’s purpose: to transform the spiritual, emotional, political, social and cultural power of literature, in part because both literature and education continue to save me.

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Law School Launches Bachelor of Arts to Juris Doctor Joint Degree Program

Incoming pre-law freshmen can now combine their undergraduate and law school years into a compressed, six-year program. Students will complete their first three years as undergraduates and the last three in the law school. Interested students must submit a 500-word essay about their interest, have strong SAT or ACT scores, a high GPA, a compelling personal statement and well-rounded involvement in extracurricular activities. The first cohort included 10 freshmen majoring in political science, philosophy and legal communications. Future cohorts will include majors across the board.

“Howard University has taken a momentous step with the creation of the B.A.-J.D. program,” said Danielle Holley-Walker, J.D., dean of the Howard University School of Law. “This program allows us to increase the critical pipeline of Howard students to law school.”

CLIMATE CHANGE

“I was just happy to be a part of that moment in history,” May says. “I still get goosebumps thinking about it.”

“I think about those events, it’s not across the world’s greenhouse gas emissions to zero. The discussion was moderated by CBS News correspondent Michelle Miller (B.A. ’89). Gates named several industries that make up most of the world’s carbon emissions, including transportation, electricity, manufacturing, agriculture, and heating and cooling. Senior biology major Tyler Colon asked Gates about how to offset the economic costs of going green, also known as the “green premium,” which hinder everyday individuals from purchasing green technologies.

“We’ve done some of that by having the tax credit for electric cars, but if you look at those, it’s not across the entire economic spectrum,” said Gates. “At the end of the day, affordability is the metric we’ve got to win on.”

STUDENT LIFE

Alternative Spring Break 2021 Goes Online

More than 400 students elected to forgo what some might consider a “traditional” spring break to serve with Howard University Alternative Spring Break (HUASB). Coordinated by the Office of the Dean of the Chapel, the first-ever virtual HUASB program continued to address social injustices across the globe during Spring Break, March 8-10, 2021. Students from all backgrounds, with varying majors and missions, united to complete more than 100,000 service hours. Participants served and engaged with organizations in more than 16 communities, with first-ever sites including Jamaica, Sacramento, California; and Bronx County, New York. As a tradition, service continued in New Orleans, Chicago, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

“Student leaders are the pulse of Howard University; they are known to create opportunity in times of crisis,” said Bernard L. Richardson, Ph.D., dean of the Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel. — IAMH POPES-JONNIS & ANDREYA J. DAVIS
The 154th Anniversary of Charter Day Convocation ceremony to commemorate the signing of the federal charter that established Howard as a university. Held virtually on March 5, the 154th anniversary ceremony featured President Wayne A. I. Frederick as the keynote speaker, who acknowledged the challenges and the latest signs of hope related to the pandemic. He highlighted the ascension of alumna Kamala Harris to the vice presidency and talked about Howard's dedication to being inclusive, regardless of race and gender. “We are a Black institution that is open to any person regardless of the color of their skin,” he said in his keynote speech. “It is our everlast- ing duty to embrace that complexity, never to shrink away from it.” The March 5 Convocation set the stage for this year’s Charter Day Virtual Celebration. Cedric the Entertainer served as master of ceremonies, and entertainment included Matt the Violinist and Step Afrika!, the award-winning company founded by Howard’s own C. Brian Williams. The 2021 recipients for the Alumni Award for Distinguished Postgraduate Achievement included: Virginia State University President Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D.; property law scholar Thomas W. Mitchell, J.D., LLM; and Ward 8 public servant Clifford L. Muse Jr., Ph.D, University archivist and historian.

Despite the pandemic, Howard University held its annual Charter Day Convocation ceremony to commemorate the signing of the federal charter that established Howard as a university. Held virtually on March 5, the 154th anniversary ceremony featured President Wayne A. I. Frederick as the keynote speaker, who acknowledged the challenges and the latest signs of hope related to the pandemic. He highlighted the ascension of alumna Kamala Harris to the vice presidency and talked about Howard’s dedication to being inclusive, regardless of race and gender. “We are a Black institution that is open to any person regardless of the color of their skin,” he said in his keynote speech. “It is our everlasting duty to embrace that complexity, never to shrink away from it.” The March 5 Convocation set the stage for this year’s Charter Day Virtual Celebration. Cedric the Entertainer served as master of ceremonies, and entertainment included Matt the Violinist and Step Afrika!, the award-winning company founded by Howard’s own C. Brian Williams. The 2021 recipients for the Alumni Award for Distinguished Postgraduate Achievement included: Virginia State University President Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D.; property law scholar Thomas W. Mitchell, J.D., LLM; and Ward 8 public servant Clifford L. Muse Jr., Ph.D, University archivist and historian.

Howard University saw a substantial increase this fiscal year in gifts across the board, from individuals, corporations and especially alumni. Total fundraising revenue jumped nearly four times, with a record 65 percent increase from alumni alone. The gifts, many earmarked for various programs and schools, have created scholarships and opportunities for Howard in a myriad of ways. “Our alumni realize that Howard is on the move,” said David Bennett, vice president of development and alumni relations. “The work of our students, faculty, staff and researchers to make the world more just is vital in these challenging times, and our alumni see that their investments are moving Howard forward.” These are just a handful of the generous contributions Howard received this fiscal year to date.

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

1,869,312

April 17, 2021

Howard University held its annual Charter Day Convocation ceremony to commemorate the signing of the federal charter that established Howard as a university. Held virtually on March 5, the 154th anniversary ceremony featured President Wayne A. I. Frederick as the keynote speaker, who acknowledged the challenges and the latest signs of hope related to the pandemic. He highlighted the ascension of alumna Kamala Harris to the vice presidency and talked about Howard’s dedication to being inclusive, regardless of race and gender. “We are a Black institution that is open to any person regardless of the color of their skin,” he said in his keynote speech. “It is our everlasting duty to embrace that complexity, never to shrink away from it.” The March 5 Convocation set the stage for this year’s Charter Day Virtual Celebration. Cedric the Entertainer served as master of ceremonies, and entertainment included Matt the Violinist and Step Afrika!, the award-winning company founded by Howard’s own C. Brian Williams. The 2021 recipients for the Alumni Award for Distinguished Postgraduate Achievement included: Virginia State University President Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D.; property law scholar Thomas W. Mitchell, J.D., LLM; and Ward 8 public servant Clifford L. Muse Jr., Ph.D, University archivist and historian.
Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Ph.D., captured a series of about 100 photographs in a collection entitled “Witness” during and after she served as U.S. ambassador to Austria. The collection includes pictures from sub-Saharan countries, where she was inspired by the women leaders who prevented and stopped violent conflict. She calls them “women waging peace.” The collection was gifted to Howard University and will be displayed within the new Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership and the Undergraduate Commons (formerly Undergraduate Library).

Howard University partnered with The Estée Lauder Companies to create a safe space for Howard alumnae to build community and receive programming tailored to their needs. She’s Howard: Own Your Power is a part of the company’s ongoing commitment to double recruitment of employees and interns from HBCUs, establish stronger partnerships with Black organizations, and meaningfully support external organizations and nonprofits pushing for systemic changes and racial and social justice.

How is a self-driving Tesla car supposed to act when someone vandalizes a roadway speed limit sign? This is one of several questions a team of Howard University computer science researchers are trying to answer as society hurtles into its artificial intelligence future.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) awarded Howard University $7.5 million to launch the Howard University Center of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (CoE-AIML). The project is led by Danda B. Rawat, Ph.D., Howard University professor of computer science in the College of Engineering and Architecture. While artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have become mainstream buzzwords, Rawat and other scientists will be left to work out the real-world kinks in the systems. Last year, hackers used a two-inch piece of tape on a roadway sign to trick the Tesla autopilot into speeding up—by as much as 50 miles per hour.

Rawat said the research problem will be one of the first his team of doctoral, master’s and undergraduate students will investigate with the new DOD grant.

“As a human, if the speed limit sign changes drastically, I would be suspicious,” Rawat says. “Cars should think in the same ways. One piece of tape should not be used to make a decision. The car system needs to make reference to history and context. In human cognition we use multiple sources to make wide decisions.”

Another area Rawat’s team is examining is bias. Though AI/ML algorithms are running in computers and machines, discrimination is showing up—such as in Apple’s automated credit limit approval, which favored men over women.

Rawat said he expected Howard researchers at the newly established CoE-AIML to lead to the creation of more trustworthy, fair and reliable AI systems that could support a wide variety of applications, including the so-called Internet of Things, electronic warfare, counterterrorism, cybersecurity and machine vision.
THE RIGHT TO VOTE
Exploring the Role of Race and ‘Civic Virtue’ in the Continued Disenfranchisement of Florida’s Ex-Felons.
by Seth Shapiro

IN NOVEMBER 2018, REPUBLICANS Rick DeSantis and Rick Scott were elected to become governor and junior senator of Florida, respectively, in two tightly-contested races. On the same ballot, 65 percent of voters approved Florida Amendment 4, surpassing the 60 percent threshold needed to officially restore voting rights to ex-felons (excluding those convicted of murder or sexual assault) who had completed their sentences and paid any restitution for their crimes. After the results were in, many — on both sides of the aisle — were left wondering whether the outcome of the two major races would have turned out differently had the individuals who had stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021, been allowed to vote in the very election that had ultimately led to their disenfranchisement.

As a part of Thomas’ research, she has spent time over the last 20 years exploring the history and rhetoric of the ex-felon disenfranchisement debate in Florida. Most often, the subject of race did not enter into the debate, and if it was brought up at all, it was only by Republican lawmakers who denied their refusal to engage with the issue had anything to do with race. For years, legislation about ex-felon reenfranchisement was raised by Demo- cratic lawmakers, yet when African-American lawmakers were never given the attention needed to bring the issue to the chamber floor. “My research has found that, in the Florida legislature, an effective tool of colorblind racism has been ‘disregard.’ Color-blind racists have essentially told people of color that ‘to maintain our common good, we probably should not talk about the issues you are raising,’” Thomas says.

While the long-term outcome of this is unclear, Thomas explains that it has vast ramifications. “The entire trajectory of our country is changed when the voices of this population are silenced,” Thomas says.

that in order for an individual to make valuable contributions to the common good, they must be civically virtuous.” Thomas says. “But there are ways in which colorblind racism shows up to challenge the civic virtue of people of color. For instance, Black Lives Matter protesters were often labeled as “thugs” and “rioters” by certain politicians and individuals in the media. Thomas says. On the other hand, individuals who stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021, were deemed to be engaging in “protest” and “dissent” by those same people.

“In our society, civic virtue is primarily available to one race of people: white people. This virtue remains intact even when they engage in the same — or worse — behaviors than people of other races,” Thomas says.

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Moving Howard Forward
Chief Strategy Officer Keshad Young talks about pillars, milestones and Howard song.

by Christina Harper

To Rashad Young, Howard University functions like a city. It’s the strategic perspective he’s taking with implementing Howard Forward, the University’s five-year strategic plan. It makes sense, considering he’s spent his career transforming cities; first in his native Dayton, Ohio, and, most recently, the District of Columbia. Young began his role as senior vice president and chief strategy officer for Howard University in October 2020. In addition to spearheading Howard Forward, he also works on external affairs and real estate.

Are you feeling welcomed at Howard? 
I am swagged out. I have sweatshirts, t-shirts, masks. My kids and wife have paraphernalia. When I wear my HU gear and hear the “HU, You Know” call, I recognize what I am an alumus.

Are we where you hoped we would be? 
I am impressed at the wins already racked up when I start. Of course, we can do more.

What happens after 2024? 
Let us do it all again. Because the plan should be iterative. As we make progress down one lane, then we should readjust and continue to push our- selves, to continue to achieve.

The RIGHT TO VOTE
Exploring the Role of Race and ‘Civic Virtue’ in the Continued Disenfranchisement of Florida’s Ex-Felons.

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Women
Howard’s New Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership
by KIN-RII YU

For decades, Howard students have studied, embarked and debated women’s issues. Now, the field has its own home. In March, Howard opened the new Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership, made possible through a $1 million gift from HU Trustee Jim Munro and his wife, Heather Munro.

“We are connecting Black women wherever they may be located on the African diaspora to Howard and creating a space where we can have discussions about Black women globally,” says J. Jarpa Dawuni, Esq., Ph.D., the center’s executive director. The center focuses on four areas:

- Student-centered teaching and learning. In addition to offering a minor in women, gender and sexuality studies, the center will introduce student-run collectives – one undergraduate, one graduate – to allow students to plan their own programs. These include speakers, Alternative Spring Break, study abroad, internships and more.
- Collaborative faculty research. Faculty who study similar topics across different disciplines will build research networks to collaborate across and apply for grants together.
- Community-centered service learning. The center will partner with University departments on women-focused community activities. For instance, programs related to women’s health, including mental health, through the College of Medicine. In addition, the center will engage with the greater Washington, D.C. community through such programs.
- Global advocacy. The center will focus on law and social justice, public policy, women’s health and wellness, and business ventures as they relate to women.

The vision, Dawuni says, is “to prepare future leaders who are gender-conscious and grounded in Black feminism conscious- ness through collaboration with faculty on research, service learning and global engagement.”

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Workers to Bridge Gaps in Health Care

INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS HELP NARROW THE CHANCES OF FRAGMENTED AND INCOMPLETE CARE.

is a key element of the program that gives students an opportunity to experience patient care in real time without the added pressure of working in an agency setting. Under the supervision of experienced faculty, students receive a patient care scenario and role-play engaging professionals across disciplines, making connections among the physical, mental and emotional health of the patient. The lab brings social work students together with students in medicine, nursing, dentistry, occupational therapy, pharmacy and other disciplines, exposing them to the interprofessional nature of the health care field so they learn how to interact with professionals outside their own discipline.

“When you go straight to work in an agency, there are times when your supervisor might be too busy to monitor and give feedback,” says Rachel Shelton, a doctoral student and the program’s research assistant. “The simulation lab was a great way to get that experience and learn those lessons.”

Students can also participate in an interprofessional bus tour of various health agencies in Washington. The tour gives them exposure to the populations they’ll serve and into the organizations helping those communities.

Another aspect of the program is student internships, a critical opportunity for students to put their skills to work. Joseph Perry II, MSW/MPH (B.S.’11), an alumnus of the School of Social Work and a 2019-2020 BWHET participant, says the interprofessional nature of the education he received through the program fulfilled its mission of preparing him for his current role.

“I work on a team that consists of mental health therapists, nurses, a pharmacist and peer support staff, and I’ve been able to mimic the BWHET framework in my place of service to the community,” he says. “Interprofessional education is important because interdisciplinary teams help narrow the chances of fragmented and incomplete care. This increases the overall chance of consumers getting as much help as they need when they need it.”

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Howard Forever

The Impact of Chadwick Boseman Beyond Howard University

Imani Pope-Johns

HE WAS ONLY 43 AND FULL OF LIFE. He was a young champion of Black storytelling in film and arts, who led through the example he set in his own career. Chadwick Boseman (B.A. ’06) shined as a pillar of Hollywood accountability to expand diversity, equity and inclusion of what the world digested and believed about the people and culture of African diaspora.

Howard University was honored to have him return to the Hilltop as the 2018 Commencement speaker, where he was welcomed with the “Wakanda salute,” branded unofficially as “Howard Forever.” Throughout his college career, capped by a tenure as the president of Howard Players, many already saw him as a young emerging actor on the rise. When he came home to deliver his Commencement address, he arrived with a full circle view of what he accomplished through his dedication and how Howard contributed to his growth.

In his speech, he shared an experience that would shift the trajectory of his career. He had landed a role on a soap opera, playing a young man drawn into a gang. He later approached the producers to ask more about this character because he felt conflicted about playing a role that “seemed to be wrapped up in assumptions about us as Black folk,” he said. He was let go from the job. However, he noted, “When I dared to challenge the system that would relegate us to victims and stereotypes with no clear historical backgounds, no hopes or talents, when I questioned that method of portrayal, a different path opened up for me, the path to my destiny.”

That moment cemented his reputation and the roles he would play afterwards. He chose Black characters who he could portray as men of honor, with purpose and dignity. He recreated important historical figures in African-American history, such as Jackie Robinson, Thurgood Marshall and James Brown. He told Esquire magazine in 2018 that playing those roles were a “profound expression” of their individual experiences as African-Americans.

“The character is not existing separate from his Blackness,” he said. “I feel like our stories are some of the best American stories because of that.”

His fictional characters, too, were complex heroes that broke stereotypes. Starring as T’Challa/Black Panther in Marvel Studios’ world-wide phenomenon “Black Panther,” Boseman gave magnitude to his purpose. He made his debut in the Marvel Cinematic Universe as the African superhero in “Captain America: Civil War” in 2016. He reprised the role again for “Avengers: Infinity War” in 2018.

Boseman’s other most notable film credits include the revenge thriller “Message from the King,” “Draft Day” opposite Kevin Costner, the psychological post-war drama “The Art of Racing in the Rain,” the sports drama “The Express.” He played his last role as Trumpet player Louis Green in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” earning a posthumous best actor Oscar nomination.

The characters Boseman portrayed would be celebrated, but his greatest gift to us was himself. Boseman told the graduates in 2018 that instead of looking for a job or career, find a purpose. “Purpose comes when you know your life’s journey, your path, your purpose. Purpose is an essential element of you. It’s the reason you are on the planet at this particular time in history.” For Chadwick Boseman, his purpose became his legacy.
For those unfamiliar with Vernon E. Jordan Jr., it can be difficult to explain who he was or what exactly he did that made him so influential. He never held public office, nor did he ever run. He was never appointed to a government position, he turned down any that he was offered. And yet, he was one of those omnipresent public figures. While politicians would come and go, Mr. Jordan always seemed to be there, talking to whoever happened to be in power about what he thought was best for the country. While no title can capture precisely who he was, perhaps the moniker of “troublemaker” can begin to describe why he was so important and how he rose to such prominence.

Mr. Jordan would often tell a story that captured both his humble roots and how he managed to rise up from them. As a young man, he worked as a chauffeur for former mayor of Atlanta, Robert Maddox. When, years later, Maddox saw Mr. Jordan on television working as a lawyer for an Atlanta law firm to integrate the University of Georgia, Maddox reportedly remarked, “I always knew he was up to no good.”

Mr. Jordan would say that he always strived to “get up to ‘no good.’ The good kind of ‘no good’ that my friend John Lewis called ‘good trouble.’ The kind of ‘no good’ that, at its core, is defying oppression for the sake of justice. ‘No good’ for the greater good.” It was this mission that motivated Mr. Jordan throughout his life and has inspired so many others who have been directly and indirectly influenced by him. After his integration efforts at the University of Georgia, he worked for the NAACP, organizing boycotts of stores in the state that did not hire Black employees. He also went throughout the South, overseeing efforts that registered 2 million Black voters.

While Mr. Jordan is most well-known for his informal roles, like when he served as one of President Bill Clinton’s most-trusted advisers, he did hold a number of important positions. He was the executive director of the National Urban League. He was one of the top lawyers at a number of different law firms in New York and Washington, D.C. He was a board member at numerous companies, and he sat on the Board of Trustees for Howard University. In all of these capacities, he sought to influence those in his orbit to champion the cause of civil rights and lend their support to African-American individuals and communities. He was the consummate chess player and kingmaker, facilitating connections in the corporate and political world and quietly recommending people for certain jobs. But what made him such an affectionate icon to so many was his kindness and genuine eagerness to help all people. He was just as likely to talk to presidential candidates about ideal running mates as he was willing to pick up the phone and put in a good word for a student applying to Howard. He was just as interested in conversing with presidents in the White House on issues of national importance as he was in talking to prospective Howard University students on the subway in New York about his beloved Alma Mater.

For Mr. Jordan, no trouble was too big or too little. For him to support a worthy cause was no trouble at all.
Howard University Hospital’s first-time participation in a vaccine trial marks another deliberate step toward health care inclusion.
According to research from Johns Hopkins University, vaccine makers attempted the same. For advocates of minority communities, this was a laudable move in the eyes of many. According to research from Johns Hopkins University, COVID-19 infection rates for Black and Latinx Americans were more than twice as high as for non-Hispanic whites. This disparity has been pivotal. “It’s significant,” Maxwell says. “We felt we could translate to people that look like us the importance of participation in an activity that would help save their lives.”

Building Trust and a Solution

At Howard, one of 115 Novavax trial sites across the United States and Mexico, 30 percent of those 150 study participants were African-American, 20 percent were Latinx and still more were from other racial minority groups, says Siham Mahgoub, M.D., lead investigator for Howard’s arm of the Novavax trial. She also is medical director at Howard’s Center for Research in Infectious Disease Management.

By enrolling in a trial, some of those individuals defied what have been longstanding hesitations in their communities about lending their bodies to experimental science.

Physiological, lifestyle, socioeconomic and other factors affecting wellness and disease can and do vary among the study population. To help account for that and to fuel production of drugs, development of medical devices and improvement in practices aimed at meeting the medical needs of a wider swath of Americans, federal lawmakers mandated in 2001 that the race and gender makeup of federally funded clinical trials mirror the nation’s demographics. It was a laudable move in the eyes of many.

But federal funding of clinical trials has fallen precipitously in recent decades. Privately owned companies focused on pharmaceutical, medical device and other health care innovations, now finance and control most trials, often treating them as proprietary and hedging against corporate competition. As a result, many companies do not disclose the gender or race of clinical trial enrollees until trials are completed. As one example, after concluding its 2016 trial of an experimental drug designed to undercut Alzheimer’s disease, Eli Lilly executives revealed that just 17 percent of participants were Black – even though African-Americans are more likely than all other racial groups to suffer and die from what is the most common form of dementia. Eli Lilly’s trial drug failed.

Creating Transparency

Black, Latinx and other persons of color in Howard’s COVID-19 vaccine trial included patients with preexisting, chronic illnesses. That was a complexity that HUH researchers had to confront. The Novavax vaccine trial was “double-blinded,” meaning neither researchers nor trial participants knew who was getting a placebo or the actual vaccine. When the trial ended a month after participants received their dose, those who got the placebo would be given the vaccine.

Double-blinding trials involving humans is considered essential to ensuring integrity of the study. If neither researchers nor participants know whether a placebo or the actual vaccine is given or received, this hedges against chances of conscious and unconscious biases influencing either researchers or study participants.

It wasn’t surprising, however, that as severe illness and deaths from the virus mounted, some trial participants were asking to be unblinded so
they could find out whether they had received the vaccine or not and to ensure they could get one as quickly as possible. A provision on the trial’s consent form allowed participants to withdraw from the research. One participant, who did not request to be unblinded, stood out to Maxwell. She was a high-risk, 70-year-old African American with comorbidities who worried about whether she received the vaccine or the placebo. Maxwell and Mahgoub listened to her concerns. However, she expressed her willingness to continue with the trial because she wanted Howard’s involvement in combating COVID-19 to be a successful one, and she had put her trust in the doctors. Maxwell and Mahgoub made the unusual decision of recommending that she withdraw from the trial and be unblinded so they could find out whether she was still at risk of contraction. “This disease has systematically killed many senior citizens,” Maxwell recalls. “I personally think it would have been unethical of me to say, ‘Wait a month until everyone gets the vaccine.’” As it turned out, she was in the placebo group. Immediately, they gave her a vaccine.

“Immediately, they gave her a vaccine.”

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Immediately, they gave her a vaccine.

“My science and the way I look at it has been tempered by the needs of the participants – because they are so vulnerable – to make sure they are protected. That is a classic example of how we approach this work.”

It’s an approach, she believes, that bolsters the confidence of actual and potential biomedical-research participants in experimental medicine dispensed through Howard. It’s a confidence in Howard’s bid to expand on the experimental medicine front.

“On the Move: The mobile health clinic traveled to different neighborhoods as part of the Novavax trials.”

“On the Move: The mobile health clinic traveled to different neighborhoods as part of the Novavax trials.”

The mobile health clinic traveled to different neighborhoods as part of the Novavax trials.

COVID-19, Melman adds, is a “more novel challenge” whose end seems reasonably in sight. Not so with racism. Areas to be further explored include the conundrum over why some people suffer fewer of racism’s debilitating mental and physical effects. What makes one person more or less resilient than another? The study comes as Howard, until now – has been like a rollercoaster. It has been intense. I work long hours. All my life, my goal has been to work for a Black business or institution. Minorities don’t always get the best care. It is not being biased to want our people to have the best. At HUH we provide the best. Our patients deserve the best.”

Howard University Hospital’s work during the coronavirus pandemic has been done with the safety of patients and employees in mind, Browne says. What Howard has achieved in the time of COVID, Maxwell adds, is critical. It is promising. “We’ve worked not just to focus on COVID,” she says, “but also to focus on the individual. We’ve had people in this vaccine trial with chronic illnesses who hadn’t been seen by a doctor. We’ve been able to refer people to doctors. We’ve made sure we do any mitigation that we can … We understand the intersectionality of all of this. And it has been game-changing.”
Raising Up Kamala

HOW HOWARD’S PAST SHAPED KAMALA HARRIS’ FUTURE

by Tamara E. Holmes (B.A. ’94)
When Kamala Harris shattered the political glass ceiling to ascend to the vice presidency, the swell of Bison pride reached a fever pitch heard across the nation. Howard is used to experiencing #BisonPride for many of its notable alumni across the public sphere – Thurgood Marshall, Toni Morrison, Vernon Jordan, Chadwick Boseman, to name a select few. But this time, it was different. “Because of the moment we find ourselves in right now – the post-Trump moment, the Black Lives Matter moment and what we can say are the dual pandemics of COVID and systemic racism – there needed to be someone that had both the skill and the moral center to be able to solve problems,” says Dana Williams, Ph.D., dean of the Graduate School and professor of English. “It wasn’t just a situation where it’s good to have a Kamala Harris elected; it’s a situation where we absolutely needed a Kamala Harris to be elected.”

Faculty and students are keenly aware of what Harris’ election means to Howard and its mission of creating leaders across disciplines and throughout the world. “What I’m expecting and anticipating is that her performance is going to highlight the fact that there are excellent students at HBCUs beyond her,” he says. “A number of our graduates are doing significant things, and it provides a platform for Howard to be in a spotlight in a positive way.”

The love affair Bison have with Kamala Harris has not been one-sided. “Every time she has had the opportunity to speak about Howard, she has been effusive in her praise of the educational experience she had at Howard and how it prepared her,” Wutoh says.

Following the Legacy

When Harris first arrived at the Mecca in the Fall of 1982, a Howard alumna also named Harris had shattered her own political glass ceiling not long before. Patricia Roberts Harris (B.A. ’45) had become the first Black woman selected to join a president’s cabinet, and she went on to serve as secretary of health, education, and human services. As a result, she was also the first African-American woman in the line of succession to the U.S. presidency, at number 13.

At the time, the women of Howard were celebrating her position in the White House, not knowing – the younger Harris included – that the woman who would become the second-in-line of succession to the presidency had moved into Eton Towers and settled into the Howard scene.

Kamala Harris, however, was well aware of the legacies who had passed through the halls of Howard. “Because of the moment we find ourselves in right now – the post-Trump moment, the Black Lives Matter moment and what we can say are the dual pandemics of COVID and systemic racism – there needed to be someone that had both the skill and the moral center to be able to solve problems,” says Dana Williams, Ph.D., dean of the Graduate School and professor of English. “It wasn’t just a situation where it’s good to have a Kamala Harris elected; it’s a situation where we absolutely needed a Kamala Harris to be elected.”

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The love affair Bison have with Kamala Harris has not been one-sided. “Every time she has had the opportunity to speak about Howard, she has been effusive in her praise of the educational experience she had at Howard and how it prepared her,” Wutoh says. before her and made it possible for Howard graduates to move another step further than they had. In her memoir, “The Truths We Hold,” Harris describes her lifelong interest in law and how, when deciding on a college, she wanted her career to “get off on the right foot. And what better place to do that than at Thurgood Marshall’s alma mater?” she writes.

Other Howard alumni were changing the face of the nation during that time. Edward Brooke (B.A. ’45) had already cleared a path for future Black politicians after being the first African-American popularly elected to the U.S. Senate. Andrew Young (B.S. ’51) had wrapped up his stint as the first African-American United States ambassador to the United Nations and was serving as the 97th mayor of Atlanta. And Phylicia Rashad (B.A. ’70) was helping to change the world’s perception of the Black family as Clair Huxtable, lawyer and mom, on the hit sitcom “The Cosby Show.”

The Making of a Vice President

Plethora of external influences were also making their way to Harris during her Howard days. Flipping through the student newspaper, The Hill-top, her freshman year, Harris probably read about Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm – one of her “heroes” – chairing a legislative workshop during the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Town Hall on Getting Around Voter Suppression. The love affair Bison have with Kamala Harris has not been one-sided. “Every time she has had the opportunity to speak about Howard, she has been effusive in her praise of the educational experience she had at Howard and how it prepared her,” Wutoh says.

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Kamala Harris, however, was well aware of the legacies who had passed through the halls of Howard
WHEN WE GATHER: A LABOR OF LOVE WITH HOWARD ROOTS

Vice President Kamala Harris’ success didn’t come in a vacuum. Rather, it came on the backs of those who went before her. That was the premise of the short film, “When We Gather,” which celebrates the women whose accomplishments made Harris’ ascendancy to the vice presidency possible.

For Jennifer Thomas (B.A. ’88), associate professor in the Department of Media, Journalism and Film, the project – inspired by and in honor of Kamala Harris – had a special meaning. Like Harris, Thomas was initiated in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Chapter. Thomas heard about the project through another alumna from Alpha Chapter, Devry Ross (B.S.E.E. ’90).

“When I learned about it, the hair on my arms stood up, and I just had this feeling that this was a project I really want to be involved in,” Thomas says. She ultimately served as the supervising producer for the film, which was crowd-funded.

Meanwhile, when Howard students in the making. Some of the lessons Harris learned while at Howard have been instrumental to her success, for example, her deft skill and confidence when debating – immortalized in her famous line in the vice-presidential debate, “Mr. Vice President, I’m speaking” – were honed at Howard when she joined the debate team. As a political science and economics major, she also chaired the economics society and pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Chapter, during her time at Howard.

In her sophomore year, she interned with Senator Alan Cranston of California, the same seat she would win more than 30 years later.

Once, while working as a tour guide at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Harris ran into Vice President Kamala Harris here. We all feel as a young person to have these two icons, both larger than life, take the time to show an interest in me,” she recalls in her memoir.

Ready for Whatever Comes Next

As students were curious. These are young people coming into their own politically. Some people weren’t sure if Kamala Harris’ politics matched their own, but there was still a sense of pride that this person who is doing this thing went to this place,” she says. “She sat in the same classrooms and has taken [classes with] some of the same professors.”

For some students, Harris’ vice presidency expands their notion of what can be. “Everything is possible because of the alumni that came before you,” says Rachel Howell, a senior political science major and president of the Howard University Student Association. “It means so much just being able to walk on the Yard and think to myself, ‘Wow, Vice President Kamala Harris was here. We all share the same cultural experience.’”

That is something that all alumni can take a page from, Wutoh notes. “I’d use this as an opportunity to encourage alumni to support the University, help us in the things we’re trying to do to make sure the next Kamala Harris.”

Howard in the (White) House

Bison presence in the new administration doesn’t stop at Kamala Harris. Howard’s own are serving in a number of capacities, both in the Biden-Harris administration and on the transition team.

Rykia Dorsey Craig, White House Regional Communications Director
Danielle Conley (J.D. ’13), Deputy Counsel to the POTUS
Maggie Lynch (J.D. ’12), Press Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Donametria “Tria” Stallings (M.A. ’07), Confidential Assistant, Office of the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education
Carlton Waterhouse, Ph.D. (J.D. ’95) Deputy Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office for Land and Emergency Management

Vice President Harris talks with Linda Thomas-Greenfield before swearing her in as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

She also noticed the excitement in her classroom throughout the election season. “Students were curious. These are young people coming into their own politically. Some people weren’t sure if Kamala Harris’ politics matched their own, but there was still a sense of pride that this person who is doing this thing went to this place,” she says. “She sat in the same classrooms and has taken [classes with] some of the same professors.”

For some students, Harris’ vice presidency expands their notion of what can be. “Everything is possible because of the alumni that came before you,” says Rachel Howell, a senior political science major and president of the Howard University Student Association. “It means so much just being able to walk on the Yard and think to myself, ‘Wow, Vice President Kamala Harris was here. We all share the same cultural experience.’”

That is something that all alumni can take a page from, Wutoh notes. “I’d use this as an opportunity to encourage alumni to support the University, help us in the things we’re trying to do to make sure the experience that Vice President Harris had continues to be accessible for the next Kamala Harris.”
Howard's classrooms have been incubators for protests that matter and their leaders.

Street Smart

The sun beamed on Honolulu’s capitol building the morning of the Hawaii for Black Lives rally, a bit of meteorological foreshadowing for the triumphant day ahead. Kylah Hughley, a Howard University junior, had worked to plan the details and publicize the June 6, 2020 event across social media. She and her co-organizer hoped for a turnout of maybe 1,000 peaceful protestors. Instead, nearly 10,000 people of all races—some with signs, some in traditional Hawaiian clothing—showed up to stand with Black Lives Matter and make the rally one of the largest in the state’s history.

Hughley is one of many Howard students who felt a call to action during that 2020 Summer of nationwide rallies. Some participated in marches, while others, like Hughley, became organizers in their home cities. Their critical involvement in the protests, coupled with what they gained in Howard’s classrooms, inevitably inspired a new generation of leaders.

Blending Education and Activism

Howard’s history of grassroots activism influences what’s being taught in its lecture halls. So does the do-something energy of Washington, D.C., where local, national and international politics intersect with the mission-driven work of major civil rights and social justice organizations headquartered in the city. It’s an atmosphere that connected Howard students’ engagement in sit-ins during the civil rights movement in the 1950s and ’60s; Black power and the June 16 movement in the 1970s; anti-apartheid protests in the 1980s; and involvement in every activism from climate change to human rights to criminal justice, says Clarence Lusane, Ph.D., professor and former chairman of Howard’s Department of Political Science.

“Howard was born out of a very critical period of the United States, during the Reconstruction era in 1867; when our country actually made an effort at democratization and inclusion. There’s a long history of our students becoming leaders around critical moments,” Lusane says. From an academic standpoint, the intersection of history and leadership is a teachable moment. “What we try to do is encourage our students to see a relationship between what we study and being change agents,” Lusane adds, “and that fits in with the whole idea that education should have a purpose. Of course, every student isn’t going to be an activist, and every student shouldn’t be an activist. But we can lay the foundation for the relationship between service and education.”
**Filling in the Corporate Diversity Gap**

- Keeping companies and organizations accountable for building representative work environments has been an ongoing challenge since the signing of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act made discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin illegal in any employment-related process. The past year of elevated racial accountability has seen an explosion of advocacy, including among Howard University alumni who are actively shaping and leading the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) conversation for companies like Bayer, CBS Entertainment, Morgan Stanley and Northrop Grumman.

  “Organizations are now understanding what has been talked about for a long time – to be successful, you have to be inclusive in your talent and the perspectives you bring to the table,” explains Darlene Slaughter (B.S. ’82), vice president and chief diversity, inclusion and engagement officer for the March of Dimes. “It has to be more than a conversation or a quote. There has to be real movement, impact and outcomes.”

A 2019 study by Gartner, a Connecticut-based research and advisory firm, revealed that 75 percent of companies that maintain diverse and inclusive decision-making teams will exceed their financial targets. The same study found that gender-diverse and inclusive teams outperform their less inclusive counterparts by 50 percent.

“Organizations are beginning to realize that the talent we employ are in our communities, consume our products and represent our brands. It speaks volumes when the c-suite and boards reflect diversity,” Slaughter says. “It’s no longer a ‘nice to have.’ It attracts talent and adds to the bottom line.”

**From the Streets, Leaders Emerge**

**IN THE HEIGHTENED SOCIAL ACTION OF SUMMER 2020, Howard University senior political science major Peter Lubembela organized 10 events in the span of six weeks for his Denver, Colorado community, where the number of deadly shootings skyrocketed 30 percent between Summer 2019 and Summer 2020. The founder and executive director of unforo, an organization he started by asking 10 Black men to each donate $10 to feed people at a local shelter, Lubembela expanded his mission to confront racial inequality, police brutality and gun violence.**

“After George Floyd got killed, my parents were like, ‘Peter, we don’t want you protesting. It’s dangerous.’ But I had to do something,” he says. “It’s been really exciting, being able to get people who are passionate about pushing this struggle forward to come together. I think in order to lead, you have to take a stand.”

Senior David Edgerton III agrees. “Organizing has opened and expanded my world view to include, not just the people suffering in the United States, but all marginalized people across the world,” he says. He helped organize several student-led protests in the Minnesota suburbs. He also addressed more than 15,000 people from the Minnesota state capitol steps as part of the “Sit to Breathe” movement. Edgerton is taking his advocacy skills to Howard University School of Law in the fall.

Third-year Howard law student Dominique Dille gained a different set of skills: legal observing, for which she received training through D.C. Black Lives Matter. She documents cops for instances when people’s civil rights are being violated and tries to help them receive bail support.

“I’ve always wanted to go into criminal law because I saw how corrupt the system is,” Dille says. “It is minority populations facing the brunt of the injustice of the criminal system and the injustice of America.”

Hughley is switching her grassroots leadership in another direction after learning that activism doesn’t happen just on the front lines of protests and marches. With three friends, she created Our Space, a youth group in Hawaii that plans and hosts events designed to affirm and support Black kids.

“I had to step away because I can’t pour from an empty cup, but I felt guilty – ‘What am I going to do now that I’m not out there?’” she says. “Once I found this project, I recognized 90 percent of the work is not in the streets, the marching or the signs. That’s what brings attention to what’s really happening behind the scenes.”

**Shanell Kitt (M.S.W. ’15)**

Visual artist and licensed therapist Shanell Kitt has used her drawings to amplify Black voices and build solidarity around critical issues. She was inspired to create “Protesting Near Central Park – They Will Hear Us, They Will See Us,” after attending a peaceful protest against discrimination and police brutality in New York City.

“We often organize, plan, support and study the history of peaceful protests. We understand that racial inequity – structural, institutional and individual – is dangerous and undeserved. The subjects in my drawing are empowered and present, and the story of the Black experience is one of dignity, hope and resilience.”

**Jay Durrah (B.A. ’83)**

Celebrated for using multiple colors instead of natural skin tones to represent the multicultural makeup of humans, artist Jay Durrah painted several murals around Washington, D.C., at the onset of last Summer’s racial reckoning. One depicted a young Black boy holding a sign that read: “Am I next?”

“The absurdity is that it’s a valid concern for Black children and adults fearful of police encounters. The majority of my paintings are reflective of my experiences and values as a Black man. I use themes such as hope, perseverance and persistence in my paintings that are directed to my community.”

**Jordan Shanks (B.A. ’17)**

For almost seven years, Jordan Shanks documented the continued struggle for racial equity through his camera lens. In October 2020, his debut photo collection, “Love Letters to America,” exhibited alongside his latest film, “Never Again,” which followed the dramatic removal of Confederate monuments in the context of the nationwide protests.

“By capturing the essence, beauty and humanity of Black and brown people in America, Our lives are not simply struggle, just as they are not simply triumph. To ignore either one when telling a story would be a disservice to viewers, particularly audiences of color, whose realities are often warped in mainstream representation.”

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In the middle of the night in Lille, France on March 20, 2020, Micah George learned that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. planned to close its borders within 48 hours—before her planned return on March 22. “I received a call at 3:00 a.m. and was on a flight back to the U.S. at 7:00 a.m.,” says George, who was a junior marketing major studying abroad at the SKEMA Business School.

As the world scrambled, adjusting to a new global health threat, governments issued stay-at-home orders and travel restrictions. Anthony Wutoh, Ph.D., reached out to our corporate partners and conducted surveys of faculty and students to see who needed additional support,” Wutoh says.

The University received donations from its trustees and other supporters. It also established an $8 million fund for students experiencing financial hardship because of the pandemic, the Howard Easement and Assistance Relief Trust (HEART) Grant. It provided up to $1,250 to more than 8,000 eligible students. When graduating students needed additional money immediately as they lost jobs because of the pandemic, the University urged people to give to the Howard University Alumni Association Emergency Scholarship Fund.

The University also waived graduation fees and returned fees for student activities, parking and labs, and provided partial room and board refunds.

In addition, the University supported students studying abroad who purchased last-minute flights home. “One student took three different flights through airports that were still open on the last day that country allowed flights out of Europe,” Wutoh says.

George benefitted from the financial support. The flight from France to her family’s home in Lexington, Kentucky cost approximately $2,000. Howard University reimbursed her.

International students were also a concern as their home countries closed their borders, Wutoh says. “This was a public health crisis. We had to move everyone off of campus.”

At that time, Roger Lyn Jr. was a junior finance major from Kingston, Jamaica who lived on campus. "We had already established a task force. As countries closed their borders, we knew students may not be able to leave,” Wutoh says.

The week before students studying abroad came home, the University announced that instruction would be remote for the two weeks for all students after Spring Break. Emergency remote instruction quickly expanded to include the remainder of the semester.

It was a new Howard, one to which few were accustomed. Everyone was navigating an unfamiliar campus in the virtual world. The University, however, was quick to provide support—financial, technological and emotional—to its students, faculty and staff as everyone scattered across the country and the world.

Supplying Equipment and Financial Support

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This was unprecedented," Davis says. "We had to figure out how to house and Lyn says. with men’s and women’s basketball. with the tennis team. "It served as a safe before he returned, as captain, lyn turned to play women’s volleyball along the highest since Davis arrived in 2015. For Fall 2020, 40 student athletes returned to play women’s volleyball along with men’s and women’s basketball. "This was unprecedented," Davis says. "We had to figure out how to house and feed the student athletes since the dorms and cafeterias weren’t open. How do we train them? How do we keep them safe?"

Working with the NCAA, D.C. health department and University officials, the athletic department created a “meticulous plan” that included testing teams three times per week for COVID-19 and mapping out how teams would enter and leave facilities to reduce contact, Davis says. The additional costs and loss of revenue from spectators was offset by savings from drastically reduced travel.

Mental Health at Top of Mind “THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE HAS BEEN the mental health strains,” says Davis, whose department held virtual mental health town halls and provided support. Similar virtual support was available throughout the University. Bernard L. Richardson, Ph.D., dean of the Andrew Krieger School of Education and Human Development, noted the mental health strains, "and the importance of support and self-care for our students and faculty.

Prior to the pandemic, 28 percent of faculty completed training on the University’s mental health and counseling services. Following the pandemic, this number increased to 80 percent. The University established a virtual support system, including virtual counseling services, peer support groups, and online resources.

Service, during this time of crisis, gives our students a greater sense of purpose and meaning," he said. Student leaders collected gifts for area children during the annual Angel Tree project, served as virtual tutors with the Social Justice Tutoring Program, and coordinated the first-ever virtual Howard University Day of Service and Howard University Alternative Spring Break program this year.

"I admire our students because they have used their creativity to work, serve and organize together in virtual settings. In the process, they are building community and realizing they are still able to make significant contributions,” Dean Richardson says. “Our students are identifying their common struggles and talking openly about them, they are finding strength, confidence and comfort in their sharing. Truly, they are believing they have been called to Howard for such a time as this.”

Morris Thomas, Ph.D., joined the University as director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CETLA) in July 2020. His office integrated the different digital learning platforms, such as Zoom, Echo 360 and Blackboard, to provide a more integrated learning experience for faculty and students.

Prior to the pandemic, 28 percent of faculty completed training on using the learning management system. Now more than 90 percent completed the training for using the learning management system, increasing the efficacy of virtual instruction in the University. Thomas says, “Online learning is the latest-growing sector of higher education.”

During those years, Howard’s own alumni also made headlines: Thurgood Marshall (LL.B. ’33) became the first Black Supreme Court Justice and Edward Brooke (B.A. ’45) became the first Black U.S. senator elected by popular vote. “We were at Howard University at the best of times,” recalls Gaynelle Henderson (B.A. ’70, Ph.D. ’81), who was also Homecoming queen. “There was a sense of change and improvement for Black people. We went through the whole ‘I’m Black and I’m Proud’ movement at Howard when we connected more with our African roots.”

In honor of its golden anniversary, the class of 1970 has launched a Reunion Giving initiative to give back to Howard, particularly in the future has become our present reality.”

Looking Back 50 Years THE CLASSES OF 1970 AND 1971

THE CLASSES OF 1970 AND 1971 went to Howard at a time that’s often described as some of the most turbulent and glorious moments in United States history. Students recall the race riots, the rise of the Black Panther Party, the first moon landing. They remember listening to Stokely Carmichael (B.A. ’64) speak on campus and where they were when Martin Luther King Jr. was shot. They protested the Vietnam War in front of Douglass Building, which turned into a five-day sit-in, and witnessed Shirley Chisholm becoming the first Black woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. James Brown’s 1968 hit, “Say it Loud – I’m Black and I’m Proud,” blazed through the radio waves, bolstered by fashion trends – the afro and African Dashiki clothing – that doubled as statements in the Black movement.

In honor of its golden milestone, the class of 1970 has launched a Reunion Giving initiative to give back to Howard, particularly in this unusual pandemic. To contribute, visit giving.howard.edu/give1970Class.
As Kemp Powers was handed the script to Disney Pixar’s “Soul,” he knew the lead character, Joe Gardner, needed some more life breathed into him. And it wasn’t because the character was wandering through purgatory. So, the “One Night in Miami” playwright infused his own personal background into the script: growing up in Brooklyn, the people he knew, the conversations he’d had, his love of jazz. With that, Powers became the co-director for the film: Pixar’s first Black director—and for Pixar’s first film with a Black lead.

“Soul” focuses on a middle-aged, African-American New York pianist who teaches middle school music and dreams of becoming a professional jazz pianist. Joe Gardner argues with his mother (voiced by Phylicia Rashad, B.A. ’70) about these dreams; a similar situation Powers found himself in when he wanted to become a writer (thanks to his freshman English professor at Howard who spotted his talent). Powers recognized the opportunity to present a lead character who, he told The Washington Post, was “unapologetically Black.” To do so, he created “authentic Black spaces,” such as the scene in the barbershop. “The subject isn’t even about race. Just letting this character pass through these authentic Black spaces will add authenticity to the character in a natural way,” Powers said during a roundtable with HBCUBuzz.

While Powers says that “Soul” could be the story of any individual, it's a close mirror to himself. “I kind of poured my own life experiences into writing Joe,” he admitted. “This idea of pursuing your dream on nights and weekends... It’s a leap of faith.”

When Natasha Graves (B.S. ’12) was planning a trip to Scottsdale, Arizona, she found very little information about tourist activities besides hiking. It was incredibly frustrating, considering she uses multiple mobility aids to get around. As a result, she developed VacayAbility, a platform where people with disabilities or unique abilities can rate and review places based upon accessibility.

“After finding it increasingly difficult to locate reliable information on accessibility and disability resources at my travel destinations, I came up with VacayAbility,” she says. “Think TripAdvisor, but for accessibility.”

According to the Open Doors Organization, there are approximately 1 billion people globally with a disability. Between 2018-2019, more than 27 million travelers with disabilities took a total of 81 million trips, spending $58.7 billion on their own travel alone.

An active voice for the immobilized community, Graves lives with Sjogren’s syndrome, a systemic autoimmune disorder which leads to other medical conditions, including automatic dysfunction, inflammatory arthritis and gastrointestinal dysfunction. Consequently, she now uses a feeding tube for nutrition and various mobility aids while commuting. VacayAbility launched in February 2020, one month before the COVID-19 pandemic forced lockdowns worldwide. Due to ongoing travel stipulations as restrictions slowly lift, Graves has pivoted to working directly with establishments to ensure they’re making a concerted effort to accommodate a wide range of disabilities, including physical, low vision/blindness, deafness or hard of hearing, sensory, allergy and other concerns commonly overlooked.

Thanks to her education at Howard, Graves has leaned into the power of relationships to bring further awareness to her cause. “I earned a degree in health education/community health from Howard, but I also received a degree in networking,” she says. “I believe that has been the biggest advantage over my competitors.”
When Nadine Chapman (B.S. ’90) joined the World Bank Group (WBG) as a mediation officer in August 2000, she was inspired by the diversity of the staff. However, she noted the absence of African-Americans. “People are often drawn to fields where they know someone who has worked in that industry,” Chapman says, who first learned about the WBG from her Aunt Geri, who worked there as an executive assistant. “Unfortunately, not many individuals have exposure to the WBG or similar institutions during their formative years.”

The World Bank Group is an international finance institution and one of the world’s largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries. It has 150 offices worldwide, the largest in Washington, D.C. In 2014, a historic meeting between WBG former president Jim Yong Kim and President Wayne A. I. Frederick occurred at the Howard University School of Business. The meeting occurred around the time when Chapman pitched an idea to Homer LaRue, director of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Center at Howard School of Law: an opportunity for Howard law students to work at the WBG. By August 2015, the initiative was underway.

The program creates a pipeline between the WBG and third-year Howard law students, who would serve as associates. Associates are competitively selected to spend one year with the WBG’s Internal Justice Services, where they apply their legal skills and expand their network in an experiential learning environment.

Past associates have told Chapman that having the WBG on their resumes helped them stand out when seeking employment after law school. To date, the WBG has welcomed 50 associates from Howard, with 10 additional associates joining this Fall. Chapman currently serves as manager of mediation services. Her office mediates complex workplace disputes and provides facilitation, training and team building. She has personally mentored associates assigned to her office and has remained in contact with some after their departure.

“This program is the highlight of my career,” she says, noting how the experience builds confidence in the associates. “The program is a win-win for Howard and the WBG in that staff are exposed to a diverse cadre of students they previously would not have met.”

What stands in the way of a talented aspiring doctor from having a successful career in medicine? Cost. That’s what Greg Umphrey (M.D. ’02) and his wife, Alyx Porter Umphrey, M.D., noted when they both came out of medical school with significant student debt. As a result, the duo founded ElevateMeD, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2019, with a mission to support medical students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Students of color also lack access to information about scholarships and funding for medical school education. In 2018, 21 percent of students attending private medical schools reported a debt of $300,000 or more. Umphrey’s wife had already created a scholarship for young Black women with aspirations to study medicine, when the couple began brainstorming ways to give back to the community in an even greater way, with a focus on groups underrepresented in medicine.

“We wanted to be in a position where we could offer assistance to others,” said Umphrey. Thus, they founded ElevateMeD. Between 2019 and 2020, ElevateMeD established a board of directors and advisory board, gained 10 corporate partnerships and raised $566,720.

The organization partnered with 10 schools to welcome its inaugural ElevateMeD Scholars Program cohort for the 2019-2020 academic year. The program included the funding of scholarship awards; a partnership between each student and a physician mentor in their specialty; two financial wellness trainings; leadership and professional development opportunities; and more. In Spring 2021, the organization announced its second cohort of scholars. Umphrey says the ElevateMeD team has a goal to eventually assist undergraduate students as they prepare for the medical school application process. They also hope to create a long-lasting community of graduates paying it forward.

“We want our graduates to be able to bring others into the program, eventually be mentors and teachers, and train the new students coming up,” he said.

According to the American Medical Student Association, cost is the top reason qualified minority students did not enroll in medical school. Many
DIONNE ‘DJ MAGIC’ LEDBETTER: DJ & DOCUMENTARIAN

During her undergraduate days at Howard, Ledbetter was known as “DJ Magic,” during her junior year at Howard, Ledbetter wanted to highlight the unique experiences, history and artistry of Howard University DJs by creating her own documentary by graduation, her “In the Mix,” premiered in May 2020. “In the Mix” follows the stories of 10 DJs who matriculated through the Mecca, focusing on their personal journeys. Their stories range from becoming the American community to working with artists like Nipsey Hussle (DJ Chubb E Swagg). Ledbetter says she adopted interviewing and editing as well as a deeper understanding and appreciation of the craft. Ledbetter says she adopted a spiritual perspective of DJing: it’s no longer focusing solely on functionality. Ledbetter, whose persona “DJ Magic” stems from the phrase “Black Girl Magic,” has continued to DJ. During the pandemic, she has also kept in touch with the Howard DJ community, joining each other’s livestreamed sets and giving each other tips. “We have all been moving through this pandemic together and helping each other out,” she says.

STORYTELLING

When she was a Howard student...
Akadius (B.S.A. ’05) and Tamra Berry (B.A. ’93) welcomed their first child, Zora Avery Berry, on June 11, 2019 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Zora Avery was delivered by OB-GYN Caudrean L. Avery-Benjamin (M.D. ’04) and labor & delivery nurse Adrianna White (B.S. ’14).

Felicia DeHaney (B.S. ’95, M.B.A. ’06), director of program and strategy of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, was named to the board of directors of ZERO TO THREE, an early childhood nonprofit in Washington, D.C.

Brock Williams (B.S. ’95) was selected to join the Board of Trustees at the Head-Royce School in Oakland, California.

Kesslyn Brade Stennis (M.Div. ’06, Ph.D. ’09) was awarded the Wilson H. Elkins Professorship for her proposal to create community engagement experiences for students to learn social justice leadership and community empowerment at Coppin State University, where she is director of the Dr. Dorothy I. Height Center for the Advancement of Social Justice.

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Yolanda Whyte, M.D. (B.S. ’94), a pediatrician, was appointed to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Children’s Health Protection Advisory Committee, which advises on regulations, research and communications on environmental issues related to children’s health.

Colita Nichols Fairfax (B.S.W. ’88), has been named to the Observer’s PR POWER 50 List for 2020. She is the founder and CEO of Colita Fairfax and Company Inc., a New York City-area public relations firm in the arts and culture, entertainment, and social betterment sectors.

Kelvin John Pettaway (B.S.A. ’93) was promoted to associate vice president of wealth management at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management in Atlanta.

Sandra Jackson (M.S.W. ’93) was promoted to president and CEO of House of Ruth, a nonprofit that helps survivors of domestic abuse and homelessness in Washington, D.C.

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Earl R. Fitzhugh (M.A. ’04) was recently elected partner at the global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. He has written or co-authored several papers on racial equity and the racial wealth gap.

Boyd Rutherford (B.A. ’79) became the first reelected Republican lieutenant governor in Maryland. He is the ninth lieutenant governor of the State of Maryland. He was first elected to office in 2014 with Governor Larry Hogan and reelected in 2018. With Governor Hogan, Rutherford has worked to combat the opioid epidemic, reform burdensome regulations on job creators, and break the cycle of poverty between family generations. He has also led the state’s efforts to modernize procurement practices, improve the mental health delivery system, and make Maryland a national leader in the implementation of the federal Opportunity Zones program.

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BISON BOOKSHELF
by
Imani Pope-Johns

- 12 Affirmations for the Amazing Kid by Charlie Bing
- Anti-Racism: Powerful Words, Inspiring Ideas by Kenrya Rankin (B.A. ’03) is a colorful book about the anti-racist move-
- Fairy Cornbread by Arian T. Moore ’05) introduces concepts of family, giving and courage, all with a drop of magic
- Dear Child, People May Hate You by Savannah Walker (B.A. ’17) is a conversation tool for parents and educators to use with their
- One of the Good Ones by Maika Moulite tells the fictional life of a teen social activist and history buff who is killed under mysterious circumstances after attending a social justice rally and the aftermath on her devastated family.
- The Other ‘Twin’ by Karen Roberts Turner, Esq., follows the imaginary lives of twins who eventually deal with individuality and heartbreak through their bond.
- Greater Love: Let Love in and Watch How It Changes You by Devyn Bakewell (B.A. ’20) follows a recent high school graduate who leaves for New York with one plan in mind – to leave her past completely behind.
- When I Grow Up I Want To Be... An Accountant by Adrian L. Mayse, CPA, is a children’s fiction picture book that exposes readers to the world of accounting. This book allows children of diverse backgrounds to see themselves on the pages through creative and colorful artwork.

DAVID C. DRISKELL

David C. Driskell (B.A. ’55) devoted himself to preserving the rich heritage of African-American visual art and culture. His contributions as an artist, scholar and curator laid the ground-
- In Memoriam

Michael Masch

As Howard University’s senior vice president and chief financial officer and treasurer, Michael Masch was a tremendous asset to and advocate for our University during his six-
- To submit a book for consideration in Bison Bookshelf, please mail a copy to: Howard Magazine, Office of University Communications, 1851 9th Street NW, Washington, DC 20059
VICTOR C. W. DZIDZIENYO
(BPHARM ’76, MD ’90)

Theodore “Teddy” Carter was the first African-American woman elected to the Senate. She spent three years working as an administrator and became a rare gem, a personification of inclusiveness, and an unparalleled advocate for children.

DAVID DINKINS

Former Mayor of New York City and Howard University alumnus David Dinkins (B.A. ’40) lived Howard’s values of truth and service. In all he did, he acted in accordance with the needs of those around him.

From 1990 to 1993, Mayor Dinkins served as the first and only Black mayor of our country’s largest city. He took over the helm of New York at a time when the city was besieged by crime, corruption and racial division. He was dedicated to serving all of New York’s many diverse populations and making government as inclusive as possible. He appointed African-American, female, Hispanic and openly gay individuals to important posts. Mayor Dinkins was also determined to serve the interests of the city’s impoverished and underprivileged, including New York’s homeless populations.

In 1990, he also received Howard’s Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award in the field of politics. In 1992, he served as the opening convocation speaker and received an honorary Doctor of Laws.

SAPHRONIA DRAKE

For more than two decades, with boundless generosity, an engaging sense of humor, professionalism, and an unparalleled commitment and dedication to students, Sapfronia Drake served as the senior administrative assistant to the department of political science, the graduate program administrator and as the administrative assistant to the political science chair.

DRAKE began her service in the political science department in 1995. Her ability to master tasks with efficiency and precision became legendary. She was a rare gem, a personification of motherly love and humanity. She worked assiduously to help students complete the vision and mission of the department of political science, especially in so far as the students are concerned. She managed to maintain the responsibilities of the department in lean and difficult times of unprecedented departmental changes, doing so with unfailable resilience and dignity.

She touched every community associated with the University, from the custodial staff and the campus police, from administrators to cafeteria workers, from alumni and donors to mail deliverers and salespeople. Not only did they all know her, but she knew them and their stories. Her warm personality and ready openness to friendship will be missed.

—KATY PERRY, Ph.D., Chair, political science department

TED FOLARIN ROBERTS

Professor Emeritus Victor C. W. Dzidzienyo had a long and illustrious career as an educator, administrator and practitioner in the United States and abroad, especially in his homeland of Ghana. Affectionately known as “DZI,” he graduated with two degrees from Howard in architecture and in city planning. He then joined the faculty in 1969, where he stayed until 2017. His roles varied from professor to dean and director, as well as chair of the Department of Architecture from time to time.

His professional experiences as a designer and city planner indeed provided real world experiences for his students. His strong advocacy of community service with an activist orientation for direct action un doubtably led to his coining the term “the architect activist,” which is attributed to training Howard architecture and planning students to be change agents in their communities.

Professor Dzidzienyo left an indelible imprint on the nearly 1,700 students who graduated from our architecture and planning programs during his tenure at Howard.

Roderick “Rold” Wesley Flakes (B.A. ’93), April 17, 2020.
Doris Elaine Barnes Lassere Woods (B.A. ’42, M.A. ’43), December 1, 2019.
Andrew Nathaniel White III (B.A. ’45), November 11, 2020.
Dr. Joseph Bartholomew Williams (B.A. ’46), November 2, 2019.
Dr. Charles Dale Mitchell Sr. (M.D. ’48), March 12, 2020.
Donald R. Henderson, M.D., MPH (B.A. ’49), November 1, 2020.

PROFESSOR ROBERTS NOT ONLY PREPARED HIMSELF TO TACKLE and master new media horizons, but he consistently and with dedication inspired his students and radio listeners to do the same.

Known as “Uncle Ted” on the global airwaves, Professor Roberts spent 40-plus years teaching and inspiring Howard University students. He was former chair of the Howard University School of Communications’ Department of Radio, Television and Film, Fulbright Scholar; author; and award-winning international radio producer, announcer and manager (Voice of America, Sierra Leone and Liberian Broadcasting).

Upon his retirement in 2013, Professor Roberts wrote: As I tell my students during our “life’s lessons” sessions, doors are opening now that were not open in the past, and the great challenges facing minorities is to be ready to enter those doors as they open. No greater tragedy can befall us as minority people than to allow new opportunities to emerge without the concomitant preparedness to meet them.

Becky A. Baer (B.A. ’43), April 8, 2020.
Virginia Henriette Hundley (B.A. ’44), February 1, 2021.
Estelle Howard (B.A. ’45), October 20, 2019.

实木木、胡唐、安吉拉·贝利·米勒、安东尼奥·蒙特斯、艾莉诺·诺伍德·克拉克、埃利奥拉·若汉·里、华莱士·沃伦·威尔逊、路德·艾萨克·李（DDS ’53）、彼得·亚当·泰勒（B.S. ’54）、本杰明·罗伯茨（B.S. ’55）、阿曼多·托马斯·帕利（B.A. ’56）、迈克尔·邓（B.A. ’56）、阿曼多·帕里（B.S. ’56）、埃德华·麦康恩（B.A. ’52）、迈克尔·邓（B.A. ’56）、埃德华·麦康恩（B.A. ’52）、迈克尔·邓（B.A. ’56）、埃德华·麦康恩（B.A. ’52）．

PROFESSOR EMERITUS VICTOR C. W. DZIDZIENYO
(B.S. ’43, M.V. ’44)

David Neal McGruder (B.A. ’93) died unexpectedly on December 25, 2020, at age 49. He was a lawyer and passionate in community service. His wife, Delphisa Thomas McGruder (B.A. ’94), established a scholarship for service and justice in his name.

Terez Paylor (B.A. ’96) died on February 9, 2021. He was 37. Paylor was a popular NFL writer and Pro Football Hall of Fame voter whose career started as a sports reporter for the Kansas City Star. More recently, he worked for Yahoo Sports.

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The evening was humid and warm and smelled like Summer. As I walked onto the Yard with my parents, my stomach tightened with knots. Will I like my roommate? Would I make friends? How will I do in my classes? What would I do without my mom and dad? How was I going to survive in this city alone? It was August 1996. I was a wide-eyed freshman, assigned to Frazier Hall in the Quad and definitely not ready to be away from home. I was not a stranger to Howard University – my sisters, Helen (B.S. ‘91) and Anne (B.A. ‘95), both went to Howard. But it was different now that it was my turn. As we filed into the rows of folding chairs, then sat and listened to the president speak, I noticed other faces like mine, just as nervous, just as curious as I was. I didn’t feel so alone. Our class was unique because we were graduating in the year 2000. It seemed so far away and futuristic, but the number made it special.

At one point in the ceremony, Howard University pins were handed out. We were asked to turn to another student and pin them. As the pin went into my T-shirt, I thought: “Maybe I really could be a Bison. Maybe this is just the beginning.” That little Howard University pin gave me hope. Through the years, whenever I wore that same pin, it gave me pride. I was a Bison. I always came back: for Homecoming, as a guest lecturer and eventually as an adjunct professor.

In 2018 I accepted a position as a full-time instructor in the marketing department of the School of Business. As I walked to the new faculty orientation at the Interdisciplinary Research Building, I had a strange sense of déjà vu. I was anxious and nervous; questions were swirling in my head. Would I be good at teaching full time? Would my students enjoy my classes? Should I get my doctorate? Was this the right decision for me? As I chatted with other new faculty, some of whom I already knew from my days as an adjunct, my nerves calmed a bit. At the end, there was a pinning ceremony. The orientation leader passed pins out and welcomed us all as new faculty to Howard University. I kept swirling that pin around in my palm, feeling all the things I felt back in 1996. I was a Bison. I was home.

Dana Williams-Johnson is a full-time instructor in the marketing department in the School of Business and a full-time doctoral student in the Communications Culture and Media Studies program in the School of Communications.

The Howard University Legacy Giving Society

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

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

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

What will be your Howard University legacy?

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

Sample Bequest Language

I hereby give, devise and bequeath _______ and No/100 dollars ($DOLLARS) to Howard University, a nonprofit organization located at 2400 Sixth Street NW, Washington, DC 20059, Federal Tax ID #53-0204707, for Howard University’s general use and purpose.

Visit plannedgiving.Howard.edu