

Volume I, Issue I • 2023-2024

# Journey

Newsletter of the African American Studies Department



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African American Studies

College of Liberal Arts  
and Social Sciences

2023-2024

**Journey**

Volume 1, Issue 1

**AAS Staff Team 2023-2024**

**Chair of Department**

Dr. Tara Green

Founding Chair of AAS Studies Department

**Administrative Assistant**

Jasmine Grant

**Program Director I**

Christopher Knight

**Program Coordinator**

Nollia Parkinson

**Research Associate**

Dr. W. Denaë Muhammad Murphy

**AAS Support Staff Team 2023-2024**

**Graduate Assistants**

Ernestina Anim

Nolan Julien

Elbert Williams



# A Letter from the Chair

*On* October 18, 2022, the College of Arts and Sciences held a welcome event in my honor. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet community members, our local political leaders, alumni and other supporters. I left that beautiful gathering knowing that as Founding Chair of the African American Studies department at the University of Houston I must always be mindful of the past and the present, the university and the community, the students and the alumni. In AAS, we must recognize the connections we have to one another and our responsibility for each. As I move forward in this new and exciting position, I see us as striving to be excellent in three areas: 1) student and alumni interaction, 2) research engagement, and 3) community partnership development. Our forthcoming Strategic Plan will provide more details.

I recognize the fact that our department exists because students demanded it to be so. In honor of our history, a primary concern for me is making space for our students. In the fall of 2022, I posted applications for AAS Ambassadors (position exclusively for majors) and the Student Advisory Board. Four students currently serve on the board, including two majors and two minors. In addition to initiating our first AAS Week, we have begun the process of designing a space for studies to work collaboratively within the AAS suite. With our students in mind, I have been meeting with alumni and learning more about the influences of my respected predecessors, Drs. James Conyers and Linda Reed. I am also working with faculty to redesign our undergraduate curriculum to make it even more interesting, competitive, and relevant for today's student and tomorrow's leader.

There is no separating research from student learning at a Research 1 institution. We begin this year with two new tenure track faculty members. As we bring in new faculty and prepare our students for life beyond UH, it is important that we have a 21st century curriculum that is unique to UH and that is aligned with other Black Studies departments across the country. Our tenure-track faculty member, Dr. Neema Langa teaches courses on health and Africa. Dr. Langa is already making her mark in maternal health studies by forming a research consortium, co-organizing a maternal health symposium, and earning a major National Science Foundation grant. Our two newest faculty have specialties in social welfare and immigration (Dr. K. Wright) and another in Black women and medical history (Dr. A. Shakir). With my expertise in African American and African literature and activism/leadership, we are well on our way to preparing more students interested in health/medical fields, teaching, politics, law, social work, and a variety of other areas.

Indeed, we are preparing AAS students to work in local and global communities. Our department offers an internship course, but we strive to go beyond. We are working towards incorporating community engagement into our courses so that students learn the importance of forming meaningful and impactful partnerships. Furthermore, for two weeks in June, we welcomed our first cohort of high-school rising juniors and seniors. Students took three courses—Introduction to African American Studies, Black health, and cultural arts. These students, some of whom are children of UH alumni, were introduced to UH and to the richness of Black history and the artistic culture in Houston.

*Dr. Tara Green*

Dr. Tara Green

Founding Chair of the African American Studies Department

# New Faculty



## Dr. Ameenah Shakir, Assistant Professor

Dr. Ameenah Shakir is a 20th Century U.S. historian of race and medicine. Her work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and explores the intersection of race, medicine, and gender. She is working on a book titled *Birthing Liberation*, a biography of Dr. Helen O. Dickens, a Black physician activist who worked to desegregate medical education, developed cancer prevention programs, and fostered diasporic connections with women physicians and Black club women during the post-World War II era.

## Dr. Kelechi Wright, Assistant Professor

Kelechi Wright is an assistant professor with a PhD in Social Welfare from the University of Kansas. Her research focuses on structural and benevolent violence and its impact on Black communities. She currently examines specific entities like the criminal legal and juvenile legal system and "mandated reporting" aspects of institutions like child welfare, education and medical systems and the impact of their surveillance on the health and well-being of Black populations.



## Dr. Neema Langa, Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Sociology

Dr. Neema Langa is an assistant professor of Sociology and the African American Studies Departments. Her research examines structural forces contributing to heterogeneity in healthcare utilization and health outcomes among African and African American women in underserved communities. She is particularly interested in exploring the role of institutional forces in determining disparities in the utilization of maternal health care and maternal health outcomes in developing countries. Her research also examines the role of social inequalities and healthcare experiences in influencing variations in these women's later-life health outcomes.

# New Staff of AAS



## Christopher Knight, Program Director I

Mr. Knight joins the department after teaching high school students and serving as a band director in the Houston Independent School District (HISD). In addition to recruiting new AAS majors and minors and building relationships with surrounding schools, he will serve as director of the EMERGE Leadership program.

## Nollia Parkinson, Program Coordinator

Ms. Parkinson brings her skills as an event coordinator and social media strategist to the department. She strives to bring more visibility to the department as it grows and expands.



## Dr. W. Denae Muhammad Murphy, Research Associate

Dr. W. Denae Muhammad Murphy is a Research Associate 2 in the African American Studies Department and Adjunct Professor in the African American Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. Dr. Muhammad Murphy is a Black feminist scholar whose research areas include Black women's history, racialization in media, and African American popular culture. She is the author of several articles and book chapters and is currently working on her first book and documentary project. A 2017 UH Alumna, Dr. Muhammad Murphy is a student-centered academic professional with expertise in curriculum development, community engagement, and leadership training.

# Student Advisory Board

## Student Advisory Board Purpose

Staying true to the spirit of the students who requested the formation of “a comprehensive department of Afro-American Studies” in 1969, the student advisory board will engage with the UH community to foster an academic environment that brings attention to cultures, class and gender identities of Africans and people of the African diaspora.

Advisory Board Goals:

- To assist the department chair with raising the visibility of the African American Studies department on and off campus.
- To support students in their pursuit of academic and professional development.
- To encourage students to be leaders within the community through mutual aid and collective care initiatives.

## Tré Blakes, Senior

My name is Tré Blakes. I am a junior African American Studies major with a minor in Media Production. I enjoy conducting interviews and making content for my media platform “The Mid Zone.” I plan on going into journalism/digital media post-graduation.



## Faith Carter, Junior

My name is Faith Carter. I am a junior psychology major with a minor in AAS from Chicago, Illinois. In my free time I enjoy binge watching movies and reading black fictional books. I chose AAS as my minor because as an aspiring psychologist with the hopes of one day owning my own practice catering to the black community, I believe that is necessary for me to be educated on the community I would like to help.

## Mahaulath Cauley, Junior

My name is Mahalath Cauley and I'm a Junior majoring in Psychology with a minor in African American Studies. I'm from a small town in southeast Texas called Jasper. The reason I chose to be on the African American advisory board is to help aid in the process of creating a safe space for the black community at the University of Houston. I want to inform them of the resources available and let them know about their spaces so they can be around like-minded individuals with common goals and similar backgrounds.



## Andrea Tribble, Junior

My name is Andrea Tribble, and I am a Junior from Minneapolis, Minnesota. In my free time I enjoy creative writing and reading - my favorite author is bell hooks! I chose AAS as a major because I am passionate about my identity as a Black woman, and I want my education to aid in my process of self-actualization. I look forward to using my education to connect with myself and my ancestry and to developing the skills necessary for community building and reeducation.



This is a take over by The Rap Hotline!

Hello, and welcome to The Rap Hotline on Cougar Soul. I'm Joshua Braggs, UH Student, founder and content creator for "The Rap Hotline."

On October 20th, I had a great opportunity and the blessing to interview rap legend and entrepreneur, Bun B from the legendary group in music history, UGK after the event that he was speaking at hosted by The African American Studies department at The University of Houston with the wonderful Dr. Tara T. Green.

If you don't know who Bun B is, then I suggest you should listen to his verse on "Murder" by UGK or "Uptown" by Drake (my personal favorite). If Southern Hospitality was a person that just happens to rap in one of the greatest rap duos in music history, it would be Bun B. His big white smile when he greeted me before the interview let me know from the jump that this interview was going to be a fun one. Read below some of the questions I asked and got his honest opinion from.

#### What Rap Album or Song inspired you to pursue your career in rap?

That's actually a great question. I was a fan of a lot of songs. I was very heavily influenced by Big Daddy Kane, Kool G Rap, and other guys from that era. Rakim for me was a very big influence on me wanting to become a rapper. Because rap was cool, culturally, it was something that I loved being engaged in listening to and stuff like that. A lot of artists made me love being a part of the culture. I remember being home from school and seeing the video of "Microphone Fiend" with Eric B. and Rakim and I remember thinking "Man, I want to be cool like that one day. I want to walk in the room and be cool like Rakim is cool." And that was the day I actually wanted to be an active part of the culture and I knew there was no turning back from there.

#### As an entrepreneur like yourself with "Trill Burgers", what are some tips you have for artists who are trying to be successful and consistent in the business world with their own brand?

Anticipate losses, anticipate obstacles, anticipate interruptions, but also anticipate success, anticipate good reception, and anticipate good business in profit. All of these things are important for you to put into your mind in terms of what you are willing to accept and what you're not willing to accept from a company. You have to believe in yourself because you're going to present these ideas for the business you have to many people and the majority of them will either say "I don't think that's going to work" or "That sounds like a good idea, but where are you going to get the money from". Never let the idea that you don't have the money to do what you're trying to do discourage you. Doesn't mean you can't find it. Doesn't mean you can't convince someone to invest in you. Money is only a small portion of the problems that you are going to encounter while pursuing your career path. The main problem is going to be the negative energy that people give you. When people don't understand your dream, don't understand your goal, they can't see exactly the pathway to where you're trying to go, and if they can't give you aspiring advice; they will try to deter you. Don't let the fact that they don't believe in you or they couldn't see how you could get from point A to point B. The path is there. It just takes hard work, the willingness to sacrifice, and to put this goal above everything else in your life.

## The Art of Being Trill: 1-On-1 Interview with Rap Legend and Entrepreneur, Bun B.

The Rap Hotline  
Nov 29, 2022

# The Art of Being Trill:

## 1-On-1 Interview with Rap Legend and Entrepreneur, Bun B.

You're a young college student. There's a lot of parties, a lot of fun, and a lot of dope stuff that happens for a lot of students to take advantage of. One you day got to wake up and decide "Do I want to party now?" or "Party later?". If you live life right and put the work in, you get to party at the point of life where you can enjoy and remember it.

Last question, how does it feel when rap fans and rap artists view you as a legend and inspiration on why an artist makes music because of you?

It's amazing for young people today who may not have been around when we started and may not have the same connection to my legacy and my music maybe as their bigger brother, their uncles, their parents, or whatnot. The young kids don't have to give me any props. They don't have to acknowledge my contribution to what I've done, but the fact that they look up to people who respect and admire what I've done and honor my contributions transitively they also honor them. It's a beautiful thing. You know, I had a lot of help when I came into this industry. I had a lot of people that looked out for me. We try to give that love back to the next generation and make sure that people can make it in the same way that people tried to make sure we can make it. We can inspire a younger generation of artists to chase after their dreams. Try to make it, put themselves on, put their people on, create industry, create revenue for themselves, put money in their people's pocket, represent their city the right way, and do all these things the right way. My job is done. You know what I'm saying, it was always about taking what was given to me which was given to me which was culture, a career, a way of taking care of my family, and making sure when the next person came up that opportunity to do what I did was there. In the same way that the people left the doors open for me. I have to make sure to leave the doors open for the next generation and make sure they have the opportunities I have. And because I've been able to do that, people have respected my journey and my legacy and they give me my props. I'm just trying to lead by example and show these young cats when you get to where I'm at, you got to reach back, you got to show love, and you have to embrace this next generation so that they feel welcomed. When the next generation of artists come into the culture and they feel welcomed, then their contributions are brighter and deeper. But, if they feel like they are out there on their own, and nobody is really feeling and supporting them, they're gonna be very surface level; because they are not really going to dig deep in themselves and give everything to themselves to this culture. They are going to do just enough to get them where they're trying to go. So I encourage letting artists know that you like what they do, you appreciate their artform, and keep them uplifted in order to do more. People did for me and I'm blessed to have done it for other people and I hope that system continues even when I'm gone.

It was such an honor to have Bun B tapping in with The Rap Hotline X Black Press and open up about his life and his role in not just the rap scene, but also the business scene. Again, I want to thank the amazing people at the African American Studies Department at The University of Houston for allowing this special moment to happen too. Make sure you follow the hotline on Instagram [@theraphotline](#) for more contents on Instagram and Cougar Soul. And follow Black Press at UH and African-American Studies department on Instagram [@blackpress.uh](#) [@aascoogs](#).





# African American Studies Week

The purpose of African American Studies week is to celebrate Black art and culture during Black History and Women's History Months. Students closely involved with the department support the department in coordinating five events during the week of February 27th-March 3rd.

## Monday February 27th

Dr. Lindsay Gary, author of The New Red Book hosted a book signing in the Evans Instruction Room (in Special Collections). Dr. Gary gave guests additional context on the journey of her book from creation to her battle with publishing. "The New Red Book" featured updated Houston hot spots and the event closed out with a question-and-answer session. The first twenty guests were gifted with a copy of "The New Red Book" to be signed by Dr. Gary.



## Tuesday February 28th

Open-Class: Black Women in Contemporary U.S. Society  
Chair of the Department of African American Studies, Dr. Tara Green hosted a public class on Black Women and Respectability. Students were able to engage in ideas around the question, what defines a respectable Black Woman?

### Black History Game Night

Students were able to enjoy the company of others in Agnes Arnold Hall playing games and participating in Black trivia. They also played culture tag, Family Feud, and For the Culture where Black culture and experience was tested.

# African American Studies Week

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## Wednesday March 1st

### Emerging Artist Spotlight: Lacey Stewart

Young artist and student leader Lacey Stewart showcased her beautiful art in the African American studies conference room. Patrons were able to enjoy the beautiful array of colorful and engaging artwork in the conference room at their leisure. Lacey presented the significance of each of her pieces created so folks could continue to admire the 'why' behind the artwork.



## Friday March 2nd

### Black Women Heal: Music as a Tool for Healing & Resisting Respectability Politics

Students listened and discussed artists like Lizzo, Queen Latifah, and Megan Thee Stallion as Andrea Tribble guided them through music as a tool for healing. Discussions centered around exploring Black Women and the methods they use to promote self-care and resisting respectability politics.



# UH researchers unpacking disparities in Black maternal health

By **Jillian Holden**

September 26, 2023



Assistant Professor Neema Langa is spearheading new research into the living, working and social conditions that shape maternal health outcomes among Black women in the United States. This inquiry comes in the wake of alarming data showing that the U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rates among high-income developed countries, despite its hefty spending on hospital-based health care. Due to systemic disparities in access to health care and quality care received, Black women are the demographic most affected by this national healthcare crisis.

“Unfortunately, in the U.S. the Maternal Health Crisis is felt primarily by Black women,” said [Annamaria Milazzo](#), a research assistant professor at the Institute for Research on Women, Gender & Sexuality. “They experience a three times higher maternal mortality than white women and a two times higher severe maternal morbidity than white women.”

The study will be funded through 2025 and will examine the importance of obstetric health care and how various factors — such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status and geographic locations — impact maternal mortalities and morbidity. The National Science Foundation awarded the project over \$340,000 in funding for the 2023-24 academic year.

“If having the best hospital itself is what makes people healthier, then Houstonians should be the healthiest, right?” asked Langa. “However, Black women are dying disproportionately compared to other groups in obstetric care, so there must be other social determinants to consider.”

In addition to Langa, who joined UH in 2022 as part of the inaugural [Presidential Frontier Faculty](#) cohort and works jointly in the African American studies and sociology departments, and Milazzo, the research team includes sociology scholars [Kathryn Anderson](#) and [Zelma Tuthill](#) and social work scholars [McClain Sampson](#) and [Quenette Walton](#). Other researchers include [Elizabeth Gregory](#), director of Women’s Gender and Sexuality and Sexuality Studies, and [Kimberly Pilkinton](#), associate professor for the Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine.

“Understanding what keeps the most disadvantaged in poverty and what we can do to get them out of it has always been a huge passion of mine,” Milazzo said. “This is something that we have to address, and it targets the most vulnerable who face huge disadvantages in many aspects of their lives. This is only one, but it is also multigenerational; if you don’t have healthy mothers, you cannot have healthy children.”

This nuanced approach is crucial. Black women are also more likely to have pre-existing health conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, which can complicate pregnancy and increase mortality risk. Additionally, socioeconomic status can also limit one’s ability to properly take time away from work for prenatal, family or medical reasons, which increases the probability of preventable maternal deaths on a higher scale.

The project will start from a broad view of the U.S. and then narrow specifically to Houston women. (Continued on page 11)



“Researchers tend to look at Black or African American women as a universal group, with no specificity, but ... there are a lot of different groups with perceptions of health, health disparities and inequalities that are different from immigrants, native Americans and refugees,” Langa said. “In the future, I want the study to continue to narrow our scope to Sub-Saharan African refugee women residing in the Houston area and the way they make sense of their health relative to social and policy determinants.”

The research team already has plans to put the resulting insights to good use. Langa and Tuthill are writing a paper analyzing the timing of maternal deaths based on a review of factors related to the deaths of women up to one year after their pregnancies. On average, 30 percent are reported as still dying, not just in the hospital but after they go home.

“When a woman leaves the hospital, what risks put her at a higher likelihood of death? We’re trying to do a checklist and identify women who may be vulnerable to early deaths and to share that with stakeholders, medical providers and family members,” Tuthill said.



## Biography by African American Studies Department chair reaches PROSE Award finals

By **Jillian Holden** • February 27, 2023



Tara T. Green, CLASS Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of African American Studies, has been named a finalist in the Association of American Publishers (AAP) 47th Annual PROSE Awards. Evaluated by a 25-judge panel, her 2022 book “Love, Activism, and the Respectable Life of Alice Dunbar-Nelson” held its weight against other humanities projects from around the nation.

“I am honored to have my work recognized,” Green said. “Bloomsbury tweeted about all authors from books that had placed, and that was how I discovered that I was a finalist. I was so surprised!”  
The 2023 PROSE Award for Excellence is divided into four categories:

- o Biological and Life Sciences
- o Humanities
- o Physical Sciences and Mathematics
- o Social Sciences

Green’s book was recognized for its acumen and merit with a PROSE (Professional and Scholarly Excellence) award. A biography finalist in the humanities section, it is her first introduction to Black New Orleans writing. The book took 10 years to complete and publish.

“It is centered on a writer who never received the recognition deserved,” Green said. “Alice is born in 1875 to a mother formerly enslaved, and during that period she becomes an activist, poet and fiction writer.”

Green’s biography was one of 106 finalists and 39 category winners eligible to advance to the next level of PROSE honors, an Award for Excellence. The prestigious R.R. Hawkins Award was chosen from these outstanding writers.

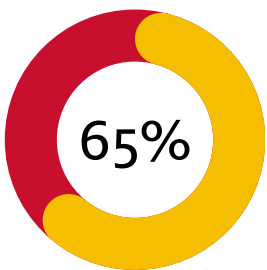
Chair of the African American Studies Department and award-winning scholar, Green is from the suburbs of New Orleans, which immensely impacts her work. She is the author and editor of six books as well as the co-curator of the Triad Black Lives Matter Collection housed at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

# EMERGE Summer Programming

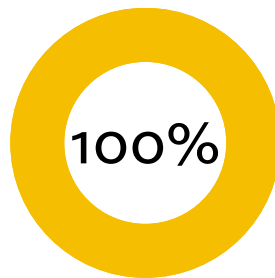


The first annual EMERGE Summer Program kicked off In June of Summer 2023. The EMERGE Leadership Academy aims to support rising high school juniors and seniors to experience two-weeks with the AAS Department. Students take several classes taught by UH professors and/or alumni, including Introduction to African American Studies, Health, and Cultural Arts. They also attend to workshops: SAT/ACT math prep and writing. These courses are vital to student success as students are provided with an opportunity to prepare for college. Dr. Kevin Thompson served as the inaugural director.

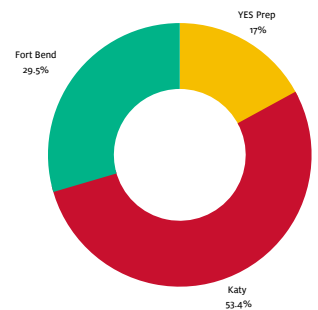
## Impact Report



65% of the initial 20 students attended and completed the program.



100% of those who responded were very satisfied with their child's experiences.



Student Attendee Breakdown  
47% Katy ISD  
26% Fort Bend ISD  
15% YES Prep Public Schools

# AAS Ambassador Spotlight-Andrea Tribble

Interviewed and written by Nolan Julien

## **Where are you from and what brought you to Houston?**

I am from Minneapolis, MN. The department brought me to the University of Houston for sure. I wanted to be an African American studies major and I wanted a Black community to connect to beyond the classroom, so Houston was the best fit.

## **What is the biggest support from the African American Studies department?**

The department is very supportive in the way that opportunities are presented. There are multiple ways, like the student advisory board, to be directly involved in the growth and expansion of the department.

## **Tell us about your BIG aspirational career goals.**

I want to be an archivist and work with archives for Black diasporic history and culture. If I could work at the Smithsonian of African American history, that would be the ultimate dream

## **How would you describe yourself in one word?**

Passionate

## **Why are you interested in African American Studies? Why archiving specifically?**

I am interested because I see myself in the material and the betterment of her education as liberation and self-actualization. With my internship at the library, I have been able to work with some recorded lectures and conversations the African American studies department donated. During this semester, I will listen to the lectures and research the people who spoke, and then digitize them and upload them on a database because right now they are on CDs. I will be writing a blog post of the ones that I find super interesting. I have already been able to listen to conversations with Toni Morrison and James Baldwin!

## **What energizes you about the work you are doing?**

I love knowing that it [the work] is inseparable from who I am. There is no distinction between the work that I do and who I am. This is work that matters beyond grades and school assignments.

## **What would you like to see happen in the African American Studies department before you graduate?**

I have started to see more outreach, and we should continue that because the department should be well known across all of University of Houston's campus. I want more students to know about the department. So many people ask me my major and didn't realize the major even exists.

## **What would you like to see stay the same after you graduate?**

The department is such an open and welcoming space and that should absolutely stay the same. I love that people can just come and talk to the different people in the office. There isn't a feeling that things are uptight or strict, it is a warm familial feeling.

## **Tell me something that's true for you, that others disagree with you on**

The idea that you can change things from within oppressive systems, you have to just tear it down and start over.

# Scholarship Recipients

## Sylvester Turner Academic Distinction Scholarship, \$1000 &

### John R. Sheeler Memorial Scholarship, \$1000

Despite my family's circumstances, as a first-generation college student, I grew to be a leader. While enrolled on my university campus, I have organized networking events, generated flyers, and coordinated several programs. Under my leadership as president of the First Generation Cougar Association, I have organized and developed initiatives aimed at supporting underrepresented students attending University of Houston. Furthering, it has been a privilege for me to serve as the first African American Supreme Court Justice for the University of Houston Student Government Association, while being named onto the dean's list three times and earning a 3.53 GPA. As an individual who overcame extreme poverty, and discrimination based on race and gender, I feel inclined to pursue a career in public service. It is for this reason that I intend to become an attorney, and look forward to enrolling in the University of Houston law school in the following academic year. GoCoogs!

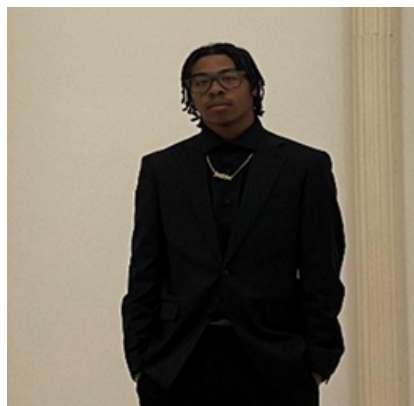


## Olee Yates McCullough Scholarship, \$1400

B“My Name is SaDasia Williams, I am a Fitness and sports major with and associate degree in science. I am currently on my third year but I am classified as a sophomore looking to graduate in spring 2025. My End Goal is to make a foundation in Personal Training and making it possible for everyone to afford.”

## William Alexander Lawson Social Justice Scholarship for Community Service, \$500

Rama, a 23-year-old with a passion for nutrition, embarked on her academic journey at the University of Houston, where she pursued her undergraduate degree in Nutrition. Eager to deepen her expertise, she is currently pursuing a master's degree in Nutrition, setting her sights on a fulfilling career as a dietitian. With a commitment to promoting health and wellness, Rama aspires to make a positive impact on individuals' lives through dietary guidance and education. Her unwavering dedication to the field of nutrition reflects her determination to improve people's well-being, one meal at a time.



## John Rueben Sheeler Memorial Scholarship, \$2000

My name is Joshua Watson and I'm 18 years old. I'm majoring in Sports Management and am looking forward to playing sports collegiately and professionally. When I'm done playing sports, my goal is to become a sports broadcaster for ESPN. When I have free time, I like to further develop my skills in sports, and I like to read. My favorite book is The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas and I also love watching the movie version. One fun fact about me is that despite being overlooked and disrespected over the years, I still have the confidence and drive to pursue my goals.”

# Scholarship Recipients

## GENE & Aubrey Locke Legacy Scholarship for Community Service, \$2000

"My name is Andrea Tribble - I'm a junior from Minneapolis, Minnesota majoring in African American Studies with a minor in History. With my degree, I plan to pursue a career as an archivist with a focus on collections centering on Black history and culture. I am especially interested in working with the journals and personal writings of Black women throughout history to learn from and honor their life experiences. My education in African American Studies has inspired me to engage with work that is reflective of my own identity and aids in the development of the AFAM Studies discipline."



## Sylvester Turner Academic Distinction Scholarship, \$1500

"My name is Laura Lozano, I am Colombian, I am 20 years old, I was born in the city of Bogota, Colombia and my family are my parents and my sister. I graduated at 18 years old at the Abraham Lincoln School in Bogota, where I studied all my school years and they gave me a Social Inclusion Education, This helped me to strengthen my sense of belonging and have confidence in myself, the key to have a success school life was to have empathy towards others, throughout my life I was trained as a high performance athlete in cheerleading, thanks to my discipline and support of my parents I managed to belong to the team Bogota and team Colombia selection of the best athletes of all the country , since I was a child my purpose was to study in the U.S., I knew it was going to be difficult because of my age. Also, I knew it was going to be difficult because of the cost, because our currency is not worth much, I fought with my resume to acquire a sports scholarship to study in this country and I achieved it through a company that helped us with the process and I was able to enter Snow College, Ephraim Utah in 2021, it has been a great experience for me. I am student that really want to know more things every day, and learn a lot here in the U.S."



## Dr. Clara Meek \$1,000 and John R. Sheeler \$1,000

Briona Adams is a freshman student at the University of Houston originally from St. Louis, Missouri. As an entrepreneur of over 12 years, an advocate for change, and an active member of political discussions Briona sets out for more Black Americans to rise to leadership in our culture. Briona desires to become a licensed architect and build on the works of Norma Merrick Sklarek, the first black woman architect, and Paul R. Williams, the first black architect.

"I do not carry this beacon only for myself, but to bring others with me. I want to serve as a catalyst to showcase to others, anything is possible, even the smallest of hopes. While I plan to contribute to society through commercial and residential architecture, I also plan to teach and mentor others."



# A Tribute to Dr. Conyers

Written by Dr. Kevin Thompson

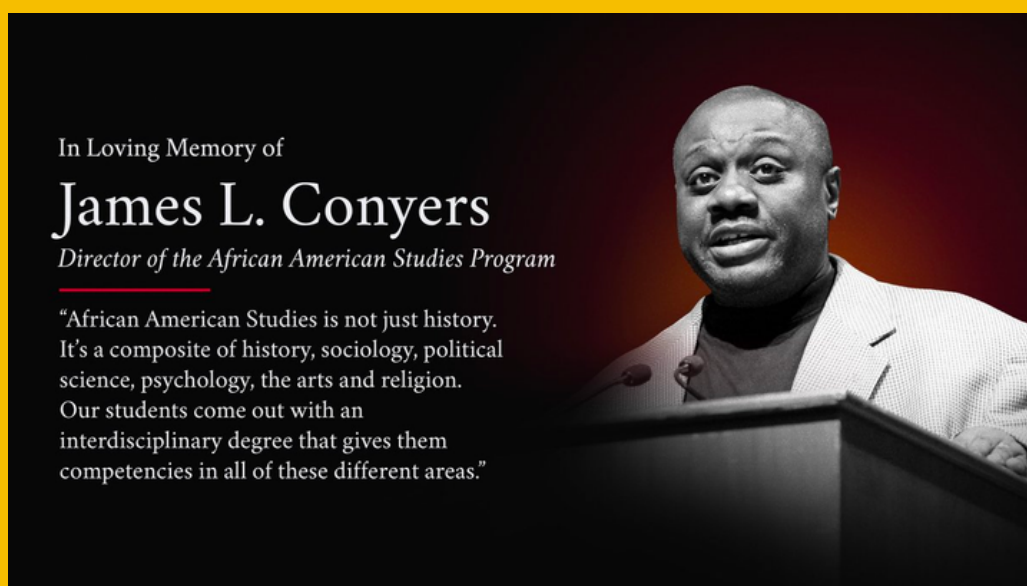


For nearly two decades, Dr. James L. Conyers served as the director of the University of Houston's African American Studies Program (AAS). Under his leadership, there were countless opportunities for students to immerse themselves in Pan-African culture through lectures, internships, programming, community partnerships, and the Study Abroad program. He was a staunch believer in the concepts of family and community, which was evident in his willingness to mentor and advise anyone who took advantage of his famous open-door policy. While occupied with preparing lectures or managing research projects, he always asked one about their day, the last time they ate or drank water, or about their family. He was intentional about making those who visited the African American Studies suite feel welcomed. His presence, intelligence, and eloquent speech concerning the discipline encouraged students to minor in African American Studies.

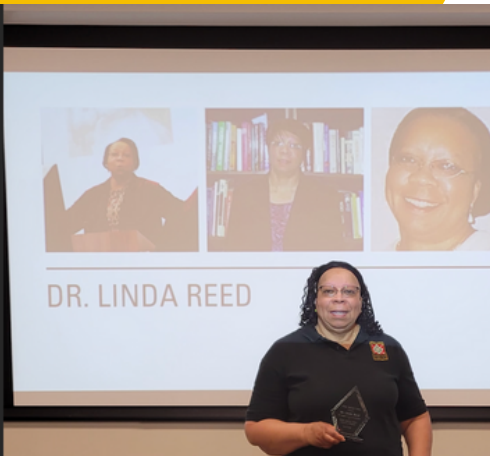
# A Tribute to Dr. Conyers

However, it was his devotion to students and to tenets of the discipline that inspired him to draft a proposal calling for AAS' elevation from "program" to "department." An advancement of this measure would increase AAS's academic and political influence on campus. While Dr. Conyers would not live to see the program achieve departmental status, his commitment to the discipline and to the people serves as the bedrock for the present and future endeavors of AAS. Prior to leaving for the day, he would stop by our offices and religiously ask us: "You good?" With the leadership of Dr. Tara Green and the backing of the University and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, I can truthfully respond to his query and say, "yes, we're good Doc." Asé!

Written by Dr. Kevin Thompson



# Honoring Dr. Reed



On April 25, 2023, the African American Studies department honored Dr. Linda Reed for her longtime service to African American Studies, both in the field and to the department. Here is the tribute as read by Dr. Tara T. Green:

When Dr. Reed was appointed to serve as interim director/chair of AAS after the unexpected death of its longtime and respect leader, Dr. James Conyers, she had been a CLASS faculty member in the history department for more than 30 years. In addition, she had previously served as director of AAS from fall 1992-summer 2001. As director she brought in many esteemed speakers, including Lani Granier who was a Harvard Professor of law and nominated by President Bill Clinton to be the United States Assistant Attorney General. Dr. Reed herself was a tireless speaker who made numerous presentations on Black history topics across Houston.

In her positions as director and faculty, Dr. Reed increased diversity among the faculty and in UH's curriculum. She was notably instrumental in raising funds for an endowed professorship, which is now held by the renowned scholar Dr. Gerald Horne. Before leaving her interim position, she recruited a community of scholars in African American Studies to serve as affiliates. In Spring 1994, she proposed AAS 2320: Introduction to African American Studies which is still offered by the department.

Her contributions as a scholar are equally of note. In addition to numerous articles, book chapters, and book reviews, Dr. Reed's book *Simple Decency and Common Sense: The Southern Conference Movement, 1938-1963* received the prestigious Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Book Award, October 1992, from the ABWH.

As a teacher, Dr. Reed has developed over 14 courses and received two teaching awards, including the UH CLASS Ross Lence Teaching Excellence Award, 2022. She has also mentored and advised many graduate students in African American Studies and Southern history across campus and on other campuses.

Dr. Reed, on behalf of the faculty, staff, and students of African American Studies, it is my honor to say Thank You for your exemplary service.

# What is Black Feminism Now?

A conversation moderated  
by **Dr. Haylee Harrell**

Department of English and Affiliate,  
African American Studies

**November, 10th 2022**

**12:00 PM**

**Agnes Arnold 625-637**

Sponsored by Department of  
African American Studies and  
Women's Gender and Sexuality  
Studies program





African American Studies  
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and Social Sciences



# **FAMILY, SCHOOL, PROTESTS, AND OTHER TEENAGER STUFF: EXAMINING THE LIVES OF BLACK ADOLESCENT ACTIVISTS**

**A CONVERSATION  
MODERATED BY**

**EDWARD SCOTT**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**FEBRUARY, 8TH 2023**

**12:00 PM**

**AGNES ARNOLD 210**

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African American Studies

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