

# The Griot

The Newsletter for the Association of Black Sociologists

Winter 2022

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Baltimore County.

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## LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

Letter from the Editor by Korey Tillman  
Song: James Brown – World

Greetings ABS Family,

I am truly grateful to have been recently appointed as the editor for *The Griot*. The Association of Black Sociologists is my academic home, along with many other Black scholars, who through ABS, receive the care and space necessary to survive the antiblack experience of academia. I have one word to describe this issue: love. Love has been the driving force that has allowed ABS to last for over 50 years and will carry ABS well past the next 50. We are not the most resourced organization, and some of my millennials might say that we are “ballin’ on a budget,” but we continue to thrive. Which is a testament to the countless, and sometimes thankless, hours of work done by volunteers and leadership that are often relegated to the dustbin of history. I hope that as readers move through this issue, they notice what is hidden within the spaces; what shouts softly from the margins. Woven within these pages are the distant memories that any *griot* is responsible to carry. As ABS continues to be a testament of living history, we at *The Griot* aim to highlight the stories of now with the intention that these stories will be carried as memories of tomorrow, furthering our legacy of love.

Bounded by amorous intentions, you will find a few threads in this issue. One, reflections on the magnetic force that pulled scholars into ABS. Two, the fervor to give back to ABS as a form of reciprocity. Three, the courage to interrogate, redefine, sustain, and celebrate Black life.

To all of those who submitted pieces for this issue, thank you. In gratitude, I would like to give a special shout out to soon-to-be Dr. Jelly Loblack and Dr. Cynthia T. Cook who serve as co-editors for *The Griot*. Lastly, to all of those who came before us, and those who are currently doing the work that allows ABS to continue to serve as a home for Black scholars, thank you.

Con amor,  
Korey T.

Korey Tillman is a PhD Candidate in sociology at the University of New Mexico. His research sits at the nexus of race, policing, and empire. Korey’s dissertation examines how contemporary policing is shaped by an antiblack and colonial past dedicated to marking Blackness as non-human. As an abolitionist, the goal of his work is to build upon the legacies of the Black feminist and radical traditions to assert Black humanity and move towards a world where African diasporic communities receive care, not criminalization. He is the one of the co-editors on the recent book, *Neglected Scholars of Color: Deconstructing the Margins*, published with Lexington Books.



Graduate Student Editor's Note by Jelly Loblack  
Song: Jamila Woods ft. theMIND & Jasminfire - SUN RA

To my ABS Family,

Together, we have built a community of support and empathy that transcends any annual conference and will continue to fuel us all as we navigate these treacherous academic waters. For that, I thank you! I'm especially grateful for the ABS Student Committee (SC) who remain at the heart of all things ABS.

In this issue, I'm especially excited about the ABS archives at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (MSRC) at Howard University. These archives will provide increased opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students alike to not only get exposed to ABS as an organization but also to the utility of and need for archival research. This project will play a pivotal role in the growth and development of ABS for years to come.

As you flip (or scroll) through this issue, I encourage you to open yourself up to a journey of reimagining! From how we understand coping processes, mentorship, and reproductive justice to how we conceptualize blackness, the diaspora, and even re-envision Black health and geographies, each piece featured in this issue moves us to expand our thinking in one way or another.

I'm humbled to have learned from you all and we hope you enjoy!

With immense gratitude,

Jelly Loblack  
 She/Her



Jelly Loblack is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at the University of Maryland-College Park, where she is currently a Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellow. Her research primarily centers around how changing conceptions of blackness differentially inform diasporic consciousness, racial and ethnic identity, and calls for racial solidarity in political movements for Black multiethnic, multiracial, and immigrant communities. Jelly earned her Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of South Florida and holds two bachelor's degrees in International Security Studies and Criminology from the University of Oklahoma. Her current research explores the ways messages about race get differentially communicated and internalized in Black multiracial and multiethnic families.

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Editorial Team Member Spotlight by Cynthia T. Cook

[Song: Runtown – Mad Over You](#)

Dear ABS,

Happy holidays everyone. I am the newest member to The Griot's editorial team. However, I am not new; I was one of the co-editors for The Griot from 2010 to 2012. I am medical sociologist whose research and publications focus on global and domestic health disparities, cultural competency in health care, maternal and child health in Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the social determinants of peace and stability in Africa.

I am presently an online adjunct professor of Sociology at Creighton University in the Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs office. I teach sociology to post baccalaureate, minority, pre-dental and pre-medical students who are preparing to enter medical and dental school in the fall of 2023. I am also the dissertation chair for three students in Creighton's Interdisciplinary Leadership Doctoral program. This spring I will teach a Social Demography course at California State University, San Bernardino.

I am looking forward to working with Korey and Jelly to continue the success of The Griot, the official newsletter of the Association of Black Sociologists.



Cynthia T. Cook, PhD

## ABS PRESIDENTIAL NOTE

Presidential Note by Al Young, Jr.

Song: Big Daddy Kane - I Get the Job Done

Dear ABS Family,

It is my great honor, pleasure, and privilege to serve this year as President of the Association of Black Sociologists. My journey with ABS has been awesome. I come into the presidency during my 30th anniversary as a member. After having been encouraged to join the Association by distinguished scholar Dr. Walter Allen, I attended my first ABS meeting in Pittsburgh in 1992. I was convinced that Walter was on a quest to get every African American graduate student in sociology to join. I cannot say that he achieved that goal, but I remain eternally grateful that he encouraged me to do so.

That first gathering exposed me to an abundance of critical scholarly engagement, love, and support. The Association became so special to me that since 1992 I have missed only one conference. Throughout that time, I grew from a young graduate student to an early-career professor, and then a veteran scholar, taking in all that I could from the Association. One special moment for me consisted of a conversation at a bar during an evening cruise at the Fort Lauderdale meeting in 1993. There, the late Donald R. Deskins, of the University of Michigan, bought me a drink and talked to me about my work on the early history of African Americans in sociology. A few years later, Dr. Deskins called me to let me know that there was a job opportunity at Michigan that he thought would suit me well. I followed his advice and applied. Less than a year after that phone call I joined the faculty at Michigan, beginning what has been my only career appointment (27 years and counting). This is the foremost of many experiences that enable me to assert that so much of who I am is because of ABS.

As President, my primary objective will be to deliver to others in the ways that I was served. My theme for this year's conference is *Black Sociology Against the Assault on Racial Knowledge*. I came to this theme out of a deep sense of concern. Three decades ago, I would not have imagined that ABS would have to launch such an assertive defense of the kind of work that its members have done and continue to do. However, we clearly are in that position. Accordingly, we must be at least as bold, confident, and courageous as we ever have been. Our nation is one generation away from a radically different portrait of who and what America is in comparison to what it used to be. Very soon, people of color will be a numerical majority. To be both an American and a person of color should be less of a contradiction than at any point in this nation's history. Yet, the contemporary assault on racial knowledge, perhaps best exemplified by the challenges posed to critical race theory—even within school systems where critical race theory is not taught—is one of several developments that reinforce for us that racial inclusion in America is a very long-term project.

We know that the social and political agenda for racial equality continues to be broad and deep. The particular part that ABS not only can contribute to, but truly steward, is the protection and promotion of the pursuit of racial knowledge. Thus, we must continue thinking deeply and writing about the state of race relations in our nation and the world, and the complexities of being and living as Black people given the class, gender, sexual orientation, and other social divisions that have become more complex and complicated over time. Furthermore, as we fight to protect our capacity to explore and offer insight and understanding into these phenomena, we must be especially protective and supportive of the future generations of scholars who will help advance this agenda. For ABS, this means investing in a more deliberate effort to support the professional development of our emerging scholars.

Equally importantly is the recognition and critical investigation of how older generations of Black sociologists worked to create space for doing Black sociology. Investing in the professional development of young scholars must go hand-in-hand with acknowledging and inviting our elder scholars to share with us what they did and learned through their struggles for racial equality in the academy. We must look back at their efforts so that we can be best informed as we move forward.

The 53rd ABS Annual Conference will take place from August 17–19, 2023 in Philadelphia at the Sonesta Philadelphia, Rittenhouse Square. This conference and the events planned prior to it will be dedicated to meeting these objectives. I not only look forward to your support and involvement, I depend upon it. Let's get to work!

In love and solidarity,

Al

Alford Young, Jr.,  
Edgar G. Epps Collegiate Professor and Chair of Sociology, and  
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Departments of Sociology,  
Afroamerican and African Studies, and Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy,  
Associate Director, Center for Social Solutions  
Faculty Director of Scholar Engagement and Leadership, National Center for Institutional Diversity,  
University of Michigan



## ABS EXECUTIVE OFFICER NOTE

Executive Officer Note by Loren Henderson

Song: Marvin Gaye - What's Going On

Dear ABS Family:

It is with deep reflection and joy that I write this to you. We have experienced our first in-person conference since the COVID-19 pandemic started, and my heart is full. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as your Executive Officer (EO). In my first year as EO, there was much to learn. With the guidance and support of Dr. Barbara M. Scott, Dr. Zandria Robinson, and Dr. Terrell Winder, this first year was both magical and successful. As many of you know, there were lots of institutional memory and skills that needed to be passed on to me, and much of it after normal business hours. Thus, I extend my deepest gratitude for all the support I received and continue to receive as I serve in this role.

Since many ABS members have not had the opportunity to serve in this capacity, I would like to give you a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to put on a conference and serve as EO more generally. For starters, the EO must take a bird's-eye-view of the organization. Learning about the organizational structure, policies, procedures, and leadership is essential. During my first year, I held multiple meetings with Dr. Scott to get up to speed on the organization's current needs. I also held introductory meetings with current Executive Committee (EC) members and other EOs in sister organizations such as SSS and ASA. While getting up to speed on the current state of the organization's functions, the financial business needed to be handled promptly and transparently. Therefore, I worked closely with our Treasurer Dr. George L. Wimberly. We often held weekly meetings to establish orders of operation on everything from paying taxes, hotel contracts, and general operating expenses.

Getting to the fun part, as you can imagine, planning a conference requires a lot of hands-on-deck. I supported this effort by working with the past President, Dr. Bates, and her planning committee. It was a pleasure assisting the planning committee. Dr. Scott provided excellent guidance and support as I worked with the brokers to locate conference hotels for Chicago, Philadelphia, and Montreal. I was trained in ABS that "if you can choose, choose the best" with each selection, I made sure to put on my ABS member hat and EO hat. I chose the location that best suited our needs and provides the best experience possible. I want the best for ABS! You deserve it.

In addition to working on the conference, I also worked closely with the Student Committee, and its 2021-2022 representative, Korey Tillman. We discussed student concerns as well as student aspirations. These discussions resulted in new membership perks:

- Professional webinars throughout the year
- Four sponsored conference waivers for student volunteer service
- More voice for students within the organization

Overall, it has been an incredible year. I am currently working with the EC to prepare for our upcoming Spring events. Be on the lookout for an email about our forthcoming Webinar with President Dr. Alford Young. And our conference Save The Date Flyer for the 53rd Association of Black Sociologists Conference in Philadelphia

from August 17th-August 19th, 2023. We are planning an eventful conference with you in mind. Make sure to register early and secure your hotel.

As we move into the holiday season, I hope you all will join me in Celebrating Kwanza Monday, December 26th through Sunday, January 1st, 2023. Thank you again for your service and participation in our ABS family.

With Love,  
Loren



ABS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE NOTE

Student Representative Note by Demetrius Murphy  
Song: Chance the Rapper ft. King Promise - YAH KNOW

Greetings ABS family,

With great pleasure, I write to you as your 2022-2023 student representative for the Association of Black Sociologists (ABS). I am thrilled you all have entrusted me with this honor. I want to express my deepest gratitude to our former student representative, soon-to-be Dr. Korey Tillman. His work and many others on the Student Committee (SC) (i.e., Kayonne Christy, Alexis Grant-Panting, Theresa Hice-Fromille, Jalia Joseph, Demar Lewis, Jelly Loblack, and Brittney Miles) have placed us all in a strong position. Through their foresight, commitment, and inspiring leadership—during an ongoing global pandemic—we, the students, have been able to contribute to ABS in meaningful ways. Next, I would like to acknowledge the Black sociologists and ABS members whose legacy we build upon and thank the Executive Committee for continuing to guide the way forward.

Now that the 2022 ABS Conference in Chicago is over. It is time to prepare for the 2023 ABS Conference in Philadelphia. First, I hope to see you all there. Second, we need your participation and input to make it a rich and meaningful experience. To that end, please complete the "2022 Annual Association of Black Sociologist Student Survey." Following my predecessor's footsteps, I am taking a three-pronged approach: assessment, implementation, and evaluation. Feedback is a critical part of this approach and foundational to our improvement.

My goals this year are to maintain ongoing communication, sustain our small but thriving community, and create more networking opportunities. I will achieve these goals by emailing monthly and hosting at least three (virtual) social events before the 2023 ABS.

Although it seems Twitter may (or may not) be going away, I want to preserve the interactions created by hashtags like #BlackInSoc and #SocAF. So, I encourage students to reach out and connect. Together we can do more.

May we stand forever in love, joy, and hope.

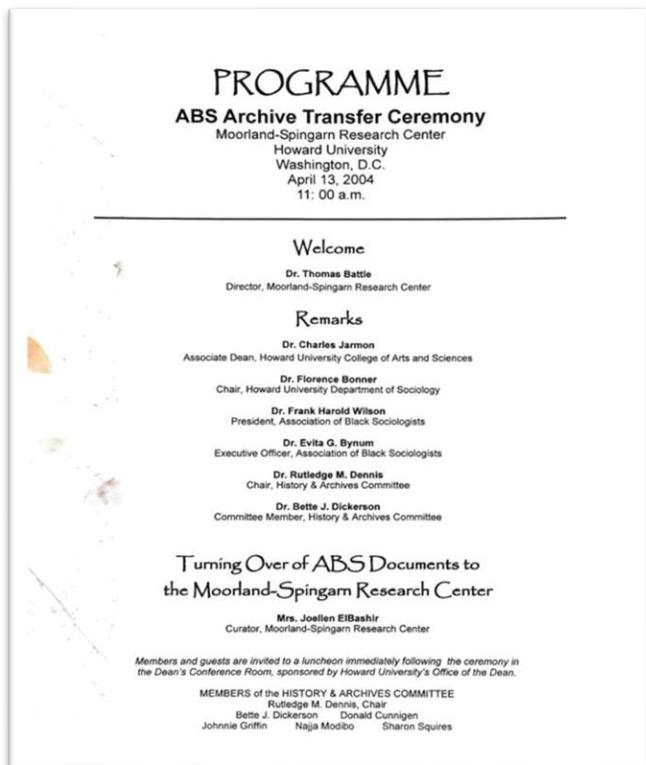
Yours in the struggle for freedom,

Demetrius Miles Murphy  
Sociology Ph.D. Candidate, University of Southern  
California  
2022-2023 ABS Student Representative  
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FROM THE ABS ARCHIVES

From the ABS Archives by Kenya Goods  
[Song: Earth, Wind, & Fire – Yearnin’ Learnin’](#)



**Image: Program for ABS Archive Transfer to Howard University**

On April 13, 2004, the Association of Black Sociologists transferred its organizational archives to the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center (MSRC) at Howard University. A total of four boxes worth of ABS’ official records, artifacts, photographs, and numerous writings were donated to the MSRC, creating opportunities for Black scholars to learn more about the organization and the legacy of Black social scientists.

As the attack on race scholarship and Black people across the globe intensified in recent years, various members of ABS saw it critical to move towards expanding access and increasing awareness about the archives. In April 2022, Loren Henderson (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) and Kenya Goods (Howard University) took the first steps towards establishing a new partnership between ABS and the MSRC. This new agreement may introduce digitization, laying the groundwork for an online database members could access and learn more about the organization’s history. Potential research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate sociologists attending Howard University, the only Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to offer a Ph.D. in Sociology, are also on the horizon.

See some archival material below. Keep up with us here in The Griot and stay tuned for more updates!



**Image: ABS Archives at Howard University (2022)**



**Image: Loren Henderson (Left) & Kenya Goods (Right)**

## BLACK LIFE: REFUSING MARGINALITY

You Can't Have Us Without Our Voices by Gwendolyn Purifoye

[Song: Patrice Rushen – Forget Me Nots](#)

In November 2020 and January 2021, I read a plethora of social media posts, memes, and even a few headlines that in one way or the other, had proclaimed that yet again “Black women had saved America.” This statement was shared multiple times, yet Black women continue to be the least protected or respected in society. Black women are too often ignored even as we ignite social movements, achieve astonishing political feats, and stand on the inaugural stage as the first.

Black women’s voices are again and again strangled, silenced, co-opted, disregarded and even stolen. From the steal of our voices like in the #MeToo movement to the need to even start campaigns like #SayHerName and #CiteBlackWomen, society has not moved beyond the treatment of Black women as mammies and jezebels where we are often tasked with or expected to capture and wipe White women’s tears, lighten our voices to assuage the depth of our cries for justice, or to be cute enough to be the face of the bandwagons’ rising up.

Oftentimes what we look like and how we sound - you know, we must be demure, smile a lot, be fly or sexy - is often a precursor to our qualifications to SPEAK and TO BE HEARD and to CAPTURE THE LISTENING EAR.

We constantly find ourselves having to create monikers to highlight our awesomeness like BlackGirlMagic. But let me be clear, Black women are real. However, because we do so much for and in a world that too often disregards our humanness, our humanity, our voices, our triumphs, and our tears, our strength seems otherworldly. That we are still able to “**come on through**” in the same spaces and places that want to disappear us - hence the magic - and yet we keep reappearing - hence why it seems like a trick - is amazing, remarkable, but yet real.

**Black women’s voices** are imbued with truth and power.

**Black women’s voices** are not meant to be relegated to just the home and places of care or just during times of pandemics or political seasons.

**Black women’s voices** are crucial to the places and spaces in society where co-mingling occurs, where ideas are fostered, where inventions are hatched, where culture is created, and where intellect is grown, sown, and dispersed.

The energy used just to be heard is exhausting and saps our strength, **yet we persist...**

The will to work for change, while being left with only the crumbs of justice is deflating, **yet we persist.** The witnessing and experiencing of having our beauty, our style, our power, and our grace mined by a population that gets exalted just for being, is annoying and frustrating, **yet we persist.**

Our persistent voices must be heard in the spaces where we are creating knowledge, igniting social movements, and saving America because **when we are not heard, when our voices are strangled, when our sound is muted** -- society loses, history is unforgiving, and we get stuck with them coming back to us like a well from which to draw hope and strength.

Black women continue to achieve, create, thrive, and endure, even against the forces that intended to make and keep us silent or for manipulated use. But our value is not constructed or authenticated in or through systems of racism nor is it limited to the hallowed halls of stratified institutions.

For sure, we don't need your accolades to have value. We don't need your permission to move. We don't need your doors to advance. We don't need your validation to have worth. But oh, what a great day it would be in this nation when the glaring realities of our value, our movements, our advancements and our value that is delivered through our voices is heard, listened to, and respected and appreciated; because **when we are not heard, when our voices are strangled, when our sound is muted** -- society loses, history is unforgiving, and again we get stuck with everyone coming back to us like a well from which to draw hope and strength.

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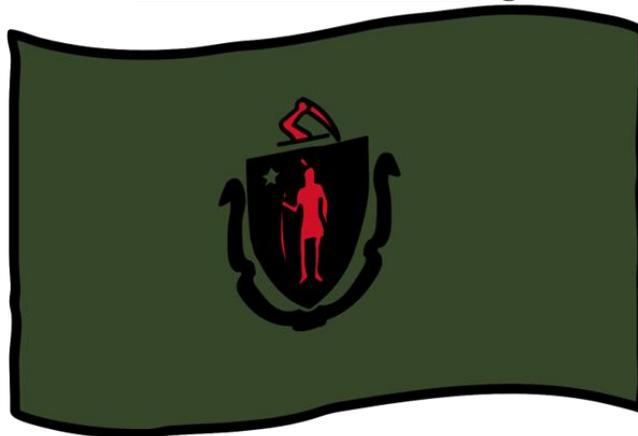


Gwendolyn Purifoye is an urban sociologist who specializes in ethnographic studies of social, spatial, and material experiences in public places, especially on and around public transportation. Her research projects are interdisciplinary and intersectional. At the heart of her work is understanding how the human dignity of racial minorities is undermined, and how it is regained and reimagined by the communities themselves. Purifoye has spent several years conducting extensive fieldwork in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Newark where she examines the lived experiences of Black and Brown folks in public places and neighborhoods.

My Black-Massachusetts by Askia Acquah Hanson

Song: M.anifest – Believe

### **Black Massachusetts Flag**



As a young Ghanaian-American born and raised in Black America; I received my fervent Afrocentric and Afro-Muslim education in the parts of the Deep South (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina) and the Wild, Wild Midwest (Michigan and Ohio). I learned what it was to be black; what it was to be Muslim, and what it was to be Ghanaian/African. I learned and experienced racism and islamophobia in its raw forms, and the various actions blackness took to combat them. However, when I moved to the East Coast; New England exact, Massachusetts to be direct, Boston-Quincy specific. It's as though all the foundations of what it meant to be black, to be Muslim, to be Ghanaian were all made clearer.

Moving to the educational hub of Massachusetts was another eye-opener in by black life. For it was here, I learned not only the meaning of 'covert racism' and how it operates on such an often subtle and strategic level, but the major way, in which blackness resistance has played, and continues to play in the fight for equality, equity, inclusion, diversity, and fairness. With as many colleges and universities as there are Dunkin' Donuts; housing famous MIT, Harvard, GBH (formerly known as WGBH) and other PBS centered programs (Basic Black, Frontline, Henry Louis Gates Jr, Ibrahim Xendi, and Cornel West, and so many more). Massachusetts was the home of Malcolm X and his family; it is where the great black sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois was born, raised, and educated; where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. obtained his Ph.D. at Boston University.

In my own life journey in Massachusetts, I have come across so much African and African American history that was made, being made (often time with myself being involved) or has the future to become a positive reality and change that it is almost incomprehensible that the blackness of New England, especially Massachusetts is largely ignored in most black circles, and in mainstream media. My black educational mainly consisted of learning of continental African greatness and struggles of slave trading and wars; Black resistance, civil rights, and horrors of such notable places in the Deep South, Midwest, and parts of the East Coast (mainly New York and Pennsylvania). My black university professors and mentors not only showed me more about what it was to be black in a broader sense in America and the world, but also what it means to be black and have a sense of community in a local sense as well. The Afro-flavor of Massachusetts; specifically, that of Boston is largely overlooked in many outlets, especially when it comes to



advertising why either Massachusetts is such an amazing place to live, or what foods to eat and neighborhoods to visit in Boston and the surrounding areas. This is why as I have grown to look at Massachusetts and New England in more of a black lens as an aspiring writer, sociologist, and artist I have thought of various ways to reflect and honor the blackness of the great commonwealth. This is when, late this year, I came up with Massachusetts and Afrocentric terms; Afro-Massachusetts, Afrochusetts with mixing of Afro and Massachusetts together, Black Massachusetts to honor the Black American themed flag, Afro-New England representing not just Massachusetts-but other New England states as well, and Afro-Boston honoring the rich varying Afro-cultures that are Boston. These terminologies represent the blackness of the past, present, and future of New England state of Massachusetts as a whole. While I don't expect these terminologies to be loved, wowed, and expected by all blacks of varying ethnicities and nationalities, or even be a household name (just yet). I do expect it to be a more lasting notice in the essence of time and black history of the amazing and continued blackness of New England and Massachusetts.

Proud to be forged in the great state of Afrochusetts.



Askia is a young Ghanaian-American Muslim sociologist and writer, living and working out of Afro-Massachusetts. I study race, ethnicity, culture, and poverty, as well as write about issues of primarily, but not limited race and ethnicity.

“My Afro comes before Latina” By Celine Ayala  
Song: Celia Cruz - La Negra Tiene Tumbao

Afro Latina poet Melania Lusía Marte stands powerfully as she recites her poem to a full audience in her yellow blazer, picked out afro, and gold hoop earrings. She looks at the audience and exclaims, “Dicen que soy Latina...until I start talking about colorism, until I check them on erasure, until I choose to speak on my own behalf, until I remind them my Afro comes before Latina.” Melania is making an exclamation to her Blackness, an exclamation made by many Afrolatinx folk in the U.S. in an effort to combat erasure, intragroup dissonance, and anti-blackness. As noted by the late Miriam Jimenez Roman, “95% of the diaspora from Africa ended up in Latin America and the Caribbean...” (2001) And yet much of the history of these people are erased; a history that has helped shape Black resistance and political movements in the U.S.

Although often left out of Afrolatinx discourse (as a result of Latin America's extensive history of anti-blackness), Haitians play a massive role in shaping Black resistance in the United States and globally. The Haitian revolution was the first to free Black people from colonial rule and create an independent Black country in 1804 (James 1989). In 1844, Carlotta Lucumi, with the help of Firmina (both enslaved women in Cuba), initiated the first Black woman led revolt in Cuba, which subsequently led to slave revolts across the island.

We must not forget the contribution of Arturo Schomburg, an Afrolatino historian whose efforts to bring awareness to African diasporic history led to the creation of what is now called the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Located in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, this is one of the leading and oldest institutions documenting the African Diaspora experience. The erasure, disinterest, and lack of acknowledgement of Afrolatinx histories and contributions in the U.S. perpetuates anti-black racial projects and impacts Afrolatinx experiences of Blackness in the U.S. and globally.

There are other notable scholars whose efforts aid in providing visibility to Afrolatinx histories and experiences. The first being Dr. Miriam Jiménez Román. Miriam was an Afro-Puerto Rican Sociologist, activist, and scholar whose work is pivotal to Afrolatinx discourse in Sociology and other interdisciplinary fields. One of the most notable works being *The Afrolatin@ reader* (2009), which is a co-authored anthology with her husband, Juan Flores. It outlines Afrolatinx histories and cultural experiences in the U.S.

Another notable scholar is Dr. Omaris Zamora, an Afro-Dominican spoken word poet and scholar whose work aims to put Blackness back at the center of Afrolatinx discourse, specifically through Afrolatina Feminisms. Omaris melds her scholarship with her poetry to foster conversations on Afrolatina Black experiences beyond academic communities. Recent scholarship by legal scholar Dr. Tanya K. Hernández (*Racial Innocence*, 2022) traces the history of anti-blackness in Latin America and dispels the myth that there is no racism in Latin America.

To add to the conversation, my research focuses on Afrolatinx experiences of Blackness, through a critical intersectional theoretical approach, in order to understand diverse Black experiences and the impacts that anti-Blackness has on Black identified Afrolatinx folk both currently and historically. Thus, I aim to understand in what ways Afrolatinx folk embrace Blackness while maneuvering through anti-Black spaces. I also explore how a transnational history of colonization, imperialism, and anti-Blackness impact Afrolatinx racialized experiences in the U.S. In my work, I find that Afrolatinx folk go through a process of learning, protecting and embracing their Blackness in order to navigate global racism and anti-Blackness. I also find that Afrolatinx folk use language as a means of familial communication and cultural belonging, and Afrolatinx folk see educational attainment as a means to lessen Afrolatinx erasure, to gain tools for survival and, to build a legacy for posterity.

To create Black scholarship that is inclusive of diasporic Blackness and actively fights global anti-blackness, a few things should be done. First, scholars who study Afrolatinidad must move away from a narrative that highlights the diversity of Latin America and move towards a narrative that highlights the diversity of the Black diaspora. Next, we as Black scholars must try to share Black histories that extend beyond the borders of the U.S. and highlight a variation of Black experiences. Finally, we must engage in diasporic Black scholarship and be sure to use language that does not reinforce an ideology of a monolithic Black experience. Know that Black is not globally synonymous with African American and write accordingly.



Celine Maria Ayala is a queer Black Puerto Rican doctoral candidate in the department of Sociology and Criminology at the University of New Mexico (UNM). Her current work examines Afrolatinx experiences of Blackness framed within an Afrolatin Critical Theory of Race to investigate how Afrolatinx folk are racialized through a transnational history of colonization, imperialism, and antiblackness. Her work is inspired by her late father's stories of his transition from Carolina Puerto Rico to the mainland. Celine is the current representative and founder of the Afrolatinx Caucus within MALCS (Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social), one of the newest members of the Black Latinas Know Collective Network,

and a former TEDx Talk speaker. When not working on her dissertation, she is working on her craft as musician (bass, trumpet and, vocals) and poet.

POETRY

copied by Jessica Marie Shotwell

Song: Jhené Aiko – Trigger Protection Mantra

They find it hard to cope,  
To deal,  
To manage.  
You know,  
With everything goin' on.  
Say her name.  
And her name.  
And her name.  
And—  
Stop.  
Pause.  
How?  
I still had to go to school the next day.  
She was coming to know herself,  
There was so much the teacher did not know.  
My classmates did not know.  
She found it hard to cope,  
To deal,  
To manage.  
You know,  
With everything goin' on.  
I have to  
Be still  
To take care.



Jessica Marie Shotwell, born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park. As an interdisciplinary scholar, Jessica's dissertation research uses a critical Black feminist sociological approach to study the logic of coping processes as they occur in U.S. public education, informed by Black girls' lived experiences. Jessica is currently preparing to defend her dissertation proposal, funded by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Jessica also studies health disparities as a mechanism of difference on racial lines, interrogating the structural conditions and systemic issues that shape health outcomes.

Sociology of Black Health by Kimya Nuru Dennis

Song: Patra – Love Your Body

**Art and Black Health**  
by Dr. Kimya Nuru Dennis, 365 Diversity

I walked into a classroom with medical students. Some students in the classroom are interested in being neurologists, some students are interested in being neurosurgeons.

I introduced myself and asked which students were previously taught medical and health courses with textbooks, articles, and knowledge primarily based in Indigenous medicines and health, African medicines and health, and Asian medicines and health. Silence.

I did an exercise of an image with graffiti artists drawing the human brain on a city sidewalk. I explained why the human body is not understood and not discussed by many people.

I explained why people, including visual learners, further understand and discuss when there are visual explanations and visual illustrations of human bodies, health conditions, and diseases.

I asked students to draw their own image of the human brain. This can include what is considered "normal" brain transactions with the body, and brain conditions. Then I asked students how they would use their artistic image to do community presentations and to help people during within-facility appointments.

As a social scientist specializing in medical and health equity and I have a brain condition, I have experiences as both the presenter and the patient.

Both experiences interlock with being a Black woman whose pain is often silenced and whose opinion is often labeled "angry." Sometimes, I reintroduce myself as "social scientist specializing in health equity" when it is apparent that medical and health professionals (of various racial and ethnic identities) are accustomed to devaluing Black people.

I reintroduce myself to help save my life and help the lives of Black people in need of true patient advocates that are often difficult to access in medical and health facilities.

Therefore, it is important for medical and health students and professionals to understand and implement artistic knowledge and artistic medical and health services.

Artistic medical and health teaching, training, and actions are beyond reading and regurgitating medical and health books, articles, and telling patients to stare at paperwork or at computer screens with terminology, diagrams, and medical imaging. Artistic discussions, communications, and explanations are beneficial for communities, families, patients, and medical and health professionals.

**365 DIVERSITY**  
Diversity Diversity Diversity  
With Your Typical Diversity Training

We speak how we speak  
We teach how we teach  
We reach who we reach  
- Dr. Kimya Nuru Dennis

Link to article above: <https://www.fotoshootmagazine.com/post/ifotc-art-and-black-health>

November is Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, Diabetes Awareness Month, Epilepsy Awareness Month, Lung Cancer Awareness Month, National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, National Marrow Awareness Month, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, Prematurity Awareness Month, and Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness Month.

As discussed in some Black families, Black communities, and in sociology of health, sociology of mental health, sociology of medicine, and medical sociology, Black people need more access to information and resources. More access to information and resources helps Black people improve their own health, improve attendance to health community events and appointments with demographically and culturally conscious and inclusive medical and health professionals.

This means more medical and health professionals need to know how to reach Black people.

This means more medical and health professionals need to know how to speak with Black people.

The Association of Black Sociologists is committed to maintaining and cultivating a prophetic tradition of scholarship, mentoring, service, and social justice.

This means Black people need actual community advocacy and customer-consumer-patient advocacy that is aware of and respectful of Black cultures, identities, and experiences.

This also means medical and health professionals must be capable of using non-medical language when necessary to explain health conditions and health services. The goal is reciprocal connecting and reciprocal understanding.

Medical and health students and professionals can only achieve this if invested beyond readings, beyond concepts, beyond theories, beyond trainings, and beyond inapplicable policies and practices.

More medical and health students and professionals need to be visible in Black communities and Black organizations to form relationships. This is more than merely telling Black people to go to a resource table at a community event or telling Black people to go to a medical or health appointment.

This is more than assuming Black medical and health students and Black medical and health professionals prioritize Black health more than school advancement and career advancement.

Emphasizing this is important since Black people are more willing to have medical and health appointments if medical and health professionals attend community events and engage in face-to-face, eye-to-eye conversations with Black people.

Black cultures impact how Black people interpret mental and physical thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, whether Black people trust medical and health professionals, and how Black people feel about the potential to be diagnosed with an illness. Therefore, culturally aware customer-consumer-patient advocacy is important.

Black people need to speak with medical and health professionals about health and various approaches to improving health. Various approaches include balancing delicious and healthy foods and beverages with reasonable exercise and relevant vitamins and medication (if needed).

Without this understanding and emphasis, medical and health professionals cannot be culturally aware advocates for Black communities and Black customer-consumer-patient.

This also pertains to medical and health students and medical and health professionals who do not receive care for their own health. Unfortunately, physical health conditions, mental health conditions, substance use, suicide, and not making health appointments are prevalent among medical and health students and medical and health professionals.

It is important for medical and health professionals to model themselves after the health status and health services they want for their families, friends, communities, and customers-consumers-patients.

As a community advocate, sociologist and criminologist, educator, and researcher, Dr. Kimya Nuru Dennis specializes in community outreach, community and patient advocacy, and changing demographics and cultures represented in curriculum and course materials in medical and health academic programs, medical and health career trainings, medical and health organizations, and medical and health facilities.



Love Letter to Abortion Doulas by KáLyn Banks Coghill

Song: Anita Baker – You Bring Me Joy

Dear Abortion Doulas,

You are not fearless but don't allow fear to stop you from showing up in this way. A way that provides liberation for those in need. You stand on the front lines with compassion and comfort to usher others to the other side of something that may seem scary, daunting, and terrifying. You speak love into the lives of those who need that extra support. You make time and make 24 hours seem like it's just enough to be there for someone. The work you do does not go unnoticed. I am one of you; I see, hear, and embrace you. This work is not easy. It can be hard, heartbreaking, frustrating, and sometimes isolating. It can be dangerous, but we don't let those dangers stop us. We fight back with compassion. We fight back with love. We fight back with the understanding that reproductive justice is not about just CHOICE, it is about access, and having access to an abortion doula is essential. Our work is not for us. It is community work. Without the community, there wouldn't be a need for the work that we do. Our joy comes from knowing this. People often wonder and some are brave enough to ask us, what is an abortion doula? What do we do? And we answer by saying we are the support system that shows up no matter what the circumstance may be. We are the transportation, the resource hub, the babysitter, the hand holder, the listener, the liaison, and the liberator. We are here because we see the value in everyone we meet, everyone we help, and everyone we embrace. This work can be selfish but in a good way. We are okay with refusing to put our people in harm's way. We are okay with saying no to press that wants to know the ins and outs of people's personal abortion stories. We are okay with telling the world no to tell those that need us yes. We are not angels or saviors. We are normal people. We are like you, wanting to make sure that reproductive justice is for EVERYBODY in EVERY BODY. Abortion doulas, I love you. I see you and am in solidarity with you. I, too, do this work because I want to imagine a world where abortion access is available to all birthing people. The liberation that comes with each moment of doula work is worth the backlash. I will never turn my back on you, I will never turn my back on us.

In solidarity, with love, and with care,

Kay

Abortion Doula

Richmond Reproductive Freedom Project



KáLyn (Kay) Banks Coghill is a professor and communications professional who has worked in the communications industry as an instructor and communications coordinator for over a decade. They are a Black non-binary femme poet, abortion doula, community organizer, and board member for Neighborhood Access. They are also a communications and community outreach fellow for the Hip Hop Counseling Collective and Virginia Commonwealth University's Digital Sociology Lab. For their full-time work, they are the Digital Director for me too. International. Their passions are rooted in social justice, digital content creation, and gender-based violence research. They work

closely with Richmond Reproductive Freedom Project, a local abortion fund and reproductive justice organization, and they are a doctoral student studying gendered-based violence in online spaces.

## MENTORING GRAD STUDENTS AT HBCUS

### We Got Us: Mentoring Graduate Students at HBCUs

by

Denae Bradley, Dana McCalla, Marie C. Jipguep-Akhtar, & Tia Dickerson

Song: Kendrick Lamar – Alright

As current PhD students at Howard University, we can identify many of the qualities that have made our historically Black university a preferred choice over other institutions: supportive and affirming faculty and staff, the opportunity to work under outstanding scholars, rigorous academic programs, Black-centered pedagogy, not having to “Where’s Waldo” Black folk, and participating in an intellectual tradition that supports critical analysis. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a long legacy of developing exceptional Black leaders, promoting Black social mobility, and positively influencing local and regional economies (Humphries 2017). As graduate students, we are heirs to these traditions and the beneficiaries of unique relationships with a supportive community of mentors who see us through. Through the good, the bad, and the ugly, we got us.

A mentor can be any person who has the experience, willingness, and ability to help another person develop into a productive professional. As such, a mentor can come in many forms: an academic advisor, a project supervisor, a faculty member, a fellow student, or simply a person with professional experience. Many, if not all, graduate programs emphasize the importance of mentoring graduate students, as it provides the necessary career-building, intellectual, and professional skills to survive in academia. Graduate students at HBCUs know we need these skills and more. We understand that we need at least one Black scholar to help us navigate the white-dominated profession that is academia. We also understand that we have to be flexible throughout our studies. Therefore, mentorship can look a little different for us. It can take the form of weekly conversations about Black hair care while connecting with other Black scholars who can partner with fellow students. It can mean asking an elder for advice on how to pay tribute to one’s intersectional identities in white heteronormative spaces while listening to their many stories about maintaining an authentic racial consciousness. Mentorship at Howard is different, but this difference is precisely why we attend.

Although we attend Howard for a particular type of mentoring, it is often difficult to establish mentor-mentee relationships at HBCUs. Oftentimes, there are no formal programs that match students with faculty except as part of academic guidance and research supervision. Black students need mentors! They have needs that are beyond the capacity of any institution. Mentoring Black students typically requires additional support in areas such as applying for external funding, responding to microaggressions, finding creative ways to network, publishing research focused on Black people, and managing multiple competing responsibilities. While it can be difficult to form mentoring relationships at our institutions, mentors at HBCUs are better prepared to meet our unique needs.

Academia is a white-dominated field and HBCUs often lack access to scholar networks that have the potential to advance the career trajectories of Black students. As with other professions, being a part of “the right” circle has a major impact on a person’s career path. Faculty at HBCUs routinely encourage students to network and develop relationships with researchers and professionals outside of their university. This is perhaps one of the most effective strategies to guide students to success in academia. We learn how to express a critical race-based perspective to teaching and research in sociology. Many institutions therefore actively seek us out. We are proud critical scholars in training, and we have our faculty to thank for that. But beyond the support we receive from faculty, our fellow students are often a huge resource as well.

We as Black graduate students must acquire the skills needed to make ourselves competitive in the academy, and peer networks are a valuable asset in learning the “tricks of the trade” of academic life. We rely on our peer-mentors who can assist by sharing resources and advice on navigating professional and academic spaces.

This peer-mentor work is additional labor for the mentor and mentee, as these tasks require a lot of time. However, it is important to fill the gaps where HBCU faculty mentoring and institutional resources are often limited. Our relationships with our colleagues are much stronger because of this peer-mentor community, which is a core feature of HBCUs. We feel integrated into a community of scholars and colleagues who we know will ensure that we complete the program and leave our HBCU with a type of knowledge that does not exist outside of these spaces.

For those considering graduate studies at an HBCU, let's be honest with you, it's difficult. There will be unique challenges that you must overcome to compete with your peers in this field, but the community and support we receive from our faculty and fellow students is unparalleled compared to non-minority institutions. A little word of advice: do your research before applying to graduate programs at HBCUs and other institutions, talk to current graduate students, expect the unexpected, be aware of potential shortcomings, and be prepared to leave after this degree. You got this! We got you! We got us!

## References

Humphreys, J. 2017. *HBCUs Make America Strong: The Positive Economic Impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. Washington, DC: UNCF Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute.



**Denae Bradley (she/her)** is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University. Her research interests lie at the intersection of reproductive and maternal health and mass incarceration. Denae is especially interested in how processes (i.e., maternal substance use and risk of incarceration) and practices (i.e., shackling pregnant people) in the carceral state influence reproductive and maternal health experiences, particularly for Black women and birthing people. She is a Health Policy Research Scholar (HPRS), a national leadership program supported by the Roberts-Wood Johnson Foundation. She is also a Birth Equity Research Scholar with the National Birth Equity Collaborative (NBEC). Denae previously worked in community development in the Mississippi Delta.



**Dana J. McCalla** is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University with concentrations in social inequality and medical sociology. Her research focuses on the social, political and health pathways of black immigrants and their children, the second-generation, in the U.S. context. Dana is a member of Alpha Kappa Delta, the international honors society of Sociology and currently serves as the National Graduate Student Representative on the AKD Council (2022-2024). Over the last ten years, Dana has worked in the education and non-profit spaces as a teacher, program analyst, and consultant primarily working with underserved students and communities of color. She hopes to develop a career in research or policy where she can increase visibility and address the needs of immigrant populations living in the U.S.

**Marie C. Jipguep-Akhtar** is an associate professor of Sociology at Howard University, USA. Her research interests include race, ethnicity, gender, the life course, and "place" disparities in health and the criminal justice system. Her current work focuses on exploring the intersection of gender with social institutions, namely, the health care and criminal justice systems and their impacts on health behaviors and outcomes, particularly during periods of social upheaval. Her research has been published in *Social Psychology Quarterly*, the *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, *Social Forces*, the *Journal of Black Psychology*, and the *Journal of Men's Health*.



**Tia Dickerson** is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Howard University. She is a graduate intern at the Marriage Strengthening Research and Dissemination Center (MAST). Tia's research focuses on marriage, cohabitation, and childrearing among Black families by socioeconomic status. Her current projects examine the relationship between race and perceptions of policing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact of racial unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic on relationship satisfaction of Black couples.

#SOCAF CORNER

[Song: Beyoncé – Church Girl](#)

#SocAF is a Twitter based movement that is using self and communal love to challenge the idea of impostor syndrome within the discipline. #SocAF has two meanings: “Soc as fuck,” and “Sociology Affirmations.” Every Wednesday from 1-3pm ET, a community of scholars use the hashtag to post about their accomplishments from the week prior. We emphasize that no “win” is too small. Colleagues post anything from typing a paragraph to winning a national fellowship—all of the wins are shown the same love through likes, retweets, and words of affirmations. Through this community effort, we affirm others that their person is great, and not defined by unrealistic standards. Our goal is to change the culture of the discipline—and academia overall—to be caring, constructive, communal, and move with a “love ethic” expressed by bell hooks in all about love. We believe this change in culture will foster a community of scholars who are truly invested in each other, promote scholarship from the margins, and transform the ivory to prevent another “scholar denied.”

The #SocAF Collective

[@koreytillman](#) [@SocScholarCR](#) [@BlkSocWithQTNA](#) [@themoryworker](#) [@snojans](#)

Affirmations, in and of themselves, are an ethic of care. I have attended every ABS conference since I started my doctoral studies in 2015 and can identify how I’ve been cared for, affirmed, and mentored at each meeting. At my first conference in Chicago, IL, I recall attending a workshop titled, “How to Write a Book Review” led by Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves and Dr. Derrick Brooms. They provided tips and strategies that I have used when writing all four of the book reviews I’ve published to date. At the Philadelphia meeting I remember bumping into Dr. Juan Battle who did not hesitate to sit down with me in the hotel lobby and help me work through my dissertation methodology as I was completing my proposal at the time. This most recent meeting in Chicago, IL, reminded my why ABS is sociology’s “Black Church”— as an unapologetically Black space it revives us culturally and contributes to the development of our collective oppositional consciousness. My experiences at ABS over the years have left me with more critical and nuanced understandings of not only how to “do sociology” but more importantly how to “do” and “be” Black sociology while navigating these academic streets. – Dr. Shaonta Allen



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[Song: Jayson Lyric ft. Nevaeh – Self Love](#)

## The Griot Welcomes Your Submissions

We are writing to invite your contributions to the ABS newsletter, The Griot. We welcome submissions in all forms, including but not limited to poetry, photo essays, art, creative writing, non-fiction essay, recorded interviews (we can transcribe and/or link), or book reviews. Our word limit is ~750 words.

Topics can include race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, immigration, religion, politics, popular culture, art, music, fashion, food, travel, public health (including COVID-19), economics, the environment, tech, social media, gaming, and any and all things concerning Black folks.

We are especially interested in ABS conference and other reflections, teaching and pedagogy, spotlights and highlights of your work, and undergraduate perspectives.

In the tradition of the Griot, let's share!

We need your submissions by **March 24, 2023** to be included in our next issue coming out this summer.

Reach out to ABS Newsletter Editor, Korey Tillman ([ktill@unm.edu](mailto:ktill@unm.edu) or Twitter: @KoreyTillman\_) with any questions.

SUBMIT HERE: <https://forms.gle/MKCcxfbSk1md69wu6>

## JOB LISTINGS

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