

HOWARD

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2021

MADAM V.P.

How Howard
Helped Kamala
Harris Climb
the Steps to the
White House



WHEN
PROTESTS
CHANGE LIVES

—
TRUSTING
THE VACCINE

—
VIRTUAL
HOWARD



■ **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.*





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Dear Howard University Community

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
 VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS
 CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



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HOWARD
 MAGAZINE

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PHOTOS BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

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.



“
SINCE OUR
FOUNDING BY
FEDERAL CHARTER
IN 1867, WE
HAVE WORKED
TO ACHIEVE A
MORE DIVERSE,
EQUITABLE AND
JUST SOCIETY.”

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.

From those simple words – “truth and service” – come heavy expectations that we will most certainly live up to.

Excellence in Truth and Service,



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

CHARLES R. DREW PROFESSOR OF SURGERY
PRESIDENT



POLITICS

Mood Swings

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

by RIN-RIN YU

■ JUSTIN HANSFORD CAN TELL YOU HOW OBAMA'S SUPPORTERS became complacent after his historic election –and how, after Biden's election, that's no longer the case. As executive director of the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center, he's well aware of the factors that have shifted the political landscape in the past 12 years and the legal changes that still need to be made. He and his team work tirelessly on pro bono cases, including reparations campaigns as well as mass incarceration and First Amendment cases in New York and Washington, D.C. for 2020's curfews.

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 energy then was unmatched. 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 shifted from corporate centris[m] 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 reimagine 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 attorneys and at least three law student interns on our team, all funded by grants. What the climate hasn't changed is our principles – we always say, "We use our head, our hands and our hearts for all of our work." All of our projects are in partnership with the grassroots. That's where our heart is, connecting with the people. All of our work also involves our immersion in the scholarship around civil rights and race and justice. We're on the cutting edge of the most current thinking, using our heads as we engage. And we get our hands dirty, using lawsuits and legal expertise to make change a reality.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

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IN THEIR SHOES

THE HOWARD HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY REFLECTS ON THE PANDEMIC

"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."



■■■
OMOLOLU MAJEKODUNMI (M.S.O.T. '12), founder of Triumph Therapeutics, a pediatric outpatient therapy clinic.

"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 know we will give them the care they need during this difficult period."

■■■
SHELLY MCDONALD-PINKETT, M.D., Chief Medical Officer of Howard University Hospital.



"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 MCGUIRE-NELSON (B.B.A. '90), 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 affects everything – the rent, the bills. I constantly have to check back home to see how my family is going, 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."

■■■
MCKAYLA MENYAH, RN 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."

■■■
MISAN PESSU, M.D. (M.D. '14) is an in-patient faculty member of the internal residency program at Luminis Health at the Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis, Maryland.

FAMILY

RESILIENT BLACK LOVE AMONG CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

by

BAHIYYAH M. MUHAMMAD, PH.D.

■ In research, children of incarcerated parents (COIP) are often dehumanized, villainized, stigmatized and labeled as future prisoners.

I was very uncomfortable with how research was oversaturated with negative outcomes and rarely mentioned the stories of those 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

“**THEY ARE POLITICALLY ENGAGED AND ACTIVE CITIZENS ON THEIR COLLEGE CAMPUSES.**”

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 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.

➔ **Bahiyyah M. Muhammad, Ph.D.**, is associate professor of criminology in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University.



MEDICINE

Increasing the Number of Black Physicians

by

ADETOMIWA VICTOR OWOSENI (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.

Perhaps 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 pursue medical degrees, and its medical school is one of two HBCUs that 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.

➔ **Adetomiwa Victor Owoseini (B.S. '18)** is a student in the class of 2023 at Harvard Medical School.

■■■

Dr. Muhammad with an incarcerated mother and son and a granddaughter/daughter during the closing ceremony of the Dr. Muhammad Experience's "Love and Incarceration" course at the D.C. Department of Corrections. Oftentimes, institutional policy requires family members in the same facility to remain separated, but these program exceptions help maintain family bonds during and beyond incarceration, highlighting the power of experiential learning and radical pedagogy.



PHOTO BY MUNTAQUIM MUHAMMAD

PHOTO BY FRANKLIN ZHANG



LITERATURE

THE POWER OF BOOKS

by SHEENA MASON (PH.D. '21)

■ WHEN I WAS EIGHT OR NINE, MY adoptive mother repeatedly smashed my skull against one of my 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 threats of beating me if I refused.

In my effort to be “perfect” and “earn” 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, that I was meant to use my story for a greater purpose, to “be somebody.”

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

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/st) 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 from the knowledge I gained. I also learned never to underestimate myself.



➔ Sheena Mason (PH.D. '21) seeks to expand and revise our understanding of African-American literature as always and necessarily being about race and racism.

CAMPUS NEWS



LEADERSHIP

The Inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris

■ ON JANUARY 20, 2021, the nation watched as Kamala Harris (B.A. '86) made history as the first woman, first African-American and first South Asian vice president of the United States. Bison presence at the inauguration was strong: Howard University Showtime Marching Band, featuring the drumline, the Flashy Flag Squad and the Ooh La La dancers, marched in the parade that led Harris to the White House. Maestro Michael Bearden (B.A. '86) had arranged the music for the National Anthem and conducted the orchestra that accompanied Lady Gaga.

Back on campus, the chapel bell tolled 49 times for Harris the moment she became the 49th vice president. In homes across the country, Howard women donned Converse sneakers and pearls, both recognizable accessories of Harris'. Online, the Howard University Alumni Association celebrated at the Blackburn Virtual Inaugural Party, with special performances by alumni Eric Roberson (B.A. '97) and Tracey Lee (B.A. '93). Howard University also joined other HBCU leaders to welcome the new administration at the “We Are One” event, where Dr. Frederick delivered remarks.



“WHILE I MAY BE THE FIRST WOMAN IN THIS OFFICE, I WILL NOT BE THE LAST.”

➔ U.S. VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS (B.A. '86)



TOP: CHUCK KENNEDY; BOTTOM LEFT: CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ



INSIGHT

BILL GATES DISCUSSES CLIMATE CHANGE

■ Howard University joined Bill Gates and other local universities in February to discuss topics surrounding his new book, "How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need." The conversation surrounded what individuals, advocates and governments can and must do to reduce 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."

PORTRAIT

A Moment with Jill Biden



■ **CHERISS MAY (B.A. '94)**, PHOTOGRAPHER and adjunct professor in the Cathy Hughes School of Communications, is no stranger to capturing VIPs and major moments in history. However, when she received a request to take a portrait of first lady Jill Biden, May was stunned. "To receive a call like that was surreal," she says.

May, who specializes in visual storytelling and "making a connection behind the camera," says Dr. Biden was "very warm and approachable" and that the two bonded as educators. May's goal was to let that warmth and humanity show through. The portrait can be viewed on the White House website.

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



■ ■ ■ Cheriss May's exhibition, "Soul Connection," can be viewed at the Leica Gallery Los Angeles through July 5, 2021.

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."



Rap Life at Howard

■ Rap Life, Apple Music's industry leading hip-hop playlist, featured a livestreamed event set against the backdrop of Howard's campus last Fall aimed at extending the discussion around issues impacting the Black community through open dialogue, important conversations and the power of music.

The event featured intimate conversations and bespoke performances from rappers and social justice advocates Lil Baby, Nas, Rapsody and Wale. It also featured sit-down interviews with students, including student association president Rachel Howell, Miss Howard University Taylor Davis, and president of the 10for10 organization Peter Lubembela, who spoke about their leadership in educating, uniting and uplifting their communities.

STUDENT LIFE

Alternative Spring Break 2021 Goes Online

■ **MORE THAN 800 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. — IMANI POPE-JOHNS & ANDREYA J. DAVIS





RECAP

The 154th Anniversary of Charter Day

■ ■ ■ ABOVE Step Afrika! performed in the Charter Day Virtual Celebration.

■ **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 complex-

ity, 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., LL.M.; and Ward 8 public servant Mary Roach, PharmD. The LaRue V. Barkwell Capstone Distinguished Service Award was presented to Clifford L. Muse Jr., Ph.D, University archivist and historian.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR



2,053 alumni, \$368,766 in emergency scholarship funding
These gifts at the end of the last school year helped 167 students graduate.

\$25,000

Ashley Blaine Featherstone (B.A. '09), actress
Netflix's "Dear White People" actress launched the Ashley Blaine Featherstone Early Career Grant to support theatre arts graduating seniors interested in an acting career.

\$40 million

MACKENZIE SCOTT

Philanthropist and author MacKenzie Scott gave the largest gift from a single donor in school history. The gift will be allocated to: campus infrastructure; faculty development plan; a program on social innovation and entrepreneurship; and underwriting of the Graduation & Retention Access to Continued Excellence (GRACE) Grant.

The Class of 1970

broke the all-time 50th Reunion Class Gift Campaign record, with 223 alumni giving a total of **\$1,869,312** to support student scholarships.

35 Years

Samuel Goodloe Jr., M.D. (B.A. '65, M.D. '69) has given the longest active streak of annual gifts, totaling **\$54,000** to support a variety of initiatives.

Trustee James (Jim) Murren and wife Heather Murren, \$1 million

Formed the HU Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership.

\$2.5 million

Craig Newmark for School of Communications

Established the Craig Newmark Journalism Endowed Opportunity Scholarship Program and the Student Experience Fund, both in the HU School of Communications.

\$505,800

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
172 members helped establish a scholarship to mark its centennial.

\$20 million

J. WILLARD AND ALICE S. MARRIOTT FOUNDATION
Formed the Marriott-Sorenson Center for Hospitality Leadership in the School of Business and the Arne M. Sorenson Hospitality Fund.

■ **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.

\$32.8 MILLION

BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES FOR SCHOLARSHIPS IN THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Michael R. Bloomberg gave four historically Black medical schools \$100 million total over the next four years. This gift marks the largest donation to the College of Medicine in its history.

\$10.1 million

HPS Investment Partners & the Kapnik Foundation

Created the Center for Financial Excellence, HPS Investment Partners Endowed Scholars Program and the Kapnik Foundation Endowed J.D./MBA Scholarship.

\$25,000

Natalie Cofield (B.B.A. '01),
Created Walker's Legacy Scholarship for Enterprising Women.

\$4.934 million

Warner Music Group/Blavatnik Family Foundation Social Justice Fund

Created the Center for Music & Entertainment Business Current-Use Fund, a Warner Music Executive-in-Residence Program, and a Warner Music & Entertainment Fellowship Program.

\$7,000

Simeon Kakpovi (B.B.A. '18), cyber intelligence analyst
Made a first-time gift to Howard in support of the Postgraduate Honors Award Fund, only a few years after graduating.





PHOTOGRAPHY

**WITNESS:
A STORY IN
PHOTOS**

■ 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).

ALUMNAE

**EMPOWERING
ALUMNAE
THROUGH
SHE’S HOWARD:
OWN YOUR POWER**

■ 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 creates opportunities for Howard women to keep receiving unique and distinct offerings of the Howard experience even after graduating.

“She’s Howard: Own Your Power is our opportunity to double down on the support network that comes with being a Howard alum by strategically targeting our women graduates with opportunities that will help them advance both personally and professionally,” said Sharon Strange Lewis, director of alumni relations at Howard University.

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.

She’s Howard: Own Your Power programming will include virtual networking events, a lecture series and seminars on relevant industry topics. Discussions will focus on topics that support the personal and professional needs of Howard alumnae, including strategies for balancing personal and professional responsibilities, navigating the challenges Black women face in the workplace, and more.—ANDREYA J. DAVIS

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INNOVATION

**Testing
Intelligence**

Hackers Tricked Tesla Autopilot into Breaking Speed Limits. Howard Researchers Have Questions.

by SHOLNN FREEMAN

■ 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

PHOTO BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



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

“**AS A HUMAN, IF THE SPEED LIMIT SIGN CHANGES DRASTICALLY, I WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS. CARS SHOULD THINK IN THE SAME WAYS.”**

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.



ELECTION

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 (except those convicted of murder or sexual assault) who had completed their sentences and paid full 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 just been reenfranchised been allowed to vote in the very election that had given them back one of their civil rights.

If the 2020 election was supposed to provide something of an answer to that question, the results were not very revealing. Because, two years after having their voting rights restored, estimates indicate that more than 90 percent of Florida

ex-felons were still disenfranchised.

Shannell Thomas, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology and Criminology and this year's Winslow Sargeant Doctoral Fellow, explains that the ambiguity of "sentence completion" is being used to justify why so many ex-felons are still being denied the right to vote; the question is being debated as to whether sentence completion includes paying restitution. The emphasis on ex-felons' paying restitution belies an uncertainty, particularly among Republican lawmakers, about whether ex-felons are capable of contributing to the common good even after they have paid their debt to society.

"Communitarian ideology supposes

“**IN THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE, AN EFFECTIVE TOOL OF COLORBLIND RACISM HAS BEEN 'DISREGARD.'**”

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.

As a part of Thomas' research, she has gone back to the year 2000 to explore 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 Democratic lawmakers, many of whom were African-American or representing largely African-American populations, only to die in committee because they 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 debate 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.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT (2)



Moving Howard Forward

Chief Strategy Officer Rashad Young talks about pillars, milestones and Howard swag.

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.

Q Are you feeling welcomed at Howard?

A I am swagged out. I have sweat-shirts, t-shirts, masks. My kids and wife have paraphernalia. When I wear my HU gear and hear the "HU, You Know" calls, I recognize what I know to be an allegiance and affinity to the University, even though I am not an alumnus.

Q Are we where you hoped we should be?

A I am impressed at the wins already racked up when I started. Of course, we can do more. For example, our goal in 2024 was to increase enrollment to 10,100 undergraduate students by 2024. We have already blown that out of the water. So, we have to set a new goal toward enrollment and make sure we consider additional faculty,

classroom space and housing for students as we grow. We will keep evolving the plan and set new challenges when we achieve the existing ones.

Q What are some metrics you're using with Howard Forward?

A We should have clarity in each of the strategic pillars as to what constitutes success. For example: In our "enhance academic excellence" pillar: What percentage of students are graduating in four years and in six years? What is the job placement rate for our graduates? We want to make sure our product – their preparedness for the world – is useful in their social mobility, economic mobility and their ability to contribute to the workforce.

"Inspire new knowledge" pillar: We want to be an R1 research institution. We want to increase the amount of revenue from sponsored research, which helps us reach that classification and achieve the tenants of pillar five, which is "achieving financial sustainability."

We must look at efficiency (pillar four). How long does it take to process requisitions? How long does it take to hire staff? What savings can we generate with good contract management?

Q How will we get to the next milestone?

A Ideally, the entire campus community will be involved. The strategy office is the organizing and convening force, but it's the rest of the campus who teach our students, that builds our buildings, who maintains our facilities, who manages our contracts, who move our requisitions, who budgets our finances. Those are the folks who make Howard Forward real.

Q What happens after 2024?

A 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 ourselves, to continue to achieve.

WOMEN

Howard's New Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership

by RIN-RIN YU

■ FOR DECADES, HOWARD STUDENTS HAVE studied, embraced 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 Murren and his wife, Heather Murren.

"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 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 feminist consciousness through collaboration with faculty on research, service learning and global engagement."



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Training Social Workers to Bridge Gaps in Health Care

by MISHA CORNELIUS



■ EAST OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVER, SOME Washington, D.C. residents find it difficult to access critical health services. In fact, the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) reports that several district neighborhoods are medically underserved, meaning there are too few medical providers. With a \$1.8 million grant from HRSA, social work professor Janice Berry Edwards, Ph.D., oversees Howard University's intensive Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BWHET) program specifically designed to address the behavioral health needs of underserved populations.

A cohort of 30 students participate in the program each year. For 10 weeks each semester, students attend Saturday workshops that deepen their understanding of topics like health disparity, trauma, self-care, opioid abuse and comorbidities. At the heart of this program is experiential learning – taking students beyond the classroom to gain real-world experiences and give them access to experienced practitioners who share their insights.

Angela Wilbon is a licensed social worker and the program's clinical director. She says students who participate in the training think of it as a bootcamp that prepares them for what they'll encounter in the field. "Students who have completed the program can fully appreciate the intensity because they're prepared to step into their roles in a different way," she says.

The BWHET case simulation lab

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



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



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. '15), 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 psychiatrist 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."

Vision

HOWARD FOREVER

The Impact of Chadwick Boseman Beyond Howard University

BY 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.F.A. '00) shined as a pillar of Hollywood accountability to expand the 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



Purpose ... is the reason you are on the planet at this particular time in history."

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 backgrounds, 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' worldwide 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 May 2016. He reprised the role again for "Avengers: Infinity War" in 2018.

Boseman's other feature film credits include: the revenge thriller "Message in Film," "Draft Day" opposite Kevin Costner, the psychological post-war drama "The Kill Hole" and Gary Fleders' drama "The Express." He played his last role as trumpet player Levee Green in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," earning a posthumous best actor Oscar nomination.

The characters Boseman portrayed will 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 crosses disciplines. Purpose is an essential element of you. It is the reason you are on the planet at this particular time in history." For Chadwick Boseman, his purpose became his legacy.



VERNON JORDAN, 'THE CONNECTOR'

BY Seth Shapiro

■ 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 em-

ployees. 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.

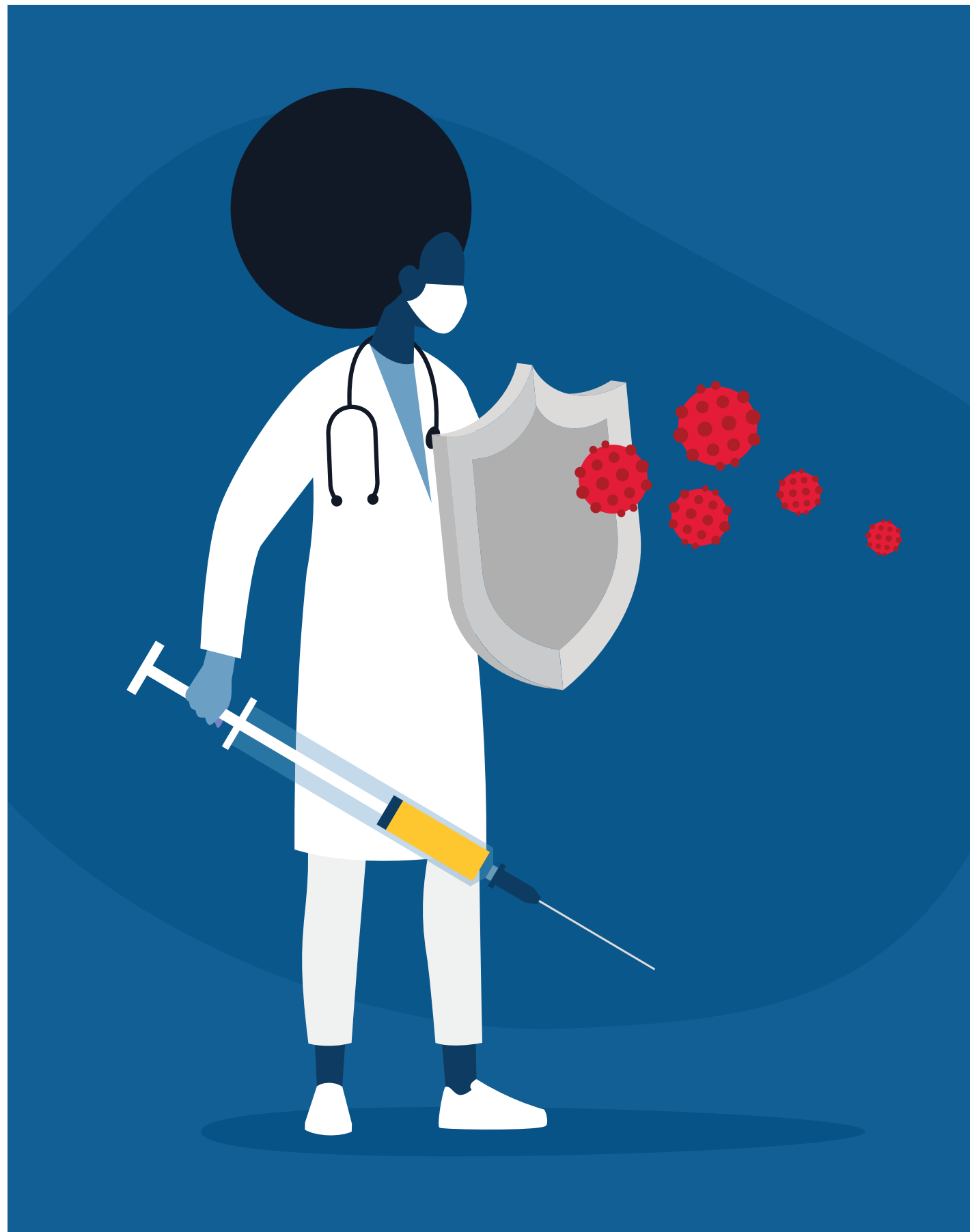
For Mr. Jordan, no trouble was too big or too little. For him to support a worthy cause was no trouble at all.

“
While politicians
would come and go,
Mr. Jordan always
seemed to be there.”



■ ■ ■
OMNIPRESENT: (clockwise, from top left) Opening Convocation in 2014; with NBC anchor Lester Holt and President Frederick in 2018; with Valerie Jarrett and President Barack Obama at Commencement in 2016.

PHOTOS BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



USING TRIAL TO OVERCOME

Howard University Hospital's first-time participation in a vaccine trial marks another deliberate step toward health care inclusion.

TRIBULATION

by **Katti Gray**

AS HOWARD UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL rolled out its participation in the COVID-19 trial with vaccine maker Novavax, it was doing more than helping to end the pandemic. It was solidifying relationships in the community.

“There is still a great distrust of biomedical science in our community. But there’s not a distrust of places like Howard University or Howard University Hospital,” says Celia Maxwell, M.D., a front-line medical worker as well as the associate dean of research and professor of infectious diseases at Howard University Medical School. “Many people say, ‘I am coming here to see you because I know you are not going to do anything bad to me.’ There is a comfort that I’ve seen over 40 years of practicing within this community. They have a sense that we have an understanding of their unique issues.”

Diabetes, hypertension, obesity – which are disproportionately higher among African-Americans than, for example, whites – and other diseases heighten chances that a patient will suffer the most debilitating, if not deadly, symptoms of COVID-19. According to research from Johns Hopkins University, COVID-19 infection rates for Black and Latinx Americans were more than 2.5 times and three times higher, respectively, than for whites, leading to greater rates of hospitalization and death for these minority communities. This disparity has provided a singular opportunity for pharmaceutical giants and other health care powerbrokers to reckon with their errors in the past. They knew that communities of color were more vulnerable to the virus and they had to be part of the all-hands-on-deck effort to curb the spread.

This effort to correct historic wrongs included Novavax. The company targeted specific percentages of minority participants in its trials, and other vaccine makers attempted the same. For advocates of a health care system that is tailored to the needs of all people, including those of color, HUH’s partnership with Novavax marked a turning point. It helped to burnish HUH’s brand as a research-

focused destination in health care and health science that places patients front and center.

“We still had more people in the loop waiting to be enrolled,” Maxwell says of the COVID-19 vaccine trial with Novavax, which enrolled 150 participants at HUH. “But the sponsor closed enrollment. They’d already reached 30,000 participants.”

Howard’s involvement in that trial, nonetheless, 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 amongst groups. To help account for that and to fuel production of drugs, development of med-



WE FELT WE COULD TRANSLATE TO PEOPLE THAT LOOK LIKE US THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN AN ACTIVITY THAT WOULD HELP SAVE THEIR LIVES.”



PHOTO BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

ical 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 1.7 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



TRIAL OF TRUST: Celia Maxwell, M.D. and Siham Mahgoub, M.D., felt the vaccine trial would help bridge the medical community with those of color.

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 aloud 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 combatting 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.

"I cannot say that other institutions [would] do that," Mahgoub says.

That participant wasn't the only one who the doctors felt obliged to help, particularly since some patients hadn't visited a physician in years. The doctors sent one whose blood pressure was too high straight to the emergency room, where that person was officially diagnosed with hypertension;



ON THE MOVE:
The mobile health clinic traveled to different neighborhoods as part of the Novavax trials.

then, the doctors connected that participant with a specialist. For another participant, Mahgoub personally set up an appointment with a neurologist.

"We feel that's how we differ," Maxwell interjects. "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.

PHOTOS BY JUSTIN D. KNIGHT



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."

COVID-19 Vaccine Trial Could Lead to Future Trials for Howard

EVEN SO, BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH IS NOT NEW FOR Howard. Maxwell, for one, has been probing HIV in minority communities for the last three decades. "We're now looking at a future trial focused on HIV," she says, as she parsed what Howard has achieved during COVID-19. "HIV is a disproportionately impactful disease for people of color. If we had not done this COVID trial, we would not be able to do one in HIV. Now, we have the infrastructure to do that. Now, we know how to interact in the community so they can be stakeholders in what they would like to see, how they would like to see it."

Churches and other community organizations were instrumental in spreading the word about Howard's COVID-19 vaccine trial. Community

members sit on Howard University Hospital's institutional review board (IRB), a federally required body of scientists and nonscientists who set parameters and protocols for biomedical research on human beings.

Research of any kind is multilayered, multi-pronged, rigorous and quite exhausting for the clinicians and public health experts tasked with carrying out that work, says Angella Browne, Howard University Hospital's infection control officer.

However, Browne says, it is hugely rewarding. "For me, this last year – from when we got our first COVID case at Howard, until now – has been like being on 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."

LONG DAYS, SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

During the pandemic, Black Americans are battling insomnia.

■ "According to our surveys, there's a greater distress about the impact of racism than about COVID-related stress, though COVID definitely has an impact," says Dr. Thomas Mellman, a Howard University Hospital psychiatrist and director of the Clinical Translational Science and Sleep Stress research programs at Howard University School of Medicine, where he also is investigating the effects of trauma and stressful neighborhood environments on sleep and, by extension, overall health.

Funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, his team's survey of their 18- to 35-year-old respondents, all of

whom are Black, found 61 percent had clinically diagnosable insomnia symptoms; 45 percent said their sleep had worsened during the pandemic. A sustained restriction of slumber blocks the hormones that gauge and regulate hunger, which can lead to overeating and obesity. Without an optimum of at least seven hours of shut-eye during a 24-hour period, mental agility and memory slip. Moods are disrupted, energy levels plummet.

Fundamentally, the study is being conducted amid a current iteration of racial tensions and a pandemic that, research shows, has kept record numbers of people wide awake worldwide.

COVID-19, Mellman 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 expands its portfolio of big-vision research projects, including ones managed through the Georgetown-Howard Universities Center for Clinical Translational Sciences, launched expressly to examine health care and outcomes among



persons of color, the disabled, the aged and others from comparatively lesser-served, lesser-resourced groups.

Mellman and colleagues are also developing a database of Howard patients hospitalized for COVID, from which researchers will look at "risks and protective factors." According to Mellman, these include "medication exposures, demographics, the neighborhoods where people lived before coming to our hospital."

How might, say, heart health be affected by witnessing police brutality or navigating a volatile community or workplace?

"One of the things we ask

people [to track] approximately a half-hour before they go to sleep is, 'How safe do you feel now?' A feeling of safety engenders a physiological relaxation that is important to sleep," Mellman says. "When people suffer with post-traumatic stress disorder, their lives can be restricted. They have disturbing dreams that interfere with sleep. They are reactive to various triggers. Some people with PTSD can be conflict-avoidant, which can hold them back in relationships, in an occupation."

That kind of people-focused, real-world research places Howard squarely among institutions studying – with what

some describe as heightened intensity – the interconnectedness of place, income, economic status, education, blatant aggression, micro-aggression and other forces, including race-driven ones, among the social determinants of health.

It is pivotal, crucial work. "We need to understand those determinants comprehensively," Mellman says. "COVID has been both an example and magnifier of those disparities. It's important that the populations Howard serves are represented in the research. ... What we learn right now, during COVID, will have applications far beyond COVID." – K.G.

PHOTO BY LAWRENCE JACKSON FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

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. For one thing, having a Howard alumnus attain the second-highest office in the United States is “affirming that we have been doing what the University was chartered to do,” says Provost Anthony Wutoh, Ph.D. “What I’m expecting and anticipating is that her

♦♦♦
FROM THE HILLTOP TO THE HILL: Kamala Harris' senior portrait at Howard (top); walking with President Biden and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin at the Pentagon in February.



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 under President Jimmy Carter. During his presidency, she served as secretary of housing and urban development and later as secretary of health 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

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. '41) 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 55th 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

PLENTY OF EXTERNAL INFLUENCES WERE ALSO MAKING their way to Harris during her Howard days. Flipping through the student newspaper, The Hilltop, her freshman year, Harris probably read about Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm – one of her “she-heroes” – chairing a legislative workshop during the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual

THE COLLECTIVE POWER OF THE DIVINE NINE

♦ The connections that Vice President Kamala Harris forged during her Howard days through her membership in Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc., and the Divine Nine—the nine historically Black Greek letter organizations that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council may have given her an edge on the campaign trail.

“The role of the Divine Nine was huge,” says senior Nira Headen, a member of Alpha Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., and president of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. “A lot of first-time voters were encouraged by their collegiate peers who were in the Divine Nine to vote.”

Indeed, the Divine Nine spearheaded initiatives to encourage voting in the Black community among all ages. These included, but were not limited to, a virtual town hall on getting around voter

suppression efforts, a partnership with NAACP to encourage Black voters to turn out to the polls, and another with Oprah for the Own Your Vote campaign to inspire Black women to embrace their political power.

Those who did turn out to the polls likely helped to propel Harris to the vice presidency, as nine out of 10 Black voters supported President Joe Biden and Harris, according to a nationwide survey of voters by the Associated Press.

Senior Rachel Howell, Howard University Student Association president and AKA member, points out that the drive to get out the vote showed the unity of the Divine Nine. “Ultimately, our goal is to promote service and to give back to our community. And so, this was the perfect opportunity for us all to come together to really do that—to really embody what all of our founders would want us to do.”—T.E.H.

♦♦♦
KICKIN' IT: Howard alumnae nationwide celebrated Kamala Harris' inauguration by donning her signature look: Converse sneakers and pearls.



PHOTOS BY ADAM SCHULTZ



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 project, where in part she oversaw the production and later publicity for the film.

The film is narrated by

actress Alfre Woodard and features the creative genius of artists such as María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Okwui Okpokwasili and LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs. Through dance and spoken word, the artists conjure up a message of healing, unity and creativity, as well as an appreciation for the role women have played leading up to this historic moment. The film opened January 27 – a week after Inauguration Day – and will tour museums and other art spaces in the coming months.

Thomas wasn't the only Bison – or sorority alumnae – to be part of the project. Codie Elaine Oliver (B.A. '05) served as the director, Crystal Whaley (B.A. '91) was a consulting producer and Bernie M. Lawrence (B.A. '90) was a production attorney for the film.

"I'm very proud that we have so many Howard alumni who were involved in this project behind the scenes," Thomas said. "We have an expectation of excellence at Howard, and I think it was reflected in the final project. I hope we made Vice President Harris very proud." —T.E.H.

Legislative Conference, a decade after becoming the first Black woman to run for president. Jesse Jackson launched his historic run for president in 1983. And during her sophomore year, crowds celebrated the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington.

Meanwhile, as violent anti-apartheid protests in South Africa were broadcast on American televisions, Howard students did not sit back. Harris soon joined the busloads of students who regularly went to the National Mall and the South African embassy to protest, calling for schools and corporations to stop investing in South Africa and for the U.S. government to take action as well. Shortly after Harris graduated from Howard, Congress enacted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 imposing sanctions on South Africa.

She would later tell Howard students, in a 2017 Commencement address, about the importance of speaking up and speaking out for what's right. It was a motto that lived with her since her Bison days.

People looking back at college-aged Harris would see the beginnings of the vice president 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 Howard alumnus and actor Ossie Davis and his wife Ruby Dee. "I've never forgotten how it made me 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

JUST AS HARRIS ADMIRING THE ALUMNI BEFORE HER, she too has inspired current and future Bison.

For one thing, there's been a spike in interest among students contemplating political science careers. "We've seen interest in our department grow and our minors trend upward since the Kamala Harris moment occurred," says Niambi Carter, Ph.D., associate professor and director of graduate studies for the department of political science.

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. '03) Deputy Counsel to the POTUS

Meaghan Lynch (J.D. '14) Press Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Donametria "Tria" Stallings (M.A. '18) Confidential Assistant, Office of the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education

Carlton Waterhouse, Ph.D. (J.D. '91) Deputy Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office for Land and Emergency Management

HOWARD ALUMNI ON THE BIDEN-HARRIS TRANSITION TEAM

Danielle Conley (J.D. '03)

Shirlethia Franklin (J.D. '07)

Donna Harris-Aikens (J.D. '94)

Teresa Mason (J.D. '82)

Paul Monteiro (J.D. '07)

Patrice Simms (J.D. '98)



STATE OF AFFAIRS:

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.

by JANELLE HARRIS DIXON



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. Kyla 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.

The Aloha State may seem like a ra-

cially and ethnically diverse paradise. Hawaii, however, is not unspoiled by the systemic racism that infects the continental states. Hughley is eager to do the work to remedy it, and that advocacy has changed Hughley's plan to become a clinical psychologist to an unknown territory of career options that she's still exploring.

"I've always had this kind of drive to speak out. But one thing that I've really gotten out of Howard is [that] everyone's there because they're a leader," says Hughley. "I think when you're in an environment where everyone is a leader, you have to kind of reevaluate what it is that you bring to the table."

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's 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

“I've always had this kind of drive to speak out. But one thing that I've really gotten out of Howard is [that] everyone's there because they're a leader.”

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.”—J.H.D.



Peter Lubembala (center left) and Kyla Hughley (right) led movements in their home cities.



From the Streets, Leaders Emerge

IN THE HEIGHTENED SOCIAL ACTION OF SUMMER 2020, Howard University senior political science major Peter Lubembala organized 10 events in the span of six weeks for his Denver, Colorado community, where the number of deadly shootings skyrocketed 50 percent between Summer 2019 and Summer 2020. The founder and executive director of 10for10, an organization he started by asking 10 Black men to each donate \$10 to feed people at a local shelter, Lubembala expanded its mission to confront racial inequity, 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 – like, ‘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. '16)

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, attend 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.”



THE ART(ISTS) OF PROTEST

Three Howard artists use their creativity to project Black voices and perspectives.



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.

“My art captures 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.”



Jay Durrah (B.A. '83)

Celebrated for using multiple colors instead of natural skin tones to represent the multiracial 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.”





When the pandemic forced the school to close campus, the University swiftly brought everyone back – online.

VIRTUALLY HOWARD

by OTESA MIDDLETON MILES (B.A. '94)

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.,

Howard University’s provost and chief academic officer, first focused on the students studying abroad.

“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

THE UNIVERSITY WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE laptops, tablets and Bluetooth keyboards to those who needed equipment. “We

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 as the University

NUMBERS

Before Pandemic →

2,575
University courses offered

3.8%
COURSES ONLINE

400
ATHLETES ON CAMPUS

5,000+
students living on campus

During Pandemic →

100%
COURSES ONLINE

600
laptops distributed to faculty & staff

400
tablets & laptops distributed to students

900+
ZOOM LICENSES

40
ATHLETES ON CAMPUS IN FALL 2020

3.4 AVG. GPA
of athletes during pandemic, highest in at least five years

Gifts sent to children in Washington, D.C. in the Angel Tree Project:

122

10 SOCIAL JUSTICE TUTORS
tutor 20 students

18
Summer lectures for faculty on improving remote instruction

1,800
PEOPLE REGISTERED FOR THE NEW UNIVERSITY VIRTUAL WOMXN’S SUMMIT (August 2020)

110
STREAMED CHAPEL PROGRAMS

3,113
average views per chapel program

Total views for Communal Conversations – a chapel program that features students: **10,355**



PACKING UP: Students were shipped laptops, tablets and Bluetooth keyboards in order to continue with classes virtually.

sent students home. He was also captain of the men's tennis team.

"I was clueless about what to do during the rise of this pandemic," Lyn says. His girlfriend's family invited him to stay with them near Atlanta. Even though campus remained closed, Lyn returned to the Washington, D.C. area for the Spring 2021 semester when men's tennis resumed competition.

Connecting Teams Virtually

BEFORE HE RETURNED, AS CAPTAIN, LYN held Zoom check-ins every three weeks with the tennis team. "It served as a safe space to see how the team was feeling," Lyn says.

Kery Davis, athletic director, strived to keep the 400 student athletes connected through virtual programs after they left campus abruptly. A positive, he said, is that student athletes earned a collective grade point average of 3.4 that Fall semester – 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 Rankin Memorial Chapel, says the chapel streamed its services and featured guest speakers for the "Wellness Collec-

“OUR STUDENTS ARE IDENTIFYING THEIR COMMON STRUGGLES AND TALKING OPENLY ABOUT THEM.”

tion," which included topics such as anxiety, social justice and meditation. The chapel continued to provide its regular pastoral care virtually to families experiencing loss of loved ones, while helping families plan virtual memorials and fielding calls from students in distress.

The pandemic also forced the cancellation of Alternative Spring Break, a popular student-led service program. This inspired students to find other

ways to give, Dean Richardson says. "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 fastest-growing sector of higher education," Thomas says. "This expanded the University's reach and will continue to expand the possibilities. What was once considered the future has become our present reality."

ALUMNI

ARCHIVES

Looking Back 50 Years

THE CLASSES OF 1970 AND 1971

THE CLASSES OF 1970 AND 1971

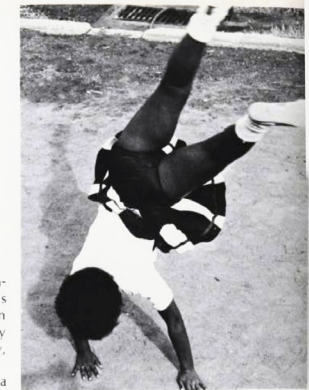
went to Howard at a time that's often described as some of the most turbulent and glorious moments in United States history. Students recall the race riots, the rise of the Black Panther Party, the first moon landing. They remember listening to Stokely Carmichael (B.A. '64) speak on campus and where 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," blasted through the radio waves, bolstered by fashion trends – the afro and African Dashiki clothing – that doubled as statements in the Black movement. 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. '41) became

We Are One

BISON FAMILY

Cheers For The Bison

Strenuous practice, tears of sorrow, lively enthusiasm, encouraging cries from the crowd – this is cheerleading. Eighteen young Howard women comprise the varsity cheerleading squad, and every week dedicate themselves to practice, sorrow, enthusiasm, and encouragement. Each girl spends a "probationary" period of a year on the junior varsity squad cheering for the soccer and junior varsity basketball teams. This year under the leadership of Brenda Jenkins, captain and Denyce Norment, co-captain, they have secured the women's gym as their headquarters.



Top: Captain displays versatility. Bottom: Varsity and Junior Varsity display togetherness.



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 clamor for 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 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/give/1970Class.

GOLDEN YEARS: A snapshot from The Bison, 1970.



ENTERTAINMENT

PUTTING THE HEART IN "SOUL"

by RIN-RIN YU



■ 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.”

ACCESSIBILITY

Crowdsourcing Accessible Vacations

by VINCIANE NGOMSI

■ 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.”



“**THINK TRIPADVISOR, BUT FOR ACCESSIBILITY.**”

GLOBAL

BRINGING HOWARD TO THE WORLD BANK GROUP

by VINCIANE NGOMSI

■ 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 130 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 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.”

“**STAFF ARE EXPOSED TO A DIVERSE CADRE OF STUDENTS THEY PREVIOUSLY WOULD NOT HAVE MET.**”



MEDICINE

■ ■ ■

TAKING A READ: Greg Umphrey helps boost medical students from groups who are underrepresented in medicine.

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.

Elevating Medical Students by Lowering Financial Barriers

by SIOBHAN STEWART (B.A. '19)

■ 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.

According to the American Medical Student Association, cost is the top reason qualified minority students did not enroll in medical school. Many



STORYTELLING

DIONNE 'DJ MAGIC' LEDBETTER: DJ & DOCUMENTARIAN

by SIOBHAN STEWART (B.A. '19)

■ She was known as “DJ Magic” during her undergraduate days at Howard for her talent spinning music at parties, but now **Dionne Ledbetter** (B.F.A. '20) has added another credential to her list: filmmaker.

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 final project, “In the Mix,” premiered on her graduation day, which occurred during the pandemic, in May 2020.

“In the Mix” follows the stories of 10 DJs who matriculated through the Mecca over a 15-year timespan, focusing on their personal journeys. Their stories range from becoming the Washington Football Team Gameday DJ (DJ Premonition) to working with artists like Nipsey Hussle (DJ Chubb E Swagg).

A large part of the film features DJs once named “Howard’s Hottest,” a competition hosted by student-run radio station WHBC 96.3. This annual tradition was co-created by Joseph Smalls Jackson (B.A. '11), who is featured in the documentary. Ledbetter

holds this title as well, which welcomed her “into a loving lineage of Howard’s most talented DJs,” she says.

The unique comradeship is what sparked her inspiration for the documentary. In March 2019, Ledbetter attended a gathering with fellow Howard DJs. DJ Chubb E Swagg began narrating their collective experiences. “He was



“IN THE MIX” FOLLOWS THE STORIES OF 10 DJs WHO MATRICULATED THROUGH THE MECCA.

telling some really interesting tales about how we are all connected and his history with DJing, how his DJing impacted this DJ and so on,” she says. “That was the very first day I started thinking about the documentary.”

Through the production process, Ledbetter gained skills like filming, 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.



▶
“In the Mix” is currently streaming on YouTube.

CLASS NOTES

'60s

Reverend Denison Harrield Jr., D.D. (B.A. '64) received the annual Volunteer Award for his decades of dedicated service to the Summit, New Jersey community.

'70s

George A. Alexander, M.D. (M.D. '77) was appointed by the secretary of defense to serve on the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services.

'80s

Harolyn Belcher, M.D., MHBS (B.S. '80, M.D. '82) is the inaugural vice president and chief diversity officer at Kennedy Krieger Institute. Belcher is a neurodevelopmental pediatrician and research scientist at Kennedy Krieger.

Joyce Hudson (B.S. '80) received the Prince William County Human Rights Award and the Virginia Association of Human Rights Award for her work with the Alliance to Save Carver Rd., which was formed to protect the historic African-American community

founded by freed slaves in the Gainesville/Haymarket Virginia area.

Cheryl M. Burgess, M.D. (M.D. '84) joined the board of directors with the American Academy of Dermatology. She is in private practice in Washington, D.C. and is also an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Georgetown University Medical Center and The George Washington University.

Robert S. Hoover Jr., M.D. (B.S. '87) has been named chief of the section of nephrology and hypertension in the John W. Deming Department of Medicine at Tulane School of Medicine.

Lisa Nelson (B.B.A. '87), founder and CEO of See In Colors, a visual communications company, is now officially a Goldman Sachs Small Business Alumni. This program focuses on

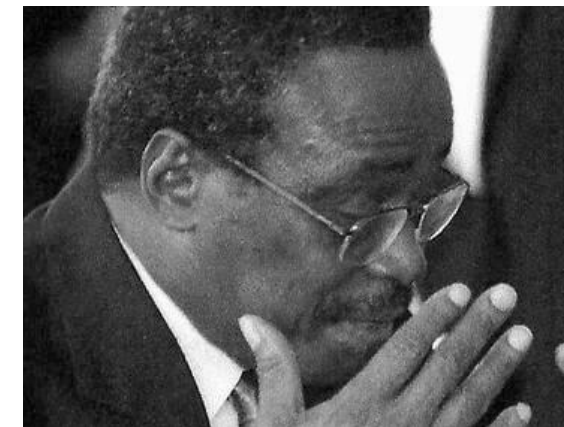
small business owners and their companies across the United States as an investment in the future.

Grady (Trey) Crosby III (B.A. '88) has been selected to serve on the Board of Directors for College Possible Milwaukee. He is an associate attorney in the Milwaukee office of the law firm Ogletree Deakins.

Khadija T. Diggs (J.D. '88) became the second African-American woman in Pennsylvania to be appointed to the Parole Board. Previously, she was assistant counsel in the Pennsylvania Governor’s Office of General Counsel, with a focus on corrections, probation and parole.

PROFILE

James E. Silcott (B.ARCH. '57) has been elevated to the 2020 College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA). Silcott is one of 13 members of the AIA Los Angeles chapter who were elevated to fellowship in 2020. He was the first African-American project architect for both Los Angeles County and the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA). One of



his notable projects is the Jules Stein Eye Institute at UCLA. Silcott has been an avid supporter of Howard University’s architecture program for three decades. His contributions total \$3 million, making him the largest donor to architecture programs at historically Black colleges and universities in the nation.

CLASS NOTES (Continued)

Colita Nichols Fairfax (B.S.W. '88) was recognized with the UNCF Hampton Roads Virginia Masked Ball Award for scholarly and teaching excellence as a professor at Norfolk State University. Dr. Fairfax is the first HBCU professor to be recognized with this award.

Cheryl L. Duncan (B.A. '88) has been named to the Observer's PR POWER 50 List for 2020. She is the founder and CEO of Cheryl Duncan 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.B.A. '89) was promoted to associate vice president of wealth management at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management in Atlanta.

'90s

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.

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.

Felicia DeHaney (B.S. '95, PH.D. '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. '98) was selected to join the Board of Trustees at the Head-Royce School in Oakland, California.

'00s

Vernon B. Harper Jr. (PH.D. '00) was named provost and vice president for academic affairs at California State University, Bakersfield.

Brandon Neal (B.A. '00) became senior vice president and senior director at APCO Worldwide.

Alesha M. Dominique (B.S. '03), an attorney and partner in Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp's Los Angeles office, was appointed practice chair for the firm's trademark prosecution practice.

Natalie Godbee, D.O. (B.S. '04), a board-certified and fellowship-trained gynecologic oncologist, recently joined the Cancer Treatment Centers of America physician roster in Atlanta.



Akadius (B.B.A. '05) and **Tamra Berry (B.A. '05)** 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)**.

Nathan Carter (PH.D. '05) has been appointed as Northern Virginia Community College's first ever chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer.

Earl R. Fitzhugh (B.S. '06) 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.



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.

Vernese Edghill-Walden (PH.D. '07) has been named vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, Illinois.

'10s

Jared Wilson (B.B.A. '11) was named chief innovation officer and managing director of global sales at ABCD & Company, a marketing and events firm in Rockville, Maryland.

PROFILE

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.

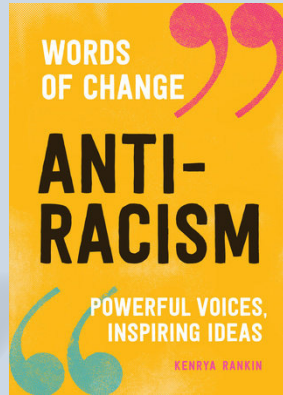


BISON BOOKSHELF

BY
Imani Pope-Johns



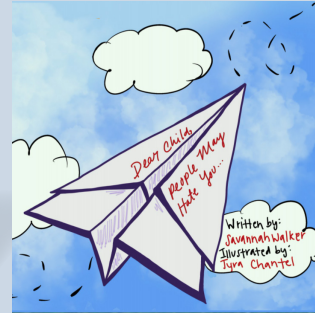
■ **12 Affirmations for the Amazing Kid** by Charlie Bingham Jr. (J.D. '08) is focused on connecting young, diverse readers together through colorful illustrations and encouraging them to walk in purpose.



■ **Anti-Racism: Powerful Words, Inspiring Ideas** by Kenrya Rankin (B.A. '03) is a colorful book about the anti-racist movement through the words of leaders, including the new generation of heroes building social justice.



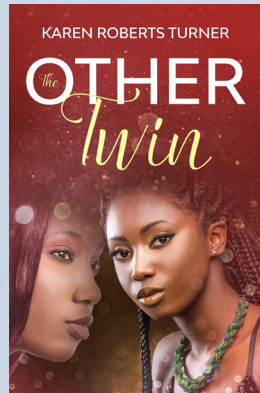
■ **Fairy Cornbread** by Arian T. Moore '05) introduces concepts of family, giving and courage, all with a drop of magic and a sprinkle of suspense.



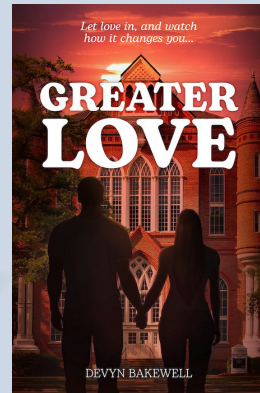
■ **Dear Child, People May Hate You** by Savannah Walker (B.A. '17) is a conversation tool for parents and educators to use with their children to have open and honest discussions about hate, racism and prejudice in this world.



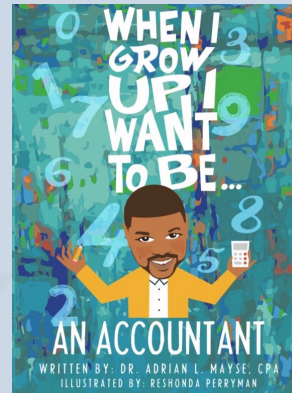
■ **One of the Good Ones** by Maika Moulite tells the fictional life of a teen social activist and history buff who is killed under mysterious circumstances after attending a social justice rally and the aftermath on her devastated family.



■ **The Other Twin** by Karen Roberts Turner, Esq., follows the imaginary lives of twins who eventually deal with individuality and heartbreak through their bond.



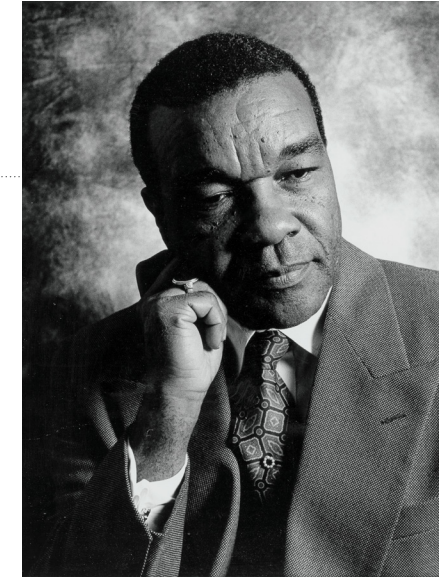
■ **Greater Love: Let Love in and Watch How It Changes You** by Devyn Bakewell (B.A. '20) follows a recent high school graduate who leaves for New York with one plan in mind – to leave her past completely behind.



■ **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.

➔ 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

In Memoriam



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 groundwork for the study of African-American art history. He is viewed as one of the primary people responsible for bringing African-Americans into the mainstream of American art.

David Driskell joined the Howard family as an undergraduate and later returned in 1962 as part of Howard's faculty for four years. In 2010, he received an honorary doctoral degree.

Dr. Driskell taught at various universities in the U.S. and in Nigeria. He joined the Department of Art at the University of Maryland, College Park in 1977 and served as chair from 1978-1983. In 2001, the University of Maryland established the David C. Driskell Center in his honor.

Dr. Driskell lectured at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago, among others, and curated numerous other exhibitions. In 1976, he curated the landmark exhibition, "Two Centuries of Black American Art: 1750-1950." An avid collector of African-American art and artifacts dating from the era of slave ships to modern times, his own collection also toured as an exhibition, "Narratives of African-American Art and Identity: The David C. Driskell Collection."

He was the recipient of numerous fellowships, awards and prizes, including three Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships and a

Harmon Foundation Fellowship.

In 2000, President Bill Clinton selected Dr. Driskell as a recipient of the National Humanities Medal. He was also asked by President and Mrs. Clinton to choose artwork for the White House.

Speaking at the time, he emphasized his reverence for the past. "The humanities for me are the basis for the whole learning experience. They inform us so much about the past," he said.

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-plus years of leadership.

He played an instrumental role in guiding our institution toward achieving greater financial sustainability, one of the key pillars of the Howard Forward strategic plan. His efforts and dedication will continue to benefit the University and all the students, faculty and staff who come to Howard for many years to come.

Throughout his tenure at Howard, Michael used his vast knowledge and experience in the education landscape to guide our University forward so we could reach even greater heights. He understood the

unique role that Howard plays as an institution of higher education. He had a passion for helping elevate our University and enhancing our prestige and reputation across the country and throughout the world.

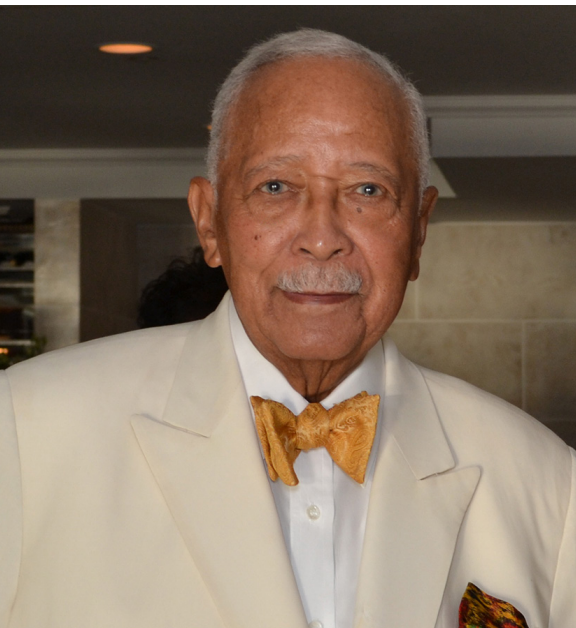
Michael joined Howard in 2015 after serving as vice president for finance and chief financial officer at Manhattan College in Riverdale, New York. He had previously worked as the chief financial officer of the School District of Philadelphia, and he also served

as the secretary of budget and administration for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Prior to working with the commonwealth, he held the position of vice president for budget and management at the University of Pennsylvania.

Michael was a man of impeccable integrity and humility. He was kind and gentle with everyone. He was a family man who was very proud of the recent additions to his family of his two grandsons. We will miss him greatly.



DAVID DINKINS



■ **FORMER MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY AND** Howard University alumnus David Dinkins (B.A. '50) 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 his 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 1991, 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.

■ **Florence A. Pendleton** (B.S. '49, M.S. '57) died on September 10, 2020 at the age of 94. Along with Jesse Jackson, she became the first senator to represent the District of Columbia in 1991, and she was the first African-American woman elected to the Senate. She spent three terms in office. Pendleton also spent more than 40 years working as an administrator for D.C. Public Schools.

■ **Loretta (Thomas) Whitfield** (B.S. '62) died on December 27, 2020 at age 79. In the late 1980s, Whitfield created Baby Whitney, a doll designed specifically for Black children that successfully sold for several years. She also worked at Howard as director of the educational advisory center for 32 years until her retirement in 1999.

SAPHRONIA DRAKE



■ **FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES,** with boundless generosity, an engaging sense of humor, professionalism, and an unparalleled commitment and dedication to students, Saphronia 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 foster 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 unflappable 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. —RAVI PERRY, Ph.D., Chair, political science department.



Victor C. W. Dzidzienyo

(B.ARCH '67, MCP '69)

■ **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.

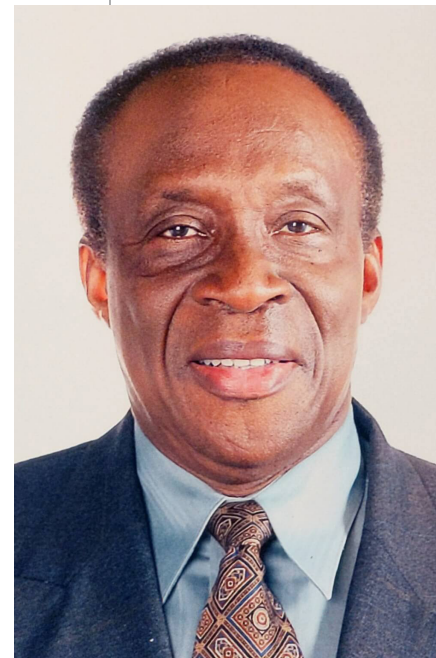
His professional experiences as a designer and city planner indeed provided real world experiences for his students. His strong advocacy of community service with an activist orientation for direct action undoubtedly led to his coining the term "the architect activist," which is attributed to training 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.

■ **Joyce Burrows Dinkins** (B.S. '53) died on October 11, 2020. She was 89. As the first African-American first lady of New York City, she became a public advocate for children.

■ **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, Depelsha Thomas McGruder (B.A. '94), established a scholarship for service and justice in his name.

■ **Terez Paylor** (B.A. '06) 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.



TED FOLARIN ROBERTS

'40s

Dr. Albert L. Gaskins Jr. (B.A. '43, M.D. '48), February 6, 2020.
Virginia Henriette Hundley (N '43), February 1, 2021.
Estelle Howard (N '46), October 20, 2019.
Eleanora Norwood Clarke (B.A. '49, J.D. '52), April 9, 2020.

'50s

Emma Geraldine Billingslea (N '51) September 5, 2020
Lee Andrew Tyler (B.A. '53), November 20, 2020.
Edgar Newton Jackson Sr. (B.S. '57), May 27, 2020.
Shirley Phillips Bagley (B.S. '58, M.S. '63), December 23, 2019.
Aaron Barnett Milton Sr. (BARCH '58), August 1, 2020.

'60s

Ardrea Burrell (B.A. '60, M.S.W. '63), September 8, 2020.
Francis Hall Henderson (B.S. '60, M.D. '71), August 22, 2020.
Luther Isaac Ike (D.D.S. '61), March 15, 2020.
John Henry Newby Jr., Ph.D. (B.A. '61, M.S.W. '63), January 26, 2021.
Horace S. Webb (B.S. '61), February 20, 2020.
Patricia Ann Morris DeVeaux (B.A. '62), May 20, 2020.
Herbert "Herbie" Leon Bryan Jr. (B.S. '63), October 26, 2020.

Roderick "Rod" Wesley Flakes (B.S. '63), April 17, 2020.
Louis Allan Ford (B.A. '63), June 6, 2020.

Barbara Weaver Ward (B.A. '63, M.S.W. '65), September 3, 2020.
Doris Elaine Barnes Lassere Woods (B.S. '63, M.S. '65), December 1, 2019.
Theodore E. "Teddy" Carter (B.S. '64), September 11, 2020.

Ellen Sandra Jordan Isler (B.A. '64), March 2, 2020.
Bettie Taylor Nash (B.S. '64), November 20, 2020.

Andrew Nathaniel White III (B.A. '64), November 11, 2020.
Carey Hiawatha Wrenn Jr. (B.F.A. '64), May 13, 2020.

Dr. Joseph Bertha Williams (B.S. '65), November 2, 2019.
Donald R. Frisby (B.S. '66, MD '70), August 30, 2020.
Edward Bruce McLean (B.A. '66), May 22, 2020.

Dr. Charles Dale Mitchell Sr. (M.D. '66), March 12, 2020.
Donald R. Henderson, M.D., MPH (B.S. '67), November 1, 2020.

William D. Thomas (B.A. '67), April 6, 2020.
Pecolia Eugenia McCain Davis (B.S.N. '68), February 20, 2021.
Jean Marie Pinnock Bryan (B.A. '69, M.A. '70), May 25, 2020.

'70s

Walter C. Blount (B.S. '71), January 21, 2021.
Anthony C. "Tony" Montez (B.S. '74), February 9, 2021.

■ **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.



Ambassador Larry Palmer

■ **AMBASSADOR LARRY PALMER** brought his distinguished diplomatic career to Howard University to increase the University's engagement in foreign services. As ambassador in residence, Dr. Palmer served as a key leader in developing relationships between the University and the U.S. Department of State, international embassies, and various foreign and domestic organizations. He also served as program director for the Rangel, Payne and Pickering fellowship programs, which were created to help diversify the foreign service.

Dr. Palmer served as ambassador to Honduras as well as to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, where he successfully implemented the president's Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, combatting corruption and transnational organized crime as well as the illegal trafficking of drugs and persons. In addition, he has served with distinction in several other countries, including Uruguay, Paraguay, South Korea, Sierra Leone, Northern Mexico and the Dominican Republic. He was also president and CEO of the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent U.S. government agency that provides grants to poor and marginalized communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.



COMING HOME

BY

Dana Williams-Johnson (B.A. '00)

■ 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."



■ **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.

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.

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.



Legacy Giving Society

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