

Rooted in Sisterhood:

Navigating the Journey Through Resilience, Reclamation and Restoration

Association of Black Women in Higher Education, Inc.

2026 National Conference | October 14–16, 2026

Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel
Coppin State University
Baltimore, Maryland

Welcome

From Our National Executive Board Members



ROOTED IN SISTERHOOD:

Navigating the Journey through Resilience, Reclamation, and Restoration



Dr. Kimberly Roan
President

Beryl Jeffers
Vice President

Dion Lucas
Secretary

Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon
Treasurer

Dr. Michelle Morrow
Former President

ABWHE

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

DR. ROAN

CONGRATULATIONS
AND BEST WISHES IN SERVING
THE ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

BERYL S. JEFFERS

CONGRATULATIONS
AND BEST WISHES IN SERVING
THE ASSOCIATION

4 YEARS

OF OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."

African Proverb

ABWHE NATIONAL PRESIDENT WELCOME

DR. KIMBERLY ROAN



Dear ABWHE Sisters and Friends,

Welcome to the 2026 ABWHE National Conference, **Rooted in Sisterhood: Navigating the Journey through Resilience, Reclamation, and Restoration.**

As I reflect on the past four years serving as your National President, I am deeply honored to have walked this path alongside you. Together, we have navigated moments of profound growth, challenge, celebration, and change. Through it all, I have been continuously reminded of the unstoppable power that is unleashed when women come together with a shared purpose.

At its core, sisterhood is reflected in how we show up for one another—extending grace, sharing wisdom, building trust, and creating sacred spaces for collective growth. It reminds us that while our individual journeys are unique, none of us has to walk them alone. This is the true spirit of our guiding light - ABWHE's motto- **"Lift as We Climb."**

To Lift as We Climb means opening doors, sharing knowledge, creating pathways, and extending a hand whenever a sister needs support. Our individual achievements become infinitely more meaningful when they strengthen the collective. Ultimately, the true measure of our impact is not simply what we accomplish, but how we choose to show up along the way. Our legacy is defined by choosing integrity over convenience, grace over judgment, trust over assumption, and collaboration over competition.

As we gather over the next few days, I invite you to be fully present, open your heart, and prepare for renewal. Reflect on the resilience that has carried you here. Reclaim the voice, purpose, and endless possibilities calling you forward.

May we remain rooted in who we are, courageous about who we are becoming, and committed to Lifting as We Climb—with integrity, grace, trust, and collective purpose.

With deep gratitude and sisterly love,

Dr. Kimberly Roan

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dear ABWHE Sisterhood,

On behalf of the **National Executive Committee,** we extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made the 2026 National Conference an extraordinary success. This October, as women across the country continue to rise, we gathered under our powerful theme, **Rooted in Sisterhood: Navigating the Journey through Resilience, Reclamation, and Restoration.** This experience was built on the foundation of courage, connection, and collective power.

An event of this magnitude requires visionary dedication, and we want to explicitly recognize the **outstanding work of each conference sub-committee.** Your strategic brilliance, long hours, and seamless coordination brought our "Conference At-A-Glance" to life. You didn't just execute an event—you created a sanctuary for our sisterhood.

Through this work, we successfully advanced our vital mission:

- **Promoting growth:** Advancing the intellectual and educational development of Black women in higher education.
- **Breaking barriers:** Working to eliminate the racism, sexism, and classism that hinder our full human potential.
- **Preserving history:** Celebrating the achievements of Black women to protect our presence in academia.
- **Securing the future:** Providing critical academic and social mentoring for Black youth.
- **Driving justice:** Utilizing our collective talents and expertise to advance a vision of social justice.

To our sub-committee co-chairs and members: thank you for your excellence, your dedication, and for always choosing to Lift as We Climb.

In Sisterhood and Service,

2026 ABWHE National Executive Committee

Table of Contents

WELCOME & ABOUT ABWHE

ABWHE National President Welcome - Dr. Kimberly Roan	4
Message of Gratitude from the National Executive Committee	5
Our Mission	8
ABWHE History	9
National Presidential Leadership & Honorary Board Members	10
National Honorary Council & 2024-2026 National Board	11

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, October 14 - Registration, Business Meeting & Culture/Connection	13
Thursday, October 15 - Opening Session & Workshops A-D	14
Thursday, October 15 - Networking Luncheon & Workshops E-H	15
Thursday, October 15 - Closing, Sister Circle & Hospitality	16
Friday, October 16 - Awards Breakfast & Keynote	17
Friday, October 16 - High-Impact Micro-Sessions I-K & Adjournment	18

FEATURES, SPEAKERS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Historic Moment-Innovation, Sisterhood, and Renewal	20
Keynote Speakers	21
Kisha A. Brown, Esq. - October 15 Keynote Presenter	22
Dr. Yvette LaShone Pye - October 16 Keynote Presenter	23
Textbook Scholarship Recipients	24
Morgan Bennett - 2026 Recipient	25
Cammie Jones-Friedrichs - 2026 Recipient	26
Chloe Dasher - 2025 Recipient	27
Kyle King - 2025 Recipient	28
Cenae MacLloyd - 2024 Recipient	29

HONOREES & RECOGNITION

2023 Honorees	30
Starr Sage, PhD, MPH - Outstanding Leadership in Higher Education	31
Karen Ruth-Jarmon - Outstanding Chapter Member	32
Dr. Michelle Morrow - Lift As We Climb Award	33
Beryl S. Jeffers - Lifetime Achievement Award	34
2026 Honorees	35
Tiffany Burton - Outstanding Leader in Higher Education	36
Tracey M. Hughes - Outstanding Chapter Member	37

Table of Contents Continued

Jacqueline Heads - Lift As We Climb Award	38
Dr. Kimberly D. Johnson - Lifetime Achievement Award	39
ABWHE Leaders Eligible for Wiser Recognition	40-41

SUPPORTERS & CONFERENCE ADS

2026 Conference Sponsors	42
Sponsor Recognition / Thank You	43
Coppin State University	44
MDI	45
Additional Sponsor Recognitions	46-49
2026 Conference Vendors	50
Vendor Recognition / Thank You	51
Conference Ads & Acknowledgements	52-70

PRESENTER & CO-PRESENTER BIOS

Presenter & Co-Presenter Bios	71
Dr. Theresa Canada & Dr. Jacqueline A. Kane - Session A	72
Delores V. Smalls - Session A	73
Venice Wollie - Session B	74
Renée Myrie - Session C	75
Dr. Ivanna Colón-Alverio & Sydney Elizabeth Robinson - Session D	76
Dr. Devery J. Rodgers & Candi Marsh - Session E	77
Constance Nwanze Bega - Session E	78
Dr. Sharde Theodore - Session F	79
Dr. Tahnee L. Wilder - Session F	80-81
Ola Kalu, PhD, EdS - Session G	82
Dr. Lover Chancler - Session H	83
Tori Marshall - Session I	84
Sheila A. McMillan, MBA - Session J	85
Dr. Chanise Reese-Queen - Session K	86

BALTIMORE THINGS TO DO AND CLOSING PAGES

Explore Baltimore, Maryland	87-89
Congratulations from the National Executive Committee	90

OUR MISSION

Promote the intellectual growth and educational development of Black women in higher education.

Strive to eliminate racism, sexism, classism, and other social barriers that hinder Black women from achieving their potential.

Communicate and document the personal and professional achievements of Black women and men in order to preserve and increase their presence in higher education.

Provide mentorship for Black youth in order to ensure their success in higher education.

Apply our talents, strengths, and expertise to advance our vision of social justice.

ABWHE CHAPTERS

Chicago
Virtual
Kansas City
Philadelphia
New York
Greater New Jersey
Minnesota

ROOTED IN SISTERHOOD:
Navigating the Journey through

ABWHE HISTORY

In 1976, Dr. Jacqueline A. Kane became Director of the ABWHE National Conference 2019 Respect the Root: Reclaiming Our Strength and Diversity 8, Resource Center on Women in Higher Education with the New York State Education Department. In this capacity she became concerned about what could be done to assist affirmative action officers. She was directed to assist in the recruitment and promotion of Black women. In April 1977, Jackie convened a committee of Black women from across NY State to plan a conference for June 5-7, 1977. This committee included women involved in Opportunity Programs, foundations, community-based organizations, as well as faculty, staff, and administrators. It was decided the conference theme should be the "Elimination of Institutional Policies and Practices that Adversely Affect Black Women": That conference was attended by approximately 75 participants who recommended that the Center organize a second conference to be held January 23-25, 1978, in Albany with the theme "Black Women in Higher Education." The participants of this second conference decided that it was time to start an organization.

For the next year and a half, with continuing support from the Resource Center, a group of women met to form what was to become the Association of Black Women in Higher Education and to sponsor a conference to launch the organization. Dr. Patricia Carey introduced the group to the Institute of Afro-American Affairs at New York University which became host for eight of the nine conferences at the University. The Approximately 200 participants attended first conference. There was enthusiastic support for ABWHE, and a modest membership campaign began. Most of the initial energy was focused on the annual conference and providing an organizational framework. At the end of the first full year 21 women had joined ABWHE.

Today, ABWHE has seven chapters nationwide. Since its inception, ABWHE has served as a forum for developing strategies to improve the quality of education of Black people, with particular emphasis on encouraging Black youth to take full advantage of available educational opportunities. ABWHE is committed to aiding Black women in the academy in fulfilling their own aspirations as well as encouraging black youth to pursue their education.

Legacy of
ABWHE NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. Jacqueline A. Kane, 1978
Gloria Primm Brown, 1981
Dr. Patricia M. Carey, 1983
*Dr. Bernadette Whitley-Penceal, 1985
Dr. Lea E. Williams, 1987
*Dr. Lenore Gall, 1989
Delores V. Smalls, 1991
Joann Mitchell, J.D., 1997
*Gloria Gay, 2005

***Ancestor**

Dr. Bettye Glover Miller and *Gloria Gay, 2001
Avis Hedrickson, 2003
*Gloria Gay, 2005
Dr. Makeba Clay, 2007
Dr. Carol O. Carson-Warner, 2009
Dr. Heather P. Tarleton, 2011
Dr. Valerie Dorsey Allen, 2013
Dr. Michelle D. Morrow, 2018
Dr. Kimberly Roan (Current President), 2022
Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon (President-Elect), 2026

***Ancestor**

ABWHE NATIONAL HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

A former national past-president or national board member who continues to work on behalf of the Association at the board level; one who has been identified by her peers to have made outstanding contributions to the Association; and one who continues to promote the values of the Association. Established in 2010 by the ABWHE National Board.

Dr. Jacqueline A. Kane
Delores Smalls
Dr. Valerie Dorsey Allen
*Gloria Gay
Dr. Cheryl T. Chatman

***Ancestor**

ABWHE NATIONAL
HONORARY COUNCIL MEMBERS

A prominent educator or media persona whose work supports the ABWHE mission by being well established in the field and by being known for their contributions to the academy. Established in 2017 by the ABWHE National Board.

Honorary Council Members:

Dr. Judith Gay
Dr. Valerie Harrison
Dr. Faynese Miller

2024 - 2026 National Board

Dr. Kimberly Roan, President
Head of Learning & Organizational Development and Talent Acquisition
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

Beryl Jeffers, Vice President
University Director for Enrollment Services
The State University of New York (SUNY)

Dion Lucas, Secretary
Virtual Secondary Math Instructor for Proximity Learning, Inc.
Adjunct Professor for Huntsville Bible College in Alabama

Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon, Treasurer
Experiential Learning Outreach Manager
Junior Achievement North

Dr. Michelle D. Morrow, Immediate Past President
Director of Scholarships, Office of Financial Aid, Scholarships & Student Employment
Northeastern Illinois University

Chicago	Dr. Michelle D. Morrow, Chapter President DeMara Campbell, Chapter Vice President
Greater Kansas City	Dr. Kimberly Johnson, Chapter President Doris Agwu, Chapter Vice President
Greater New Jersey	Dr. Crystal Smith, Chapter President Dr. Kimyata Valere, Chapter Vice President
Minnesota	Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon, Chapter President Dr. Caroline Gaither, Chapter Vice President
New York	Dr. Jacqueline Kane, Chapter Advisor* Dr. Layla Qaabidh, Chapter President** Gelaine Williams, Chapter Vice President**
Philadelphia	Joi Dallas, Chapter President Tonja Robinson, Chapter Vice President Isabel Sampson-Mapp, Interim Chapter President Pamela Carr, Interim Chapter Vice President
Virtual	Dion Lucas, Chapter President Dr. Rosalind Kennerson-Baty, Chapter Vice President

** Intermittent term

Conference Schedule

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2026

Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel
202 E Pratt Baltimore, MD 21202

3:00 - 6:00 PM EST	**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION**
5:00 - 6:30 PM EST	**ABWHE Board & Annual Business Meeting** Dr. Kimberly Roan, National President Kira Edwards, Miss Black United States 2026 **2026-2027 ABWHE National Officer Installation Ceremony** Dr. Valerie Dorsey Allen, Past National President, Presiding Ceremony Officer Dr. Jacqueline Kane, Founding President, Co-Presiding Officer Dr. Kimberly Roan, National President, Co-Presiding Officer Beryl Jeffers, National Vice President, Co Presiding Officer
7:00 - 9:15 PM EST	**"An Evening of Culture & Connection"** Fogo De Chao Brazilian Restaurant, *Dinner provided by ABWHE* Emcee: Tonja Robinson, Vice President Philadelphia Chapter Statement of Purpose: Isabel Sampson-Mapp, Immediate Past Interim President of the Philadelphia Chapter & Past National Chair of Chapter Development Welcome & Recognition of Special Guests: Jameilla Robinson-Frazier, National Treasurer-Elect Libation Ceremony: Dr. Michelle D. Morrow, National Vice President-Elect Recognition of Wisers: Michelle D. Ray Dorman, Philadelphia Chapter Member Invocation: Dr. Rosalind Baty, Vice President Virtual Chapter **Dinner Served** Interactive Cultural Experience: Capoeira Malês Creative Expression: Karima I.A. Bouchenafa, Philadelphia Chapter Member Acknowledgements, Closing Remarks Instructions for the Remainder of the Evening: Dr. Caroline Gaither, President, Minnesota Chapter

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2026

Coppin State University (CSU)
J. Millard Tawes College Center (Tawes Hall)
2500 W. North Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21216

8:00 AM EST — **DEPARTURE TO CSU:** ***Please meet in the lobby at 7:45AM if you are taking the conference shuttle. Onsite parking is available at Coppin State University in Parking Lot F***

8:30 - 9:15 AM EST — **CONFERENCE CHECK-IN & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

9:30 - 11:30 AM EST — **CONFERENCE OPENING SESSION**

Emcee: Joi Dallas, President, Philadelphia Chapter

Welcome & Statement of Purpose: Dr. Kimberly Roan, National President

Mindfulness Moment: Dr. Ufuoma C. Abiola, Greater New Jersey Chapter Member

Greetings from Coppin State University, Dr. Anthony L. Jenkins, President of Coppin State University

Introduction of Speaker: Dr. Kimberly Roan, National President

Keynote Speaker: Kisha A. Brown, Esq.

11:45 - 12:45 PM EST — **CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSIONS**

Session / Presentor(s)	Title of Presentation	Location
Session A Dr. Theresa Canada, Dr. Jacqueline A. Kane, and Delores V. Smalls	Leadership at the Top: ABWHE Founder and Former National Presidents	**Ballroom** (Up to 150)
Session B Venice Wollie	Seen but Not Fully Known: The Hidden Experiences of First-Generation Black Students of Immigrants	**Talon 210** (Up to 65)
Session C Renée Myrie	The Grief We Don't Talk About: Healing Black Youth & Families	**Talon 214** (Up to 25)
Session D Renée Myrie	Rooted in Community: Supporting Black Women Across Every Stage of the Academic Journey	**Talon 218** (Up to 25)

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2026

Coppin State University (CSU)
J. Millard Tawes College Center (Tawes Hall)
2500 W. North Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21216

1:00 - 2:30 PM EST — **NETWORKING LUNCHEON**

Emcee: Dr. Crystal Smith, President, Greater New Jersey Chapter

Statement of Purpose: Dr. Crystal Smith, President Greater New Jersey Chapter

Welcome: Dr. Lisa Millsaps-Graham, New York Chapter Member

Reflections on Sisterhood at CSU: Dr. Chanta Haywood, Provost

Lunch by Thompson Hospitality

Networking Activity: The Roots That Connect Us
Dr. Chaz Voe

2:45 - 3:30 PM EST — **BREAK & ABWHE VENDOR VILLAGE**
Tawes Hall Atrium **The ABWHE Vendor Village will be open from 9:00am-5:00pm*

3:45 - 4:45 PM EST — **CONCURRENT WORKSHOP SESSIONS**

Session / Presenter(s)	Title of Presentation	Location
Session E Dr. Devery J. Rodgers, Candi Marsh, and Constance Nwanze	Beyond Bloodlines: An Ethic of Care at the Intersections of Femtoring and Othermothering	**Tawes Hall** (Up to 150)
Session F Dr. Sharde Theodore and Dr. Tahnee L. Wilder	We Root for Each Other: How Sistahood Shapes the Doctoral Journey	**Talon 210** (Up to 65)
Session G Dr. Ola Kalu	Extracting Care: Community Doulas and the Hidden Labor of Black Women in Healthcare	**Talon 214** (Up to 25)
Session H Dr. Lover Chancler	Supporting Students and Each Other in Times Like These	**Talon 218** (Up to 25)

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2026

Coppin State University (CSU)
J. Millard Tawes College Center (Tawes Hall)
2500 W. North Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21216

4:45 - 5:15 PM EST	**CLOSING REMARKS** Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon, ABWHE National President-Elect
5:45 PM EST	**DEPARTURE TO RENAISSANCE HARBORPLACE HOTEL** *Please meet at the main entrance of Tawes College Center.
6:30 - 8:00 PM EST	**~ Dinner on Your Own ~**
8:15 - 9:30 PM EST	**ABWHE SISTER CIRCLE** Dr. Rosalind Baty Renaissance Hotel Meeting Room
9:45 - 10:45 PM EST	**NETWORK/DROP-IN/GRAB A SNACK** Renaissance Hotel, ABWHE Hospitality Suite

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2026

Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel
202 E Pratt, Baltimore, MD 21202

8:30 - 9:15 AM EST	**Registration & Check-In**
9:00 – 9:30 AM	**Arrival & Breakfast Service**
9:00 - 11:30 AM EST	**ABWHE AWARDS & BREAKFAST** Emcee: Beryl Jeffers, National Vice President Invocation: Dion Lucas, National Secretary
9:30 – 9:40 AM EST	**Welcome & Introduction of Keynote Speaker** Dr. Kimberly Roan, National President
9:45 – 10:25 AM EST	**Keynote Speaker** Dr. Yvette Pye
10:35 – 11:20 AM EST	**Awards Presentation**
10:35 EST	**National Awards** Beryl Jeffers, National Vice President & Awards Committee **Presidential Awards** Dr. Kimberly Roan, National President **Vice Presidential Awards** Beryl Jeffers, National Vice President **Passing of the Gavel & Acknowledgements** Dr. Kimberly Roan, National President
12:30 - 2:30 PM EST	**UPSKILLING FOR MASTERY: HIGH-IMPACT MICRO-SESSION** Latesha Fussell, New York Chapter Member, Speakers & Presentations Co-Chair

Session / Presentor(s)	Title of Presentation	Location
Session I Tori Marshall	**Title of Presentation from 2:30 - 1:10PM** Inside Out: A Culturally Responsive SEL Approach to Empowering Black Girls	**Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel**
Session J Sheila A. McMillan	**Title of Presentation from 1:10 - 1:50 PM** Estrangement: Navigating the Journey through the Resilience of Stigmas while Reclaiming and Restoring our Dignity	**Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel**
Session K Dr. Chanise Reese-Queen	**Title of Presentation from 1:50 - 2:30 PM** Own Your Awesomeness: Accomplishments, Self-Promotion, and Bragging	**Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel**

All sessions will run consecutively within a single meeting space at the hotel.

2:45 - 3:00 PM EST

Closing Remarks & Adjournment
Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon, National President

Historic Moment

A Historic Moment:
INNOVATION, SISTERHOOD, AND RENEWAL

On behalf of the ABWHE Sisterhood, we extend our deepest gratitude to our conference planning executive liaisons and dedicated sub-committees. This year marked a historic milestone for our organization: for the first time in our history, the ABWHE National Conference was hosted in a state without a local chapter. Bringing our national gathering to Baltimore, Maryland presented an unprecedented opportunity to innovate, prompting us to coordinate, pivot, and plan differently than ever before.

With exceptional agility, expertise, and resources, you beautifully brought to life our conference theme: Navigating the Journey through Resilience, Reclamation, and Restoration. Planning across distances required its own form of resilience, and your visionary leadership successfully reclaimed our power to adapt and expand our reach. Through your tireless efforts, you created a sanctuary for vital in-person connection, restoring our spirits and fortifying the sacred bonds of sisterhood that define ABWHE.

Thank you for your invaluable time, leadership, and dedication. Your collaborative spirit ensured an inclusive, seamless, and deeply impactful experience for everyone, proving that our collective strength knows no geographic boundaries.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LIAISONS
Dr. Kimberly Roan, Beryl Jeffers, Dion Lucas, Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon, and Dr. Michelle Morrow

SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS & SPONSORSHIPS
Dr. Kimberly Roan, Latesha Fussell, and Dion Lucas

PROGRAM & LOGISTICS
Dr. Michelle Morrow, Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon, Jacqueline Heads, Tonja Robinson, Jameilla Robinson, Dr. Crystal Smith, Dr. Kimyata Valere, and Marsha Williams

AWARDS, REGISTRATION, VENDORS
Beryl Jeffers, Tracey Hughes, Dr. Lover Chancler, Dr. Rosalind Baty, Dr. Angela Seay, and Dr. Caroline Gaither

PUBLICITY, MARKETING AND SOCIAL EVENTS
Dion Lucas, Dr. Kimberly Roan, Tracey Hughes, Dr. Rosalind Baty, Jacqueline Heads, Tye Barnett, Dr. Chaz Voe, Dr. Lisa Millsaps, Joi Dallas, Latesha Fussell, and Myesha Smith

MERCHANDISE & CUSTOM COLLECTIONS
Dr. Kimberly Roan

Keynote Speakers

OCTOBER 15TH KEYNOTE PRESENTER

KISHA A BROWN, ESQ.



Kisha A. Brown, Esq. is a civil rights attorney, legal strategist, and founder of Justis Connection, the nation's first Black attorney referral network. Through her work, she helps individuals and leaders move from legal confusion to clarity—so they can make aligned, informed decisions in moments that matter most.

A former Director of the Baltimore City Civil Rights Department, Kisha has spent her career at the intersection of law, equity, and systems change. Today, she is the creator of Legal Clarity Sessions, where she provides a confidential, judgment-free space for professionals to navigate complex challenges with confidence and strategy.

Kisha's work is grounded in a simple but powerful belief: you cannot lead boldly if you are unclear about what protects you. She equips Black women leaders—especially those operating in high-stakes, high-impact environments like education—with the tools to understand their rights, reclaim their agency, and lead with intention.

Title of Proposal:
Legal Clarity is Leadership: How Black Women Educators Protect Their Power While Transforming Institutions

Program Description:
Black women educators are often called to lead, nurture, and transform institutions that were never designed with them in mind. Yet in the midst of this responsibility, many are navigating complex workplace dynamics, unclear policies, and legal vulnerabilities—without the tools to fully protect themselves or their impact.

This session introduces legal clarity as an essential leadership skill, not a reactive measure. Grounded in bold leadership rooted in truth and transformation, this talk explores how understanding your legal landscape—contracts, workplace rights, institutional policies, and professional boundaries—can fundamentally shift how you lead.

Participants will gain insight into how legal ambiguity quietly shapes decision-making, limits leadership capacity, and contributes to burnout. More importantly, they will leave with a practical framework for recognizing risk, asking better questions, and accessing the right support before challenges escalate.

This is not about becoming a lawyer. It's about becoming a leader who is informed, protected, and positioned to lead with clarity, confidence, and power.

Session Expectations:
Black women educators have long been at the forefront of shaping minds, communities, and institutions—often while navigating environments marked by inequity, interpersonal challenges, and systemic barriers. What is rarely acknowledged is how legal ambiguity—uncertainty around contracts, policies, rights, and responsibilities—quietly impacts leadership.

This session reframes legal clarity as a core leadership competency for Black women educators committed to equity and transformation.

When leaders lack clarity about their legal landscape, it influences what they tolerate, how they advocate, and whether they feel empowered to make bold decisions. This session creates space to explore those realities while equipping participants with practical tools to lead more confidently and strategically.

Participants will be introduced to an accessible framework for identifying where legal uncertainty shows up in their professional lives and how to respond proactively rather than reactively. Through real-world scenarios and guided reflection, we will examine common challenges such as contract misunderstandings, workplace conflict, shifting institutional expectations, and professional boundary-setting.

Learning Outcomes - Participants Will:
- Identify key areas where legal ambiguity may be impacting their leadership and decision-making.
- Understand how contracts, policies, and workplace rights shape their professional experience.
- Learn a practical framework for approaching legal uncertainty with clarity and confidence.
- Develop the ability to ask more informed, strategic questions in high-stakes situations.
- Recognize when and how to seek legal or professional support.

OCTOBER 16TH KEYNOTE PRESENTER

DR. YVETTE LASHONE PYE



Dr. Yvette LaShone Pye is an entrepreneur, writer, and educator of 20 years that was unceremoniously laid off nearly after 20 years serving as a Professor in H.E. She enjoyed teaching and advising doctoral and master's degree students Chairing 68 dissertations. She received a BS in Education at Chicago State University, and an MA and Ph.D. in Urban Social Geography from the University of Minnesota. With extensive research experience mentoring, community advocacy/engagement, and research, Dr. Pye coordinates efforts between diverse community groups and builds rapport with colleagues at all levels. She is meeting the challenges of The NEW NORMAL of the 300 1000 Black Women professionals reluctantly joining the ranks of the unemployed. She's endeavoring to stay encouraged by loved ones and reflecting on research endeavors across the United States and abroad in Brazil, Kenya, and Italy. Dr. Pye has written her memoir, Going from the Projects to Ph.D.: Transcending My Geography. She currently serves as the Treasurer of the Minnesota Chapter.

Title of Proposal:
Tales from the Trenches: 20 Years of Hindsight—Navigating the Academic Landscape

Program Description:
Tales from the Trenches: 20 Years of Hindsight—Navigating the Academic Landscape
Not everything that shapes an academic career is written in policy or taught in programs—this session explores how professionals come to understand and navigate those realities over time.

This session offers a practical, experience-based perspective on navigating an academic career, informed by over 20 years in higher education teaching, leadership, and doctoral advising. Rather than presenting a one-size-fits-all model, the session highlights common patterns, challenges, and decision points that many professionals encounter in the academy.

Participants will consider how to approach career planning with greater awareness of institutional expectations, workplace dynamics, and potential barriers. The session will address frequently experienced pitfalls, as well as everyday strategies for managing relationships, expectations, and professional responsibilities.

Attention will also be given to identifying sources of support, including mentorship and peer networks, and to thinking carefully about trust, boundaries, and professional discretion. The role of lateral moves—such as shifting roles or institutions—will be discussed in terms of both opportunities and trade-offs.

Attendees will leave with space for reflection and a set of considerations to inform their own decision-making as they navigate academic environments.

Session Expectations:
This session offers a focused, practice-based perspective on navigating academic careers, informed by over 20 years of experience in higher education teaching, leadership, and doctoral advising. The session centers on common patterns, challenges, and decision points that shape academic work, including those not typically addressed in formal preparation.

The session will briefly highlight key phases of academic roles and recurring challenges related to expectations, workload, and institutional culture. It will then introduce practical considerations for making career decisions with greater awareness of context, including navigating relationships, opportunities, and constraints. Attention will also be given to mentorship, peer support, and lateral career movement, with emphasis on weighing potential benefits and trade-offs.

Learning Outcomes - Participants Will:
- Recognize common challenges within academic environments.
- Identify key decision points in their professional pathways.
- Reflect on how support systems and career moves may influence their trajectory.

Textbook Scholarship Recipients

2026 Textbook Scholarship Recipient



Morgan Bennett

Morgan is a student at Harvard Graduate School of Education, working on a Master's degree in Education Policy & Analysis.

2026 Textbook Scholarship Recipient



Cammie Jones-Friedrichs

Cammie is a Doctoral student in Higher Education Administration at the University of Southern Mississippi.

2025 Textbook Scholarship Recipient



Chloe Dasher

Chloe is a Junior from Spelman College majoring in Elementary Education with a passion for helping future generations.

2025 Textbook Scholarship Recipient



Kyle King

Kyle is a Senior from Northeastern Illinois University majoring in Physical Education with a passion for helping students with lifetime fitness.

2024 Textbook Scholarship Recipient



Cenae MacLloyd

Cenae is a Student at Michigan State University from Detroit

2023 Honorees

2023

Outstanding Leadership in Higher Education Award Recipient



Starr Sage, PhD, MPH is the inaugural Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota. In this leadership role, Dr. Sage is responsible for envisioning and implementing DEI strategic priorities in collaboration with faculty, staff, students, and community partners. As a DEI leader and former tenured professor of public health, Dr. Sage has acquired extensive teaching, research, and practical experience in the realms of social justice as well as health and racial equity.

Her past research endeavors have included a community-engaged exploration of the unique barriers to and facilitators of accessing cancer screening and health care for Black women. Across her academic work, Starr advocates for the intentional design of more inclusive, diverse, and equitable higher education spaces in which historically excluded populations can feel seen, heard, and valued.

2023

Outstanding Chapter Member Award Recipient



Karen Ruth-Jarmon is a dynamic educator and passionate student advocate with broad experience providing instruction and leadership in challenging urban environments. Strong ability to connect and communicate with diverse student populations. Proven project manager with talent for building, leading, and developing high-performance cross-functional teams. Dedicated to working with underserved communities and delivering thorough student preparation for higher-level education or student employment.

2023

Lift As We Climb Award Recipient



Dr. Michelle D. Morrow is the director of scholarships at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) in Chicago. Michelle completed a Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education Administration from Argosy University, Chicago. Her dissertation topic was: "How Campus Involvement Impacts the Persistence of African American Students Attending Urban Postsecondary Institutions." She holds a Master of Arts Degree in Inner City Studies Education from Northeastern Illinois University, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), and an Associate of Arts Degree from South Suburban College.

Michelle is the immediate past National President for the Association of Black Women in Higher Education. Past roles in ABWHE include serving as president and vice-president for the Chicago Chapter, National Board secretary, chair of the ABWHE Scholarship Committee, and co-chair of the 2019 ABWHE National Conference Committee. Other service includes being a member of UIC's Umoja: Black Legacy Alumni Coalition and NEIU's Alumni Advisory Board. She served for four years as an inaugural member of the Associate Board for Resilience of Chicago, an organization that empowers sexual assault survivors and provides preventative education for the larger community that seeks to end rape culture. Additionally, Michelle served on Resilience's Taskforce for Race Relations and chaired the Associate Board's, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council. Michelle is also an active member of the Chi Omega Omega Graduate Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated where Michelle has participated in community service activities that address issues related to global impact, social justice and human rights, and educational enrichment for high school students.

Michelle is the co-author with Barbara Henley and Michael Magee of the book chapter, History and Foundation of the Field: The Life and Career of Melvin C. Terrell in the book Advancing Equity and *Diversity in Student Affairs: A Festschrift in Honor of Melvin C. Terrell.*

2023 Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient



Beryl S. Jeffers is the University Director for Enrollment Services at The State University of New York (SUNY). She is responsible for managing the overall planning of marketing and recruitment initiatives and program development at the New York City Office. She specializes in marketing and recruitment program design for secondary school counselors, students & families and serves as the central communications liaison for NYC high schools and counseling professionals. She maintains a working relationship with essential University offices including Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, Institutional Research, Undergraduate Admissions at the 64-SUNY campuses. She is committed to postsecondary access and success for all students, especially for underrepresented students.

Beryl is widely recognized as a thought leader and influencer within higher education. She is passionate about public policy as a platform for change. With a passion and commitment for students and student development. As an integral member of the Vice Chancellor's Management Team, Beryl is involved with the discussion, development, and implementation of division-wide initiatives.

Leadership is not new to Beryl who, as an undergraduate student, was responsible for the movement, preparation, and training of hundreds of her peers as president of the student council. It was during this time she learned the importance of leading by example and its connection to sacrifice. She has presented at many regional, state and national conferences and is a recipient of numerous honors and awards. Currently, she is the National Vice President of The Association of Black Women in Higher Education. She has also served as the President of the New York Chapter of ABWHE. She has served as Vice-president for Diversity, Access, and Equity- NYSACAC. She is the recipient of the NYSACAC Professional of the Year Award, SUNYCAP Admissions Profession Award, The College Access Consortium Award and CUNY Bronx Community College Presidential Award. Beryl serves on many professional and community boards and committees such as the NAACP, Habitat for Humanity, and The National Council for Negro Women. She is a very proud life-time member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Beryl earned two Masters' Degrees from Columbia University-Teachers College: an Ed.M. in Organizational Leadership and Higher Education Administration and a M.A. in Student Personnel Administration and Counseling and an advanced certificate in Higher Education Leadership &Policy from Cornell University.

An Ordained Deacon, she has taught Sunday school for twenty-nine years…. during the beginning of the pandemic was her milestone year (25 years) and as they pivoted to virtual teaching, Beryl remained dedicated, diligent, and disciplined in teaching Christian Education to her first graders. She is involved in the life of her church- serving many Ministries for over 32 years.

Married to her beloved husband, they are the very proud parents of two young adult college educated sons who live between Atlanta and NY.

2026 Honorees

2026

Outstanding Leader in Higher Education Award Recipient



Born and raised in Houston's Acres Homes neighborhood, **Tiffany Burton** learned early from her family the value of a strong work ethic and higher education—principles that continue to anchor her career as a workforce educator. A licensed cosmetologist for 28 years who holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas, Tiffany brings a rich blend of practical trade experience and strategic leadership to technical education. Her career progression includes serving as program director for the CHI-Lone Star College-North Harris cosmetology program and department chair of Consumer Services and Legal Professions at San Jacinto College North Campus. Today, as Dean of Business and Technology at San Jacinto College North Campus, she oversees dynamic programs across Industrial Technology, Logistics, Management & Professional Services, and Consumer Services fields.

As dean, Tiffany focuses on expanding affordable, high-demand technical pathways for dual credit and non-traditional student populations while modernizing workforce education. She spearheaded the expansion of baccalaureate pathways, launching the initial for the college's Bachelor of Applied Technology in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, while also leading efforts to implement 1000-hour barbering, emergency telecommunicator, and global logistics dual credit offerings. A dedicated steward of institutional growth, Burton has secured key competitive funding—including a $392,500 TIME Grant and a $189,987 JET Grant—to advance student financial aid, faculty development, and state-of-the-art training technology. Her strategic vision has forged direct-to-employment industry pipelines with partners such as Turner Industries, Houston Freightliner, Kubota, and Emerald Electric, alongside robust dual credit partnerships across six regional school districts.

Tiffany's leadership is defined by teamwork, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to dismantling barriers for students. She collaborated with college leadership to bring on-site Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) exams directly to campus for Cosmetology and Barbering graduates to eliminate geographic and financial obstacles, standardized divisional curricula under a "One-College" model, and championed events like the Iron Women Competition to recruit non-traditional students into the industrial trades. Active in professional organizations including the Association of Black Women in Higher Education (ABWHE), American Association of Blacks in Higher Education, (AABHE), American Association for Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC) and Career & Technical Association of Texas (CTAT). Tiffany remains dedicated to recruiting talent that mirrors the college's diverse student body and serves as an empowering resource for her team and community.

2026

Outstanding Chapter Member Award Recipient



Tracey M. Hughes is a charter member of ABWHE's Greater Kansas City Chapter and has served as GKC's Secretary since 2024. She helped to organize the Chapter's first officer elections, and was responsible for developing GKC's Bylaws, which were passed by charter members in July of 2024. As a member of GKC's Communications, Executive, and Membership committees, Tracey has worked to organize GKC's Google Drive, schedule general and executive meetings and take minutes, create LinkedIn posts and share event listings on the Chapter's Google Calendar, and distribute relevant information to current and potential GKC members. Nationally, Tracey contributes to ABWHE's Bylaws Committee, working collaboratively with other ABWHE Sisters to draft new and revised sections and articles. In early 2025, she also took on web editing duties for the ABWHE website, creating events and updating national and chapter pages as needed.

Tracey has worked as an academic librarian since the early 2000s, and is currently a Teaching & Learning Librarian and the Director of Inclusive Engagement for the University Libraries at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She holds a B.S. degree in Psychology from McPherson College, a master's degree in Information Science & Learning Technologies from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a master's degree in Liberal Studies from UMKC. In addition to providing information literacy instruction for General Education courses, she is one of the liaison librarians for UMKC's School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Tracey has contributed numerous articles for CHOICE Reviews Online, a leading publication within academic librarianship for book and database reviews. She co-presented at the 6th International Media Literacy Research Symposium in Rome, Italy this summer, discussing efforts to create and deliver a media fact-checking lesson plan for First Semester Experience students at UMKC.

Tracey was a member of the Kansas City Roller Warriors flat-track roller derby league, skating as a blocker from 2017-2019, and serving as a Non-Skating Official from 2017-2024. When the league transitioned from an LLC to a nonprofit organization, Tracey was an inaugural member of KCRW's Board of Directors, serving from 2021-2024 in a variety of roles (Secretary, Vice Chair, and Chair). From 2020-2024, she co-facilitated discussion groups on white supremacy and dominance cultural norms in roller derby, both for KCRW and for board members of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association, and she served on WFTDA's international advisory group, the Anti-Racism Team (ART) Project, which made recommendations to address inequities within the sport.

In her free time, Tracey enjoys digging into her roots, having been bitten by the genealogy bug in 1997. She shared research finds on her "Tracey's Tree" genealogy blog for more than five years, and after taking some time off due to life changes, she hopes to resume posting new discoveries again. Related to her family history work, Tracey contributed a chapter for the edited work Documenting Family Information and the Curation of Life Histories, to be published in early 2027.

2026

Lift As We Climb Award Recipient



Jacqueline Heads has spent her career breaking ground and building pathways, driven by an unwavering belief in human potential. Moving seamlessly from higher education leadership to grassroots advocacy, her work as an advisor, director, and dean reflects a singular vision: ensuring every individual has the resources, confidence, and access to succeed.

Currently, Jacki serves on the executive team for a "best-in-class" STEM education organization, delivering hands-on science experiences that reach over 50,000 students each year through its combined on-site lab sessions and virtual lab broadcasts.

As one of the youngest directors of the Rutgers University Douglass Project for Women in Math, Science, and Engineering | Project SUPER Enrichment Program, Jacki expanded opportunities for college women pursuing STEM-related fields. She partnered with faculty and departments university-wide to provide dynamic research experiences spanning marine biology to stem cell science. Her strategic collaborations also established the program's first global research venture, affording students the chance to present their work alongside peers in Brazil.

Beyond campus walls, Jacki shapes key community pipelines. A founding board member of the Benjamin Banneker Preparatory Charter School, she maintains a deep commitment to educational access and equity. To that end, she actively supports programs and initiatives that foster student achievement, including serving as a long-time STEM judge for the NJ Regional NAACP ACT-SO Competition. Jacki was honored to be appointed as the inaugural "City Lead" for New Jersey's first "All Girls Matter Empowerment Conference," an event that gathered high school and middle school students, mentors, and parents for a day designed to inspire and empower. She also serves as co-chair of her NCNW section's signature event, the "Girls to Women Leadership Conference."

Selected for the inaugural cohort of the esteemed New Jersey Black Women's Collective Leadership Institute, Jacki now serves as a capstone mentor. Her hands-on support spans every sphere, from guiding African refugee women through healthcare certification programs to supporting local senior centers and grassroots agencies.

Jacki's dedication to excellence has yielded numerous honors, including the Hidden Heroes Award from the Family & Children's Services of New Jersey, a nomination for the Rider University Ziegler-Gee Woman of the Year Award, dual recognition as a NJ Commission on Higher Education | Educational Opportunity Fund Champion, and being named a two-time PCOM Student National Medical Association Mentor of the Year.

Grounded in integrity, high vibrations, and the transformative power of sisterhood, Jacki is a foundational leader within the Association of Black Women in Higher Education, Greater New Jersey. She initiated the charter approved in September 2023 and led the chapter as its founding President through 2025.

Jacqueline endeavors to live by a guiding philosophy of service, spending much of her energy acting as a voice for the unheard, an extended hand for those seeking growth, and a steady resource for anyone striving to unlock their fullest potential. She embodies this dedication daily far beyond her professional role, inspired by one of her favorite quotes: "Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good."

2026

Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient



Dr. Kimberly D. Johnson is an educational leader with a passion for mentoring, leadership development, professional growth, and advocacy for women and girls. She is Senior Manager of Civic Engagement and Service in the Office of Student Involvement at the University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC). As Program Director for AmeriCorps Lift As You Climb, she provides guidance to peer mentors.

Dr. Johnson previously served at UMKC as Senior Program Manager in Multicultural Student Affairs, Director of Special Projects, and Executive Assistant to the Chancellor. She holds an adjunct professor appointment in UMKC's School of Education, Social Work, and Psychological Sciences and taught at Rockhurst University Helzberg School of Management. She has a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Higher Education Administration, Educational Specialist (Ed.S.), Master of Arts in Education, and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology degrees from UMKC.

At UMKC she implemented the Inaugural Staff Conference for Professional Development, 2014, served on the Inaugural Black Women Leaders' Conference, 2006, contributed to the Annual Women of Color Leadership Conference, and was recognized as Advisor of the Year, 2022. Johnson was selected for the Leadership and Mentoring Institute by the Association of Blacks in Higher Education, 2014.

A member since 2019, she served as National Secretary of the Association of Black Women in Higher Education (ABWHE) and was elected to a second term for 2026–2028. She was Vice President and charter member of ABWHE's Virtual Chapter and the Inaugural President of the Greater Kansas City Chapter. Nationally, she contributed to Conference Planning and Chapter Development committees.

She is Program Co-Chair of America's Big Sisters Foundation, Vice President of Kansas City Boys & Girls Choir, and member of Greater Kansas City Chapter of Societas Docta, Inc. where she is dedicated to mentoring African American women pursuing doctoral degrees. Dr. Johnson served on boards such as Awesome Ambitions Girls Mentoring, National Congress of Black Women Kansas City and Advisory Board for the National Conference on Race & Ethnicity. She is Parliamentarian for Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., Delta Eta Sigma Chapter, and Correspondence Secretary for Sigma Golden Rhoyalty Legacy Foundation.

Her published works include:

- *Invisible Life in the Academy: Understanding the Workplace Experiences of African American Staff in Higher Education.* Dissertation.
- Johnson, K.D. & Randolph, L. *Dealing with Conflict and Handling Difficult Conversations.* National Association for Campus Activities Back to School Issue. Vol 47/no.2.
- *Invisible Life in the Academy: African American Women Staff in Higher Education. J. Gammel (Ed.). I Am What I Become-Constructing an Identity as a Lifelong Learner.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- *Invisible Life in Student Affairs: Experiences of African American Women Professionals in Higher Education. In M. Burke (Ed.). No Ways Tired: The Journey for Professionals of Color in Student Affairs.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- *Black Women Staff in the Academy: Challenges, Sisterhood, and Strategies for Success.* In K.K. Hope (Ed.). *Black Women Speaking From Within: Essays and Experiences in Higher Education.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Johnson is committed to education, service, leadership, and community.

ABWHE Leaders
Wiser Recognition

ABWHE Leaders
Wiser Recognition

SINCE THE 2023 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

As a term of profound love, respect, and reverence, we affectionately refer to ABWHE Sisters who have sustained our sisterhood throughout the years as *"Wisers."*

The growth of ABWHE would not be realized without their service. These remarkable women have poured their dedication, wisdom, and commitment into this essential organization in a multitude of ways. We honor those who have:

SERVED AS LEADERS
completing their full term as Chapter President and National Board Officers.

SUSTAINED OUR MOVEMENT
actively supporting ABWHE's mission during their leadership term.

EMBODIED OUR CREED
dedicating their lives to our sacred motto: *"Lift As We Climb."*

To our Wisers — thank you for your enduring strength, your guidance, and the blueprint of resilience you have gifted to the next generation of Black women in higher education.


Dr. Chaz Voe


Dr. Kimberly Johnson


Rorujorona Ferrell


Dr. Layla Qaabidh


Dion Lucas


Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon


Jacqueline D. Heads


Isabel Sampson-Mapp

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Acknowledgements


Congratulations
Tiffany Burton
From the 2026-2028 Incoming Leadership Team
ABWHE
Outstanding Leader in Higher Education


Congratulations
Tracey Hughes
From the 2026-2028 Incoming Leadership Team
ABWHE
Outstanding Chapter Member

UMKC

University Libraries

Congratulates



TRACEY HUGHES

Congratulations on receiving the Outstanding Chapter Member Award! We're so proud of all the work you've done at both the national level and as a charter member and Founding Secretary of the Greater Kansas City Chapter. We see how much you invest into this work, and the award is well deserved!

- Your friends and colleagues at the University Libraries

CONGRATULATIONS, TRACEY!

From your first certificate to your most recent degree, you've always made the family proud! Congratulations on being named Outstanding Chapter Member for ABWHE!



Love always,
Dad.





Fruitful trees have strong roots...







...and I thank my ancestors for helping me bloom & grow.

Love you forever, Tracey.
(2026 ABWHE Outstanding Chapter Member)


Congratulations
Jacqueline Heads
From the Program and Logistics Team
ABWHE
Lift As We Climb Award

CONGRATULATIONS IPP HEADS WITH LOTS OF LOVE FROM GNJ



You are a superstar leader, a legend of a role model, and a mentor extraordinaire! Always raising others up as you soar to new heights, truly embodying "Lift as You Climb!"

CONGRATULATIONS, JACQUELINE HEADS!

ABWHE-GNJ proudly celebrates **Jacqueline Heads** on receiving the ABWHE "Lift As We Climb" Award.

Your dedication to uplifting others, empowering women, and serving your community truly embodies the spirit of "Lift As We Climb."

Through your leadership, service, and commitment to excellence, you continue to inspire others to reach higher, open doors for those who follow, and make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.



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Navigating the Journey through Resilience, Reclamation, and Restoration


Congratulations
Dr. Kimberly Johnson
From the 2026-2028 Incoming Leadership Team
ABWHE
Lifetime Achievement Award



ABWHE-GKC proudly celebrates two extraordinary leaders whose dedication and service continue to inspire and strengthen our profession, our chapter, and our community; Dr. Kimberly D. Johnson for her Lifetime Achievement Award and Tracey Hughes for her Outstanding Chapter Member Award.

As a distinguished leader, mentor and advocate in higher education, Dr. Johnson has dedicated her career to student success and creating opportunities for others to thrive. As a founding leader and inaugural president of ABWHE-GKC, her vision and service have helped strengthen our chapter and inspire generations of leaders.

Tracey Hughes, a dedicated UMKC Librarian IV, exemplifies service, collaboration and inclusion. As a founding member and founding Secretary of ABWHE-GKC, her leadership and commitment continue to advance our chapter and the profession.

We celebrate Dr. Kimberly D. Johnson and Tracey Hughes for their outstanding contributions to higher education, their unwavering commitment to ABWHE-GKC, and their dedication to lifting as they climb. Congratulations!

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Dr. Kimberly Roan

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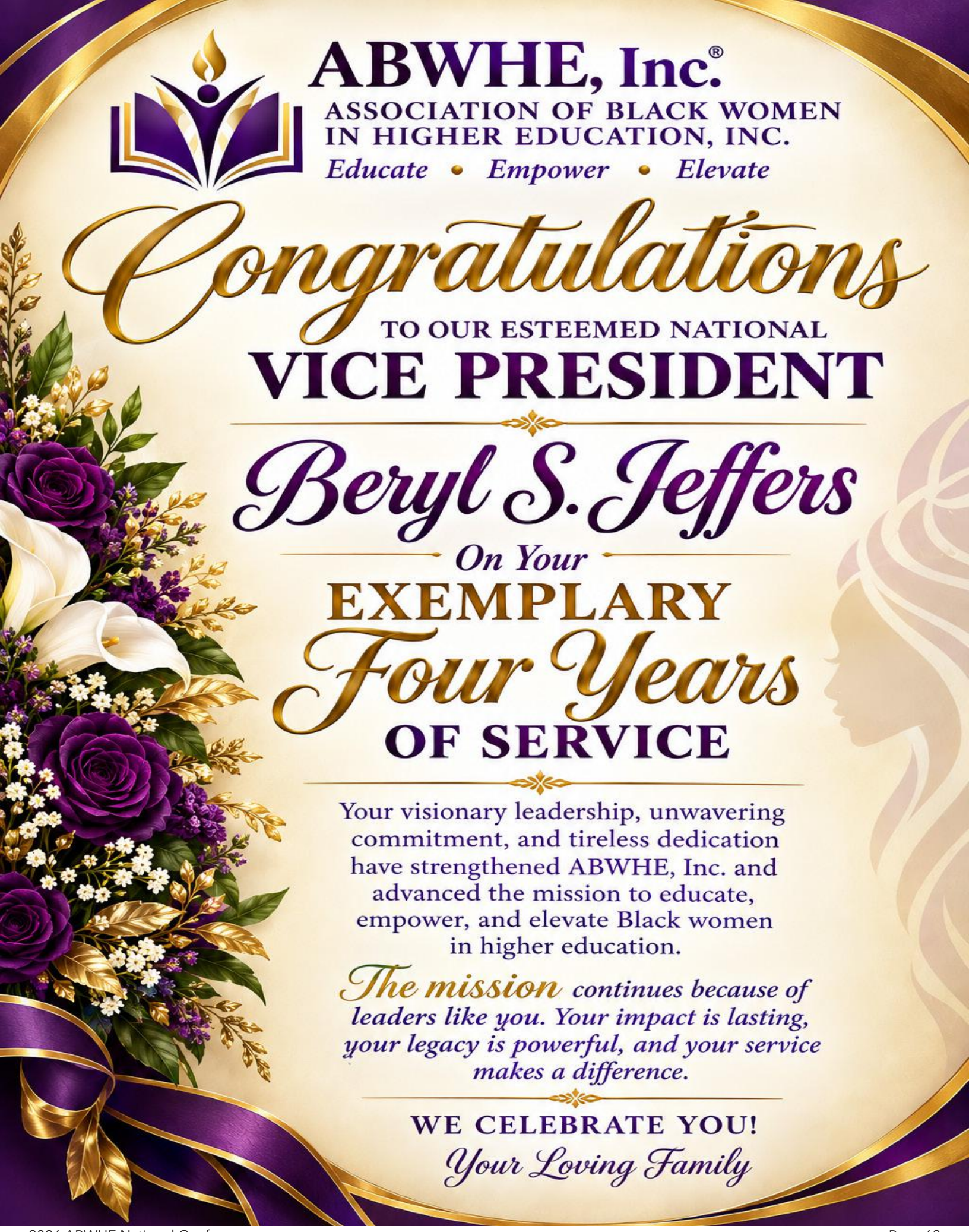
Beryl S. Jeffers, Ed.M., MA

National Vice President

Thank you for your Dedication, Commitment, Steadfastness, and Resilience. You have personified GRACE and Strength for the past 4 years as National Vice President. The impact that YOU have made for young women in the Academy space is to be applauded. You are a TREASURE to so many. We are So very proud of You!

The Big Apple Board of Directors

Doris, Felipe, Linda, Robin, and Mary (posthumous)


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Beryl S. Jeffers
On Your
EXEMPLARY
Four Years
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Your visionary leadership, unwavering commitment, and tireless dedication have strengthened ABWHE, Inc. and advanced the mission to educate, empower, and elevate Black women in higher education.
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Beryl S. Jeffers, Ed.M~MA.

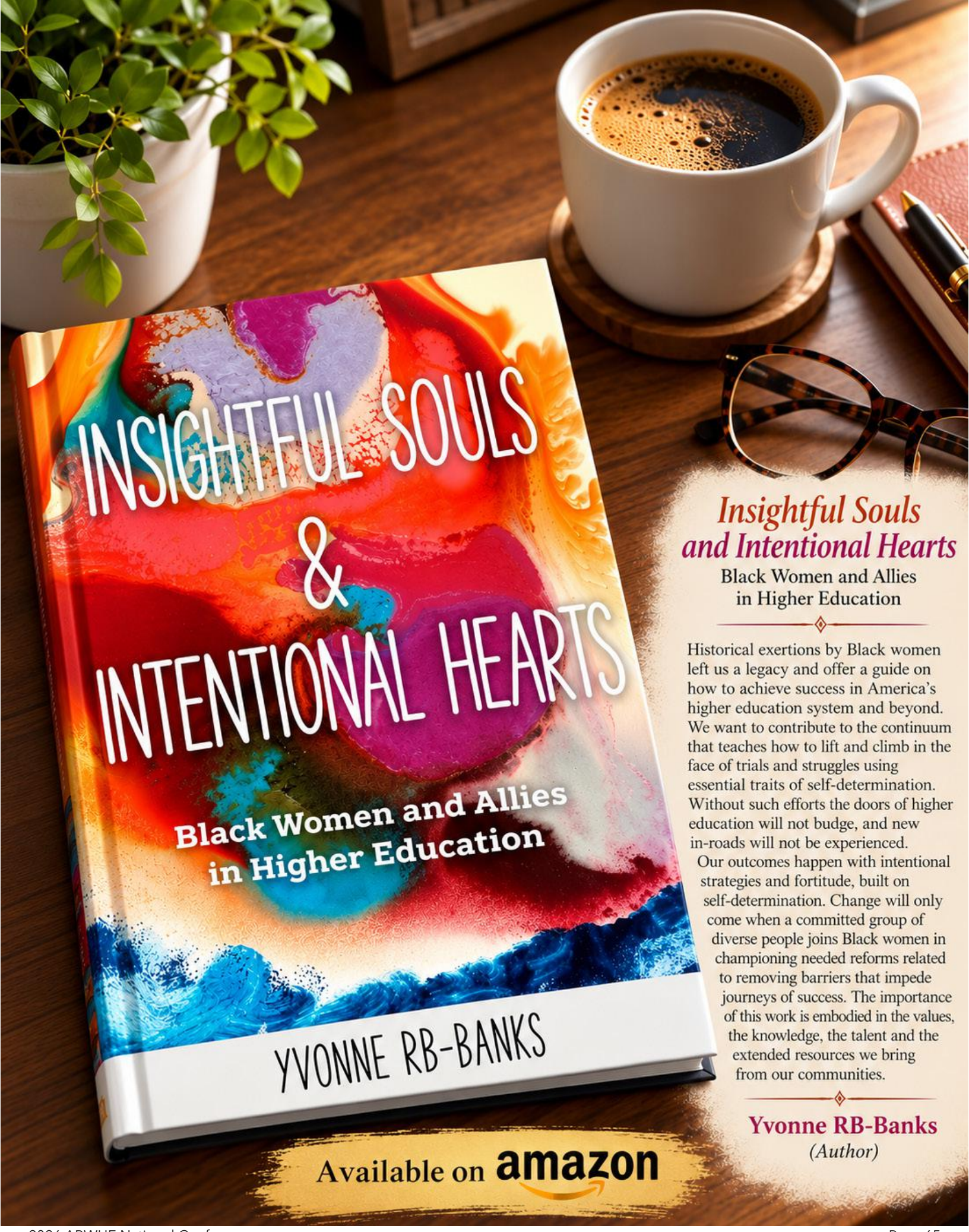
2022-2026 ABWHE National Vice President

A dedicated and committed servant leader who advocates, encourages, and supports Black women and youth in the Academy. You are a community builder and connector.

Many thanks for your stellar leadership!

Mentoring in Medicine





Insightful Souls and Intentional Hearts

Black Women and Allies in Higher Education

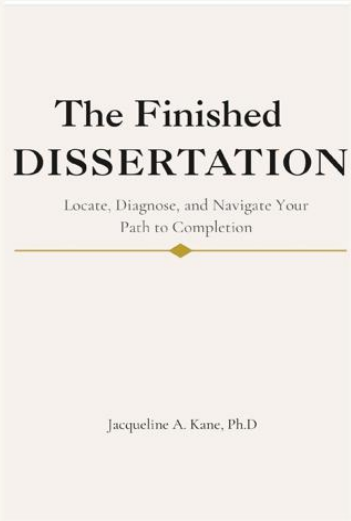
Historical exertions by Black women left us a legacy and offer a guide on how to achieve success in America's higher education system and beyond. We want to contribute to the continuum that teaches how to lift and climb in the face of trials and struggles using essential traits of self-determination. Without such efforts the doors of higher education will not budge, and new in-roads will not be experienced.

Our outcomes happen with intentional strategies and fortitude, built on self-determination. Change will only come when a committed group of diverse people joins Black women in championing needed reforms related to removing barriers that impede journeys of success. The importance of this work is embodied in the values, the knowledge, the talent and the extended resources we bring from our communities.

Yvonne RB-Banks
(Author)

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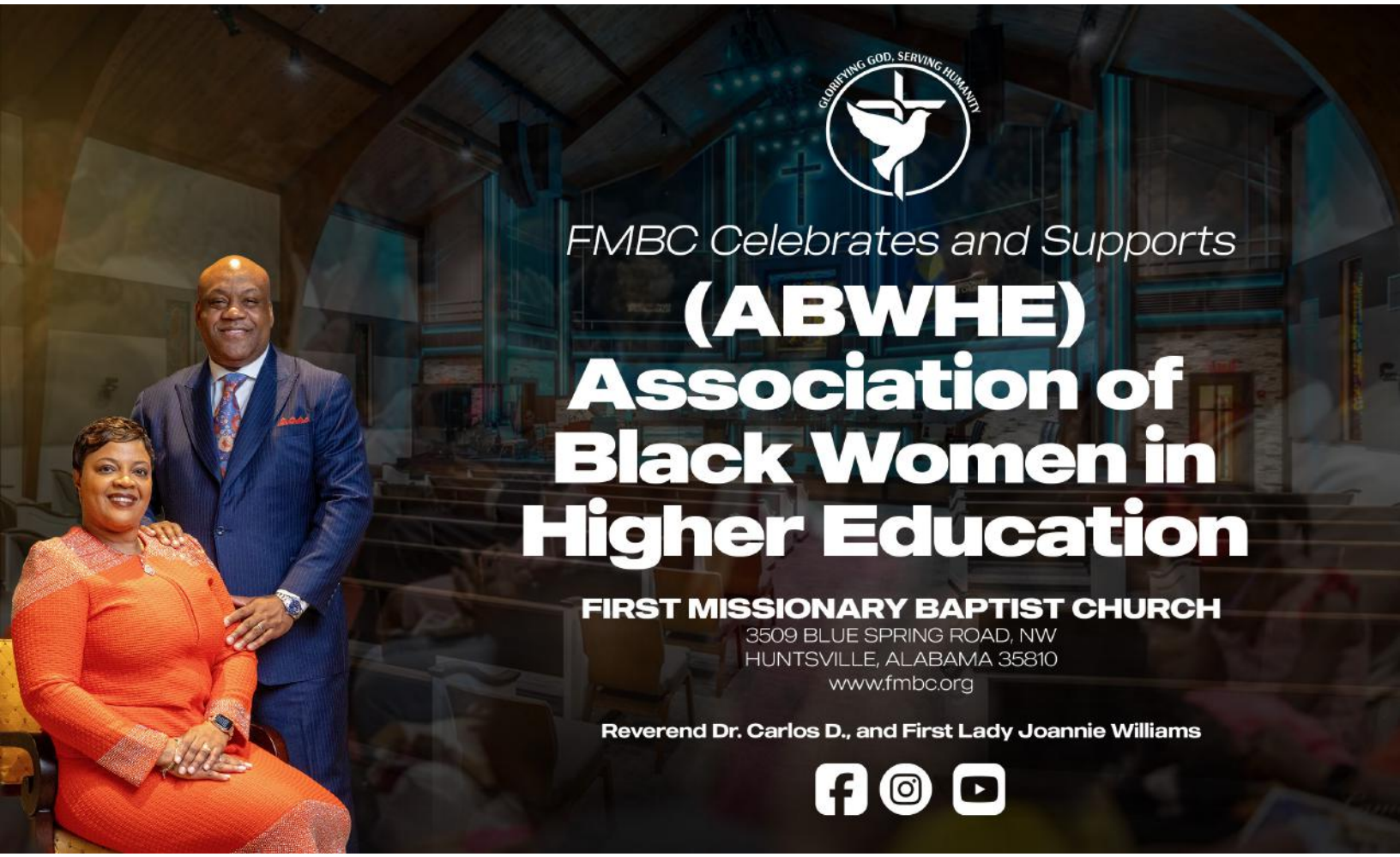
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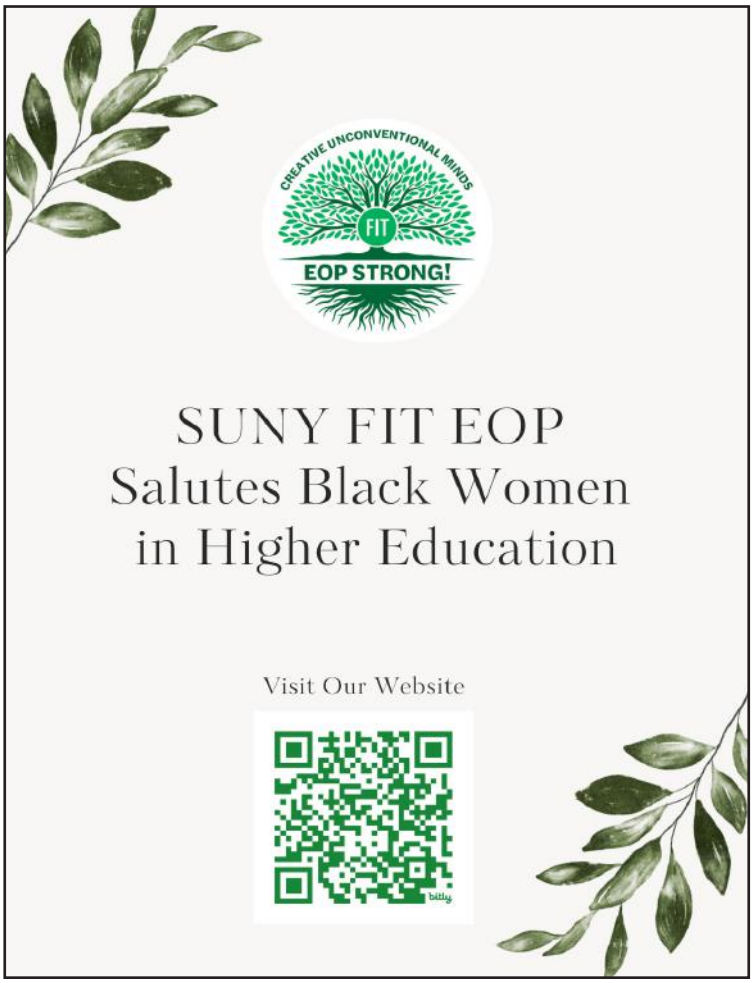
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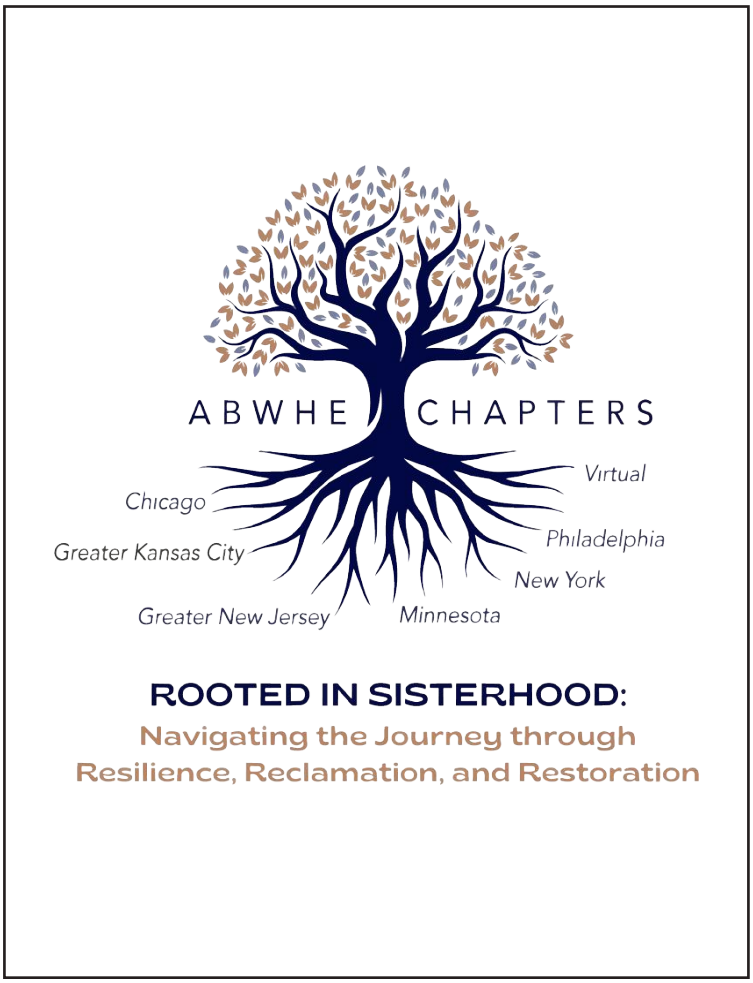
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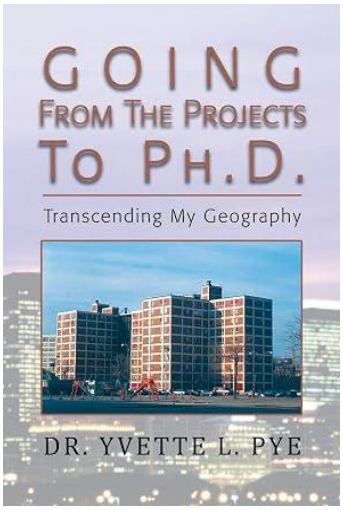
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2024-2026
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CONGRATULATES



ROOTED IN SISTERHOOD:

Navigating the Journey through
Resilience, Reclamation, and Restoration

2026 HONOREES

Presenters and Co-Presenters

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION "A" CO-PRESENTERS | 11:45AM—12:45PM

DR. THERESA CANADA



Dr. Theresa J. Canada is a professor, author, licensed professional counselor, and host of The Silk Stocking Sisters Podcast. Her podcast explores the untold stories behind the ongoing fight for educational equity. The proud Harlem native was one of the few fourth graders selected to participate in a New York City school desegregation experiment. This formative experience continues to shape her work today.

Dr. Canada is currently a Professor of Education and Educational Psychology at Western Connecticut State University. She has also served as department chair and graduate program coordinator. Her career reflects a deep commitment to civil rights, diversity, educational inclusivity, and a strong dedication to promoting mental wellness through her clinical mental health practice.

She is the author of Desegregation of the New York City Schools: A Story of The Silk Stocking Sisters. This book offers both personal reflection and historical insight on a pivotal chapter in American education. Her expertise in educational equity, psychology, and counseling has earned her appearances on Dateline NBC, The Discovery Channel, and other national platforms.

Whether in the classroom, on the page, or behind the mic, Dr. Canada inspires critical reflection and action while elevating voices often left out of the conversation.

DR. JACQUELINE A. KANE



In 1976, Dr. Jacqueline A. Kane became Director of the Resource Center on Women in Higher Education with the New York State Education Department. In this capacity, she became concerned about what could be done to assist affirmative action officers. She was directed to assist in the recruitment and promotion of Black women. In April 1977, Jackie convened a committee of Black women from across NY State to plan a conference for June 5-7, 1977. This committee included women involved in Opportunity Programs, foundations, community-based organizations, as well as faculty, staff and administrators. It was decided the conference theme should be the Elimination of Institutional Policies and Practices that Adversely Affect Black Women. That conference was attended by approximately 75 participants who recommended that the Center organize a second conference to be held January 23-25, 1978, in Albany with the theme "Black Women in Higher Education." The participants of this second conference decided that it was time to start an organization.
For the next year and a half, with continuing support from the Resource Center, a group of women met to form what was to become the Association of Black Women in Higher Education and to sponsor a conference to launch the organization. Dr. Patricia Carey introduced the group to the Institute of Afro-American Affairs at New York University which became host for eight of the nine conferences at the University.

The first conference was attended by approximately 200 participants. There was enthusiastic support for ABWHE, and a modest membership campaign began. Most of the initial energy was focused on the annual conference and providing an organizational framework. At the end of the first full year, 21 women had joined ABWHE.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION A CO-PRESENTERS CONTINUED

DELORES V. SMALLS



Delores V. Smalls is a full professor and coordinator of Educational Counseling in the Department of Student Personnel Services at Nassau Community College. She was a participant and delegate to the United Nations NGO Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985 and led a delegation of six women to the United Nations NGO Forum on Women, Beijing, China in 1995. In 2002, she also served as an NGO delegate to the 55th annual DPI/NGO Conference – Rebuilding Societies Emerging from Conflict: A Shared Responsibility.

Delores is involved in a number of women's academic organizations including the Women's Faculty Association, Women's Studies Project, Affirmative Action Committee, the Association of Black Women in Higher Education (ABWHE), the American Association of Community Colleges' National Council on Black American Affairs and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. She participates in regional and national activities that include the Steering Committee of the Metro-New York City National Council on Education, the National Network for Women Leaders in Higher Education and the New York Metropolitan Association for Developmental Education.

Delores sits on the boards of the Nassau Community College Women's Center and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women; she is on the board of Trustees of Family and Children's Association. She is a member of the board of directors of ABWHE as a past national president and a member of the Nassau/Suffolk chapter Executive Committee as its founding president. She is the chairperson of numerous committees such as the Central Nassau Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She is the past president of the Nassau/Suffolk Pan Hellenic Council and is a past president of the education committee for the Long Island Women's Agenda.

Delores is the co-director of the multi-media project "Promises Made, Promises Kept-A Reflection of African American Women of Long Island" and has lectured and conducted seminars about education, leadership, spirituality, community and human development. She has been cited for outstanding achievements and received honors from the National Council of Negro Women, the Association of Black Women in Higher Education, the Nassau Community College Human Relations Society, Haraya-BSO, the Association for Culturally Diverse Women and has been recognized by the Nassau County Executive and Legislature.

Title of Proposal:
Leadership at the Top: ABWHE Founder and Former National Presidents

Program Description:
This session will include our ABWHE Founder and 1st National President along with other former National Presidents. The presenter will serve as the moderator for this discussion-based presentation. This will be an interactive panel presentation. Attendees will learn firsthand about the history of the organizations' founding and leadership focus. Each former president will share their perspective on the conference theme – Rooted in Sisterhood: Navigating the Journey through Resilience, Reclamation and Restoration. This focus will provide insight based on panelists' experience as former academic leaders. All attendees will find this session to be of interest.

Session Expectations:
The panel session will provide attendees with a unique opportunity to hear from ABWHE founder and 1st National President and former National Presidents about their roles as leaders of the organization. This will be an interactive conversation between the presenter and panelists. The learning outcomes will provide attendees with information that they can use to pursue, thrive, and excel as higher education leaders. Attendees will be able to ask questions at the end of the session, as time permits.

The presenter will define the three key aspects of the conference theme.

1. Resilience
a) Resilience is the process of effectively adapting to difficult life experiences, trauma, or significant stress by tapping into inner strengths and support systems. It involves navigating adversity through flexibility, optimism, and proactive coping, allowing individuals to not only "bounce back" but also to grow personally (American Psychological Association).
b) Resilience refers to the ability to successfully adapt to stressors, maintaining psychological well-being in the face of adversity. It's the ability to "bounce back" from difficult experiences (U.S. Dept. of State).

2. Reclamation
a) the act of returning something to a former, better state (Vocabulary.com)
b) In behavioral health, reclamation is the process of regaining agency, identity, and control over one's life, particularly after experiencing trauma, addiction, or marginalization. It involves actively rewriting one's narrative, rebuilding self-worth, and reconnecting with personal values, joy, and agency (Jasmine Marshall, Mad in America, August 14, 2025).

3. Restoration
a) The act of restoring, renewal, revival, or reestablishment (Collinsdictionary.com).
b) the act of returning something to its original, normal, or unimpaired condition, encompassing renewal, revival, or reestablishment. (WordReference.com).

Each panelist will describe their personal and/or professional experiences as former ABWHE national presidents as it relates to the conference theme.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION B PRESENTER

VENICE WOLLIE



Venice Wollie is a higher education professional and doctoral student focused on advancing equity in college access and student success. She works in student support and advising, where she develops and implements programs that assist students—particularly those from historically underrepresented backgrounds—in navigating the transition to and persistence through higher education. She holds a Master of Public Affairs from Rutgers University and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education.

Her research centers on the lived experiences of first-generation Black and African American students who are children of immigrants, with a particular focus on the structural, cultural, and institutional barriers they encounter in accessing four-year public institutions. Through qualitative and narrative inquiry, Venice amplifies student voices to inform policy, practice, and program development. In addition to her research, Venice has experience designing mentorship initiatives and supporting college-bound students through advising, career development, and holistic support models. She is passionate about creating inclusive educational environments that promote belonging, retention, and long-term student success.

Title of Proposal:
Seen but Not Fully Known: The Hidden Experiences of First-Generation Black Students of Immigrants

Program Description:
Attendees will leave this session with a deeper understanding of the unique and often overlooked experiences of first-generation Black/African American students who are children of immigrants.

Session Expectations:
Conversations about first-generation college students often group students into a single category, overlooking important differences in identity and lived experience. This presentation focuses on first-generation Black/African American students who are also children of immigrants—an often underexamined population within higher education research and practice.

This study draws on qualitative narrative methods to explore how these students make meaning of their college experiences while navigating multiple, intersecting identities. Participants describe feeling recognized in broad conversations about diversity and access, yet not fully understood in ways that reflect their cultural, familial, and social realities. Their experiences highlight how institutional definitions of "first-generation" and "Black student experience" do not always account for the complexities of being both.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION C PRESENTER

RENÉE MYRIE



Renée Myrie, MSW, LCSW-C, LPN is the Juvenile Court Services Coordinator at Circuit Court for Baltimore City & is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Nurse. Her work focuses on supporting court-involved youth and families impacted by trauma, grief, violence, and systemic inequities. Renée develops healing-centered programming that connects youth and caregivers to behavioral health resources, family supports, and community-based services. Her professional interests include grief, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive approaches that promote resilience among marginalized populations. Through her clinical and systems-level work, she is committed to advancing wellness practices that support both individuals' experiencing loss and the helping professionals who serve them.

Title of Proposal:
The Grief We Don't Talk About- Healing Black Youth and Families

Program Description:
Grief within Black communities is often compounded by systemic inequities, exposure to community violence, disrupted family systems, incarceration, and limited access to culturally responsive mental health support. Black youth and families frequently experience multiple forms of loss, including the death of loved ones, loss of safety, loss of stability, and loss of opportunity. Despite these realities, grief remains under-addressed within many public systems serving marginalized populations.

Black women serving in helping professions frequently support individuals and families navigating trauma, violence, and complex life stressors while simultaneously managing the cumulative emotional impact of repeated exposure to loss. While these roles are rooted in purpose and service, ongoing engagement with grief can lead to vicarious loss, compassion fatigue, and emotional strain. Many Black helping professionals operate within environments that normalize strength and resilience yet rarely create space to acknowledge the emotional weight carried in service to others.

Drawing from professional practice experience supporting individuals and families navigating grief, this presentation explores how loss manifests across both community and professional spaces. Participants will gain insight into how grief affects Black youth and families impacted by violence and systemic stressors, while also examining the emotional implications for Black women working in service-oriented roles such as social work, healthcare, education, advocacy, and public service.

This session highlights the importance of culturally responsive, healing-centered approaches that support both those experiencing loss and those providing care. Emphasis will be placed on the role of reflection, peer support, and intentional wellness practices in promoting restoration, sustainability, and emotional well-being among helping professionals.

Session Expectations:
This session explores how grief manifests within Black communities impacted by systemic inequities, community violence, family disruption, incarceration, and chronic exposure to stressors that affect emotional well-being and stability. Black youth and families often experience multiple forms of loss, including loss of loved ones, loss of safety, loss of opportunity, and loss of connection. Despite the prevalence of these experiences, grief frequently remains unacknowledged within systems that serve marginalized populations.

Black women working in helping professions—including social work, healthcare, education, advocacy, and public service—are often positioned as sources of support for individuals and families navigating trauma and loss. While this work is purpose-driven, repeated exposure to grief-related experiences may contribute to vicarious grief, compassion fatigue, and emotional strain. Professional environments often emphasize resilience without creating structured space for reflection, processing, and restoration.

Drawing from professional practice experience supporting youth and families impacted by violence and complex loss, this session examines the intersection of grief exposure across both community and professional roles. Participants will explore how unacknowledged grief can influence emotional well-being, professional sustainability, and the capacity to provide effective support. The presentation will highlight healing-centered, culturally responsive approaches that encourage reflection, peer connection, and intentional wellness practices to support both those experiencing loss and those providing care.

Participants will engage in guided reflective activities designed to increase awareness of how grief may present within individuals, families, and professional environments. Opportunities for small-group discussion and individual reflection will allow attendees to consider how culturally responsive support strategies can be applied within their own professional or community settings. Practical considerations for strengthening resilience, promoting emotional sustainability, and fostering supportive environments will be discussed.

This session is designed for helping professionals, educators, healthcare providers, social workers, advocates, community leaders, students, and others interested in understanding how grief impacts Black youth, families, and the professionals who serve them. The content is relevant for individuals working in both direct practice and systems-level roles.

Attendees will leave with increased awareness of how cumulative grief impacts emotional well-being across personal and professional contexts, along with practical strategies to support healing, reflection, and sustainable engagement in service-oriented roles.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION D PRESENTER

DR. IVANNA COLÓN-ALVERIO



Dr. Ivanna Colón Alverio is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. A first-generation college graduate and former TRIO professional, her work centers on expanding access, equity, and student success for historically underserved populations. Her research examines how first-generation college students understand and navigate mandatory fees, financial literacy, and affordability within higher education. Prior to joining the professoriate, she spent more than a decade in student affairs supporting access and retention programs. Dr. Colón Alverio is committed to mentorship, community building, and advancing policies and practices that empower students and professionals to thrive in higher education.

Attendees will leave with increased awareness of how cumulative grief impacts emotional well-being across personal and professional contexts, along with practical strategies to support healing, reflection, and sustainable engagement in service-oriented roles.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION D CO-PRESENTER

SYDNEY ELIZABETH ROBINSON



Sydney Elizabeth Robinson, originally from Las Vegas, is a doctoral student in Higher Education & Student Affairs at Saint Cloud State University. Her research centers on the experiences of Black women at predominantly white women's colleges. She serves as Associate Director of the Multicultural Center at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University, supporting mentoring, feminist leadership, and transition programs. Robinson holds an M.S. in Higher Education Administration and a B.A. in English with a Creative Writing concentration. As the daughter of two first generation graduates, she advocates for racialized and first generation students.

Title of Proposal:
Rooted in Community: Supporting Black Women Across Every Stage of the Academic Journey

Program Description:
Rooted in Community: Supporting Black Women Across Every Stage of the Academic Journey is a 60-minute roundtable session designed to bring together educators, practitioners, and scholars committed to nurturing the academic and personal flourishing of Black women. This session recognizes that Black women's experiences in higher education are shaped by intersectional identities, complex institutional histories, and often-unacknowledged labor. Guided by the legacy of the Combahee River Collective, this session invites participants to explore how race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and lived experience shape Black women's academic experiences. Through collective inquiry and relationship-building, participants will explore how institutions can more intentionally sustain Black women from their first points of entry through advanced study and professional life.

Session Expectations:
Our session seeks to explore what it means to nurture, affirm, and sustain Black women in higher education from college entry through graduate studies and into professional life. Drawing on our lived experiences, Black Feminist scholarship, and practice-based wisdom, this roundtable hopes to create a space to reflect on the cultural and interpersonal conditions that shape our/Black women's educational journeys across a myriad of institutional contexts.

Attendees will have the opportunity to share best practices, reflect on institutional challenges, and co-create actionable ideas to support themselves and other Black women in their roles as students, scholars, and practitioners. Participants will discuss the tensions and possibilities that arise when Black women navigate predominantly white or gender-exclusive institutional spaces, and how supportive community networks can function as sites of resistance, healing, and liberation.

Learning Outcomes:
- Engage in reflective, community-rooted dialogue that centers Black women's voices, stories, and wisdom traditions.
- Identify challenges Black women encounter at various stages of their academic journeys and offer support strategies to mitigate these challenges.
- Target Audience: Student affairs professionals, faculty, graduate students, academic advisors, DEI practitioners, program directors, and anyone committed to supporting Black women in higher education.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION E PRESENTER

DR. DEVERY J. RODGERS



Dr. Devery J. Rodgers is an equity leader, serving as an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at California State University, Long Beach. Before joining higher education, Dr. Rodgers enjoyed an illustrious career of over 20 years as a central office administrator, school site leader, and teacher in California's PK12 public schools. She's spent the bulk of her career leading school districts' education technology initiatives across a variety of sociocultural contexts. Dr. Rodgers' research utilizes critical ontologies of knowledge and critical qualitative research methods to examine topics related to underrepresented/marginalized students, specifically:

- #techequity and how to close digital learning and access gaps through leadership practices
- #blackgrads and their sense of belonging and efficacious place in graduate settings

Dr. Rodgers' scholarly interests and commitment to creating/sustaining equity pathways for marginalized students is realized through organizational leadership.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION E CO-PRESENTER

CANDI MARSH



Candi Marsh is a higher education professional, counselor, educator, and doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership at California State University, Long Beach. She currently serves as the NextUp Counselor/Coordinator at Los Angeles Harbor College, where she supports current and former foster youth in achieving their academic, career, and personal goals through comprehensive counseling, advocacy, and student-centered programming.

Drawing from both her professional expertise and lived experience as a former foster youth, Candi is committed to advancing educational equity and improving outcomes for foster care alumni. Her research focuses on the experiences of foster care alumni aged 26 and older who pursue higher education after aging out of age-based support programs. Through her scholarship and practice, she seeks to inform policy, strengthen institutional supports, and amplify the voices of foster care alumni navigating higher education.

Candi holds a Bachelor of Arts in Child Development and Family and Consumer Sciences and a Master of Science in Counseling with an emphasis in Student Development in Higher Education from California State University, Long Beach. She is passionate about mentoring students, fostering resilience, and creating pathways to educational success for historically underserved populations.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION E CO-PRESENTER

CONSTANCE NWANZE BEGA



Constance Nwanze began her career in education with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in 1995, serving in a variety of roles throughout her tenure. She taught in alternative education (community schools and juvenile halls) across Los Angeles County, supporting students with academic, behavioral, and attendance challenges, including those on probation, expelled from their home schools, or referred through the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). Her experience also includes nine years as a Head Start Specialist, where she ensured comprehensive services for children ages 0–5 with exceptional needs.

Constance later transitioned to the district office, where she led Road to Success Academies (RTSA) initiatives at LACOE. In 2023, she rejoined the County Community Schools Division and currently serves as an Assistant Principal.

Constance is currently a third-year doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Department at California State University, Long Beach. Her research explores how school administrators enact Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) practices in juvenile court schools to humanize learning experiences for incarcerated youth. As both a practitioner and scholar, Constance is committed to advancing equitable educational opportunities for incarcerated students, whose circumstances restrict their access to affirming and meaningful education.

Title of Proposal:
Beyond Bloodlines: An Ethic of Care at the Intersections of Femtoring and Othermothering

Program Description:
Research indicates that faculty/student relationships affect student satisfaction with college, academic achievement, and retention. Research also tells us that the Black students don't benefit as much from these relationships as their White counterparts. In the limited research that has investigated the quality of relationships between faculty and Black students, two primary factors emerged as influencing these relationships: exposure to and connection with Blacks who have been successful in higher education, and the cultural sensitivities Black faculty bring to their collegiate experiences.

Rooted from cultural traditions of the African diaspora, othermothering in the academe is a form of maternal advocacy on behalf of the professor to and for her students. Defined as "mothering that…includes care for the broader community via forms of activism that take up collective responsibility for nurturance, advocacy, and justice on the behalf of others" (Docka-Filipek, 2016, para 1), this also includes Femtoring, a specialized form of mentorship aimed at guiding women, particularly in professional and academic settings, through a feminist, intersectional, and nurturing lens. Through Black Feminist Thought (Hill-Collins, 2000) this study looks at the beyond-mentoring practices undertaken by a Black female faculty member with her Black female graduate students, exploring the communal support that cultivates Black female graduate students to persist to academic potential.

Session Expectations:
The target audience for this seminar are any Black females in, or considering coming into the academe. Whether having been a femtor, presently othermothering, in the role of the mentee, or on the outskirts of support, we invite you into a testimonial space where you will feel uplifted and empowered.

During this seminar, participants will:
- Engage with an understanding of what it's like to be a Black female graduate student in an "other" minority-serving institution
- Understand the dismal data of Black (female) student graduate support
- Engage in literature review around Black Female Graduate Experiences
- Explore the CSULB Black Graduate Student Support Network
- Hear personal testimonies / lived experiences of BGSSN student scholars, tinged with facilitation from the BGSSN Advisor
- Realize the coalition built from the othermothering/femtor relationships
- Explore the impact of these experiences on a sustainable model
- Leave with a victorious outlook on femtoring

Through panel presentation, whole group and small group discussion, table activities, professional reading, and reflective activities, we will help our audience relate to the struggle, connect with ways they can help, share promising practices, and create a path forward.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION F PRESENTER

DR. SHARDE THEODORE



Dr. Sharde Theodore is an Assistant Professor in Morgan State University's Department of Teacher Education and a faculty affiliate of the National Center for the Elimination of Educational Disparities. A proud HBCU alumna, she earned her bachelor's degree from North Carolina A&T State University and her master's, specialist, and Ph.D. in Special Education from Florida International University. Her professional background includes teaching in Title I schools and serving as an Education Program Specialist in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. Dr. Theodore's research focuses on advancing equity in special education by reducing disparities affecting Black students with disabilities and strengthening the recruitment and retention of diverse special education personnel. Her work also examines the experiences of Black women in special education doctoral programs and explores culturally responsive practices that support the academic and behavioral outcomes of Black students with or at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders.

During this seminar, participants will:

- Engage with an understanding of what it's like to be a Black female graduate student in an "other" minority-serving institution
- Understand the dismal data of Black (female) student graduate support
- Engage in literature review around Black Female Graduate Experiences
- Explore the CSULB Black Graduate Student Support Network
- Hear personal testimonies / lived experiences of BGSSN student scholars, tinged with facilitation from the BGSSN Advisor
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Through panel presentation, whole group and small group discussion, table activities, professional reading, and reflective activities, we will help our audience relate to the struggle, connect with ways they can help, share promising practices, and create a path forward.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION F CO-PRESENTER

DR. TAHNEE L. WILDER



Dr. Tahnee L. Wilder is a Speech-Language Pathologist and researcher with over 15 years of clinical experience. She holds a Ph.D. in Special Education with a concentration in Cognitive Neuroscience from the University of Central Florida. As a Postdoctoral Fellow at the DREAM Technical Assistance Center at Florida International University, she leads initiatives to enhance digital learning infrastructure and technology integration within special education preparation programs at Minority Serving Institutions. Her research investigates how educational technology can strengthen executive functioning and promote equitable access for historically marginalized learners. Dr. Wilder's innovative work includes developing the RISE interactive map, which earned the Outstanding Quantitative Research Award from the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. She also contributes scholarly expertise as a technical editor and reviewer for leading special education journals.

Title of Proposal:
We Root for Each Other: How Sistahood Shapes the Doctoral Journey

Program Description:
Black women pursuing special education doctoral degrees encounter systemic, interpersonal, and structural barriers that contribute to their continued underrepresentation in full-time faculty roles, ultimately shaping the cultural relevance and effectiveness of pre-service preparation for educators working with racially and ethnically marginalized students with dis/abilities. This session shares findings from a qualitative study employing sista circle methodology to explore the challenges, resilience strategies, and culturally grounded support systems that Black women draw upon throughout their doctoral journeys. Data were collected from seven sista scholars through culturally responsive sista circles—dialogic, community-centered discussions similar to focus groups—and a complementary questionnaire, with member checking, reflexivity, and triangulation incorporated to enhance trustworthiness.

Findings illuminate the multifaceted nature of doctoral socialization for Black women, highlighting the critical role of mentorship, friendship, kinship, and sistahood as sources of affirmation, resistance, and survival within predominantly white academic spaces. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the lived realities of Black women in special education doctoral programs and learn how communal support networks foster belonging, persistence, and well-being. Participants can expect to leave with evidence-based insights into the systemic and relational challenges shaping Black women's doctoral experiences, an understanding of how culturally grounded practices strengthen doctoral retention and success, and practical strategies for cultivating more equitable, inclusive, and affirming environments within their own programs and institutions. This session invites dialogue, reflection, and collective action toward improving representation and transforming academic spaces for Black women in the field.

Session Expectations:
This interactive session centers the voices and experiences of Black women pursuing doctoral degrees in special education, drawing on a qualitative study that investigated how "sistahood"—the communal practices Black women employ to support, protect, and empower one another—alongside mentorship, friendship, kinship, and culturally responsive support networks, influences their academic trajectories.

Rooted in the conference theme, this session highlights the ways Black women intentionally cultivate community to navigate systemic inequities embedded within doctoral socialization. Participants will be guided through the study's key findings, with particular attention to how Black women build, sustain, and rely on culturally grounded forms of relational support. These relationships—often formed through informal networks and affinity groups—function not only as sources of affirmation and collective care, but also as counterspaces that challenge dominant academic norms.

By centering sistahood as both an analytic and practical framework, this session illustrates how Black women engage in practices of resistance, healing, and mutual uplift while pursuing advanced scholarship in a field where they remain deeply underrepresented.

The session will also highlight the culturally responsive nature of Sista Circles as a methodological approach. Participants will examine how the method itself honors communal knowledge-sharing, aligns with Black feminist epistemologies, and allows Black women to articulate their experiences through storytelling, collective reflection, and intergenerational wisdom.

Continued on next page...

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION F CO-PRESENTER

DR. TAHNEE L. WILDER CONTINUED

Through this lens, the presentation will not only share findings from the study but also model how culturally grounded methods can transform research, mentorship, and doctoral training practices. Participants can expect an engaging, reflective environment that blends research-based insights with collaborative discussion. They will have opportunities to connect findings to their own institutional contexts, reflect on their roles in shaping doctoral culture, and identify actionable strategies for strengthening equity, belonging, and holistic support for Black women and other marginalized doctoral students. By the end of the session, attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the structural barriers facing Black women in doctoral education, a renewed appreciation for the transformative power of culturally responsive mentorship and community-building, and concrete tools to foster more inclusive and affirming academic spaces.

The four objectives of this session are:

- Identify at least three unique challenges that Black women face in special education doctoral programs.
- Describe the role of culturally responsive mentorship, kinship, and support networks in Black women's doctoral persistence.
- Analyze how doctoral socialization practices may perpetuate or disrupt systemic inequities.
- Develop an actionable strategy to enhance equity and relational support structures within their own programs or institutions.

Session Activities & Audience Interaction

- Visual Slide Presentation: Accessible slides featuring participant quotes, thematic visuals, and key findings.
- Sistahood Reflection Activity: Small-group discussions mirroring
- Sista Circle practices, with prompts on mentorship, belonging, and culturally responsive support.
- Guided Dialogue: Whole-group discussion linking findings to participants' professional contexts.
- Experience Mapping Exercise: Participants identify gaps and opportunities within their institutional environments.
- Resource Sheet: Summary of findings, scholarship, and practical strategies for supporting marginalized doctoral students.

Target Audience: Higher education practitioners, faculty, doctoral program administrators, graduate advisors, researchers, and students interested in equity, Black women's experiences, culturally responsive mentorship, or Special Education doctoral training.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION G PRESENTER

OLA KALU, PHD, EDS



Ola Kalu, PhD, EdS, is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and the University of Pennsylvania. Her research examines how neighborhood conditions and structural forces shape maternal and child health equity, with particular attention to the lived expertise of Black women and the intergenerational consequences of place-based inequality. Trained as a community-engaged urban sociologist, Dr. Kalu studies how race, place, and policy intersect to produce disparities across education, reproductive health, and community well-being. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the University at Albany, SUNY, and an EdS in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Florida. Outside of academia, she is the founder of The Black Repro Space, a platform that provides Black women with reproductive health resources and education across the life course.

Title of Proposal:
Extracting Care: Community Doulas and the Hidden Labor of Black Women in Healthcare

Program Description:
Knowing and having the onus to hold systems together while being undervalued, overburdened, and exhausted is considered a personal failing and a problem in what Black women's daily lives are. This presentation utilized community doula work to demonstrate a broader pattern. How institutions systematically distribute invisible labor to Black women, then pathologize them when they break.

Community doulas improve birth outcomes by doing the institutional work that healthcare systems refuse to do, including translating medical jargon, advocating when patients are dismissed, coordinating fragmented care, and absorbing the emotional fallout from system failures. Research shows that when a doula supports the birthing process through respectful care for Black birthing people, this benefits them by 2.7 fold. However, doulas face burnout, professional development, and unsustainable workloads.

Drawing on work in progress with Philadelphia doulas, I demonstrate how burnout obstructs extraction. where healthcare systems offload essential care functions onto unpaid Black community health workers rather than transforming the racialized systems that perpetuate harm. When doulas can't sustain their practice, it is an institutional diagnosis.

Using Lorde's statement that 'caring for myself is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare.' I state that community accountability extends to treating Black women's well-being as a measure of institutional performance rather than as an indicator of individual resilience. This framework extends beyond healthcare to anywhere Black women are absorbed into systemic dysfunction.

The question is: what do exhausted Black women reveal about the institutions that exploit them?

Session Expectations:
In this session, I focus on how community doula work provides insight into the reliance on Black women to stabilize family systems. I examine how their labor is undervalued and undersupported, especially during burnout. Drawing on professional research with community health doulas in Philadelphia, I show how doulas fill institutional gaps in healthcare systems by translating medical information, advocating for patients dismissed by healthcare systems, coordinating fragmented care, and supporting families affected by racialized medical encounters.

Research shows that with doula support, they receive lower intervention rates and improved maternal experiences. However, doulas face unmanageable workloads, limited institutional recognition, and high levels of burnout. This session reframes burnout as an indicator of institutional dysfunction instead of a personal failing. When essential care functions are offloaded onto underpaid or unpaid community workers, exhaustion becomes proof of systemic extractions.

This session situates survey findings within Black feminist frameworks of care using Lorde's framing of self-preservation. Through this lens, doula burnout and wellness reveal insights into systems that exploit Black women's resilience while avoiding structural change. The analysis shifts beyond maternal health to institutional contexts where Black women are expected to absorb and repair.

Learning Outcomes:
Participants in this session will gain a deeper understanding of how community birthwork functions as a form of care and as a site of structural violence within the health care system. Participants' learning outcomes are :

- Identify how community doula work exposes structural gaps in maternal healthcare systems.
- Understand burnout among Black community health workers as an institutional rather than individual problem.
- Apply Black feminist frameworks of care and self-preservation to discussions of health equity and institutional accountability.
- Reflect on how similar patterns of invisible labor appear across educational, healthcare, and community institutions.
- This session will allow participants to reflect on parallels within their own professional contexts and consider strategies for institutional change.

OCTOBER 15TH SESSION H PRESENTER

DR. LOVER CHANCLER



Dr. Lover Chancler is the Director of the Center and an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Central Missouri. She previously served as the Principal Investigator for the university's SIP Title III grant and now oversees its successor programs. Committed to student success, she advises first-generation organizations and leads specialized study abroad trips.

Her diverse professional background includes roles as a Social Worker, Probation Officer, and Racial Justice Director. Dr. Chancler holds a PhD in Human Ecology from Kansas State University, a Master of Criminal Justice, and a BSW. As the owner of Role Model Consulting, LLC, she provides holistic DEI and communication training. Her research focuses on racial socialization, cultural competency in Family Studies, and the impact of social media on race relations during crises.

Title of Proposal:
Supporting Students and Each Other in Times Like These

Program Description:
Faculty, Staff and Advisors working with student organizations focused on cultural identity and advocacy are currently navigating a rapidly shifting institutional landscape. Across the nation, new legislative mandates and evolving university policies regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have created complex hurdles for student funding, space acquisition, and organizational operations. This facilitated discussion is designed specifically for these individuals who serve as the frontline responders to these challenges.

Moving beyond general support strategies, this interactive session examines the specific policy barriers impacting cultural organizations today. Participants will explore practical methods for helping students translate their cultural missions into institutionally compliant language that emphasizes educational value and student retention. Furthermore, the session introduces the "Four P's" framework—Policy Knowledge, Partnership, Paper Trail, and Perseverance—as a toolkit for student self-

Session Expectations:
The primary goal of this session is to move from theory to implementation. Through peer-to-peer exchange, advisors will share best practices for navigating bureaucratic systems while addressing the emotional toll of "Racial Battle Fatigue" on both students and staff. Participants will conclude the session by developing a concrete Action Plan to implement on their respective campuses. By equipping students with the tools to advocate for themselves and building a resilient network among advisors, we can ensure that cultural organizations continue to thrive as essential pillars of student success and leadership in these challenging times.

Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify current institutional policy shifts at your universities and broader higher education landscape that disproportionately impact cultural student organizations.
- Translate organizational mission and heritage-based programming into "policy-proof" language that emphasizes institutional values, educational impact, and student retention.
- Apply the "Four P's" framework (Policy, Partnership, Paper Trail, Perseverance) to coach student leaders in effective self-advocacy and bureaucratic navigation.
- Develop a localized Action Plan that incorporates peer-to-peer best practices and wellness strategies to mitigate "Racial Battle Fatigue" for both students and advisors.

OCTOBER 16TH SESSION I PRESENTER

TORI MARSHALL



Tori Marshall is the CEO and Founder of MosaicED Strategies, where she equips educators with culturally responsive strategies that support student identity, social-emotional wellness, and academic success. With over two decades of experience in youth development, her work centers on empowering Black girls through identity, voice, emotions, and mindset. Tori is a graduate of Hampton University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and holds a Master of Arts in Psychology from Roosevelt University. She partners with schools and communities to create affirming learning environments that strengthen belonging, engagement, and student achievement.

Title of Proposal:
Inside Out: A Culturally Responsive SEL Approach to Empowering Black Girls

Program Description:
This session introduces a culturally responsive social-emotional learning approach that centers identity, emotions, and mindset to support the success of Black girls. Grounded in the Inside Out approach, a framework that emphasizes internal experiences as drivers of engagement, and the S.T.I.N.G. Framework (Success, Transform, Impact, Nurture, Grow), participants will explore how what students think, feel, and believe directly impacts how they show up in learning environments.

Rather than focusing solely on external behaviors, this session invites educators to shift their approach to understanding the root cause of student experiences. Through reflection, dialogue, and practical application, participants will examine how identity development and emotional awareness influence student voice, confidence, and engagement.

Participants will gain strategies to create affirming and culturally responsive learning environments that strengthen belonging and relationships. This session equips educators with actionable tools to implement SEL practices that are student-centered, culturally grounded, and designed to support the academic and social success of Black girls.

Session Expectations:
This interactive session is designed for educators, school leaders, and practitioners who are committed to creating affirming and culturally responsive learning environments for Black girls. Grounded in the Inside Out approach, a framework that centers identity, emotions, and mindset as drivers of student engagement and the S.T.I.N.G. Framework, this session explores how internal experiences influence how students show up in the classroom.

Participants will examine how traditional approaches to behavior and engagement often overlook the importance of identity development, emotional awareness, and mindset. This session shifts the focus from managing behavior to understanding the root of student experiences, providing educators with tools to better support the whole child.

Through guided reflection, collaborative dialogue, and hands-on application, participants will engage in activities that help them reimagine how they support student voice, strengthen relationships, and foster a sense of belonging. Educators will also explore how culturally responsive SEL practices can be used to create environments where Black girls feel seen, valued, and empowered.

Learning Outcomes:
Participants will:
- Examine how identity, emotions, and mindset impact engagement, behavior, and academic outcomes
- Apply an inside-out SEL approach to strengthen student voice, confidence, and emotional awareness
- Develop a culturally responsive strategy that increases belonging and engagement for Black girls

Session Activities Include:
- Reflective exercises to examine current practices
- Small group discussions to deepen understanding and connection
- Application-based strategy development for immediate implementation

This session is ideal for educators, counselors, coaches, and leaders serving students in seeking practical, culturally grounded approaches to social-emotional learning. Participants will leave with clear, actionable strategies that can be implemented immediately to support student success and well-being.

OCTOBER 16TH SESSION J PRESENTER

SHEILA A. MCMILLAN, MBA



Sheila A. McMillan, MBA follows the Chinese Proverb "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime". Sheila is dedicated to fulfilling God's purpose to empower, teach and inspire women within her community and beyond. She meets these objectives through her roles as a mentor, and dedicated supporter of domestic violence and the mental health struggles that come with it. With seventeen years of experience in the professional development and domestic violence area, she has facilitated at several conferences and workshops.

Ms. McMillan earned her Bachelor of Science with a concentration in Business Management from Peirce College and received a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. Sheila earned her Post Masters Advanced Business Certificate with Specialization in Organizational Leadership from Drexel University, LeBow College of Business. She is a mother of four, grandmother of three and a resident of Delaware by way of being a longtime resident of Philadelphia, PA.

Title of Proposal:
Estrangement: Navigating the Journey through the Resilience of Stigmas while Reclaiming and Restoring our Dignity

Program Description:
One minute family and friends regularly attend the family barbecues and holiday dinners. Then, you find out your family is not speaking to you because of intergenerational trauma. For example, you may be angry about something that happened in 1972 and was repeated and carried to the next family member. You are experiencing "No Contact" with your adult child or grandchild and you are unsure if you will ever see or hear from them again. AND you have no idea what you may have done for this to occur. Suddenly you find out that your child, family member or friend wants nothing to do with you and you can't figure out what happened.

Please know that you are not alone. Parents or close friends do not talk about estrangement to their friends, coworkers or even their own family because they fear judgement and deep shame. We will learn how to gain self-awareness and understand the causes. We will understand the emotional impact that includes grief, rage, shame, guilt. We can then begin to reclaim and restore our dignity and compassion for life again.

Session Expectations:
Estrangement is one of the most painful and baffling experiences in a parent, child or even a close friend's life. It is a subject that is hardly ever talked about in most African American families particularly communities that value familial ties highly. (ex. "that's your mom-talk to her even if she doesn't respect or speak to you) Women of color face unique challenges in family dynamics because it can carry significant stigma and shame. There are often mental health struggles in which individuals often experience depression or anxiety symptoms.

Estrangement is a feeling of grief over the loss of someone who is still living. There is no closure. You see their life going on as usual in social media, or from other friends who have no idea there is no communication. Women of color are often pressured to prioritize family cohesion despite toxic, sometimes violent and abusive or dynamics. This behavior forces them to endure dysfunctional situations. This can also cause trust issues and social isolation.

We will learn objectives to understand the psychological, social and systemic causes, recognizing the emotional impact like grief of a living loss, deep shame and sibling or intergenerational trauma. We will then learn a few of the best ways to move forward in reclaiming our dignity and pride in ourselves by setting boundaries. We will learn how to redefine love and respect for ourselves as well as family members, adult children, and friends. We will discuss ways of reconciliation and therapy for both parties.

OCTOBER 16TH SESSION K PRESENTER

DR. CHANISE REESE-QUEEN



Dr. Chanise Reese-Queen brings more than 20 years of leadership experience advancing professional development and education across academic, nonprofit, and healthcare settings. She serves as Executive Director for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development and Continuing Medical Education at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, where she leads strategic initiatives that support faculty development, continuing medical education, and institutional collaboration.

Dr. Reese-Queen holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Management, a master's degree in Public and Community Health, and a bachelor's degree in Human Relations. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Law with a focus on Healthcare Law.

She is passionate about empowering others through leadership development and her workshop, Own Your Awesomeness. Dr. Reese-Queen is also a collaborative author in Relentless Pursuit: Upending the Unicorn Effect, a leadership anthology that explores resilience, authenticity, and professional growth.

Title of Proposal:
Own Your Awesomeness: Accomplishments, Self-Promotion, and Bragging

Program Description:
Many professionals—particularly women and individuals from underrepresented groups—struggle with self-promotion. Social expectations and gender norms often encourage women to be modest, supportive of others, and reluctant to highlight their own accomplishments. As a result, many talented professionals minimize their achievements, hesitate to claim credit for their work, and miss opportunities for career advancement. Research has shown that this self-promotion gap can contribute to disparities in visibility, leadership opportunities, and compensation.

This interactive session, "Own Your Awesomeness: Self-Promotion and Bragging," explores the role of self-promotion as an essential leadership competency and career development strategy. Participants will examine the social and cultural factors that influence how individuals communicate their accomplishments and how these dynamics affect career progression. The session will also highlight the benefits of confidently articulating one's skills, contributions, and impact in professional settings.

Through discussion, reflection, and hands-on exercises, participants will identify their own accomplishments, practice communicating their strengths, and learn practical strategies for promoting their work in authentic and effective ways. Attendees will leave with tools and language they can immediately apply in professional conversations, performance evaluations, networking situations, and leadership opportunities.

By the end of the session, participants will gain greater confidence in acknowledging their achievements and advocating for their value—while embracing their authentic voice and leadership potential.

Session Expectations:
- At the end of the session, learners will
- Explore perceptions and advantages of self-promotion and bragging
- Identify their accomplishments and successes
- Practice engaging in self-promotion
- Identify ways to promote their skills and accomplishments

Presentation Outline
- The session will begin with an opening video/quote on self-promotion
- Presentation on research around why women don't self-promote or brag about their accomplishments and why women don't accept credit for their work.
- Present a video on Self-Promotion Gap
- Presentation on why women should self-promote and brag
- Exercise – learners will take 5 minutes to list their skills, accomplishments, and successes.
- Exercise – learners will share their skills, accomplishments, and successes.
- Presentation on ways to self-promote and brag.

Explore Baltimore



1. **Baltimore Inner Harbor**
   Walk the waterfront, enjoy harbor views, dining, shopping, and nearby attractions.
2. **National Aquarium**
   Discover sharks, tropical habitats, marine life, and immersive exhibits at the Inner Harbor.
3. **Fort McHenry**
   Explore the historic fort whose defense during the War of 1812 inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner."
4. **Reginald F. Lewis Museum**
   Discover Maryland African American history, culture, achievements, art, and stories.
5. **National Great Blacks In Wax Museum**
   Experience African American history through life-size wax figures and historical scenes.
6. **Camden Yards**
   Catch an Orioles baseball game or visit Baltimore's famous downtown ballpark.
7. **Fells Point**
   Explore cobblestone streets, waterfront views, restaurants, shops, and historic architecture.
8. **Federal Hill Park**
   Enjoy a classic panoramic view of Baltimore's skyline and Inner Harbor.
9. **American Visionary Art Museum**
   See imaginative and unconventional works by self-taught artists.
10. **The Walters Art Museum**
    Explore art and artifacts spanning ancient civilizations through later European and Asian works.
11. **Baltimore Museum of Art**
    Browse an extensive collection of modern, contemporary, and historic art.
12. **Lexington Market**
    Sample local flavors and Baltimore favorites, including Maryland-style seafood.
13. **Baltimore Water Taxi**
    Sightsee from the water while traveling between waterfront neighborhoods.
14. **Edgar Allan Poe House & Museum**
    Learn about Poe's life and his years in Baltimore.
15. **Maryland Science Center**
    Enjoy hands-on science exhibits, dinosaurs, astronomy, and family-friendly activities.


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1. **LP Steamers**
   A Baltimore classic known for fresh steamed crabs, crab cakes, and waterfront views in Locust Point.
2. **Faidley Seafood**
   A must-visit at Lexington Market, famous for its award-winning crab cakes.
3. **Phillips Seafood**
   A well-known Inner Harbor restaurant offering Maryland seafood favorites in a lively atmosphere.
4. **Thames Street Oyster House**
   Fresh oysters, creative seafood dishes, and a stylish setting in historic Fells Point.
5. **Ekiben**
   A popular spot for Asian-inspired small plates, bao buns, and creative flavors.
6. **Charleston**
   Upscale Southern cuisine with a modern twist, located in a beautifully restored historic building.
7. **Mama's On the Half Shell**
   A local favorite for fresh seafood, raw bar selections, and waterfront dining.
8. **Blackwall Hitch**
   Waterfront dining with a diverse menu, craft cocktails, and great views of the Inner Harbor.
9. **The Bygone**
   Enjoy elevated American cuisine and craft cocktails atop the Four Seasons Hotel with stunning city views.
10. **Blue Moon Café**
    A cozy, eclectic spot in Fells Point known for American cuisine, great brunch, and a lively atmosphere.
11. **Miss Shirley's Café**
    A Baltimore staple for creative breakfast, brunch, and comfort food with a Southern flair.
12. **Woodberry Kitchen**
    Farm-to-table dining featuring locally sourced ingredients in a charming industrial space.
13. **The Helmand**
    Authentic Afghan cuisine with rich flavors and a warm atmosphere.
14. **Attman's Delicatessen**
    A historic, family-owned deli serving classic sandwiches, homemade soups, and more since 1915.
15. **Rye Street Tavern**
    A neighborhood favorite offering refined American fare in a relaxed setting.
16. **Kislings Tavern**
    A beloved, no-frills local spot known for its legendary crab soup and friendly atmosphere.



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Jameilla Robinson-Frazier
National Treasurer Elect

FROM

Dr. Kimberly Roan, Beryl S. Jeffers, *and* Dion Lucas



With Gratitude...

Thank you for bringing your incredible energy, warmth, and presence to the 2026 ABWHE National Conference: Rooted in Sisterhood: Navigating the Journey Through Resilience, Reclamation and Restoration! We hope you are walking away feeling refreshed, deeply inspired, and renewed in spirit. The transformative conversations, shared wisdom, and powerful connections forged over these past few days were a true testament to the strength and beauty of our collective community. If you're not yet a part of the ABWHE community, we invite you to join us Visit us at abwhe.org to obtain information regarding our organization and chapters.