

Spelman MESSENGER

INSIDE:

A Forever Blue Spring in Review
Empowering Future Entrepreneurs
Game Jam: a First for HBCU Students
Celebrating Columbus Area Scholars



Helene D. Gayle, M.D., M.P.H.

A Transformational Leader for an Unprecedented Time

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ALUMNAE NOTES

Alumnae Notes is dedicated to the following:

- Education
- Personal (birth of a child or marriage)
- Professional

Please include the date of the event in your submission.

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Take Note is dedicated to the following alumnae achievements:

- Published
- Appearing in films, television or on stage
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BOOK NOTES

Book Notes is dedicated to alumnae and faculty authors.

Please submit review copies.

IN MEMORIAM

We honor our Spelman sisters. If you receive notice of the death of a Spelman sister, please contact the Office of Alumnae Engagement at 404-270-5048 or Linda Hart Patton, Director of Alumnae Operations, at lpatton@spelman.edu. *For verification purposes, please include a printed program, newspaper acknowledgment or electronic link with your submission.*

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CREDO

Founded in 1885, the *Spelman Messenger* is the alumnae magazine of Spelman College and is committed to educating, serving and empowering Black women. The content of the Messenger is designed to share news and events about the College and alumnae, as well as discuss Spelman's leadership role in addressing a wide range of issues relevant to our community.



On the Cover

A look back at the inauguration of Dr. Helene Gayle, and a look forward on bold aspirations for the future of Spelman.

COVER PHOTO BY DALVIN ADAMS

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The Inauguration of
Helene D. Gayle, M.D., M.P.H.,
as Spelman's 11th President

BY LOÁN LAKE

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CORRECTION/SPRING 2023

Take Note: Title correction for
Kendal Whitlock, C'90. Whitlock
was named Head of Digital
Optimization. The division is RWE
Clinical Trials at Walgreens Boots
Alliance.

Take Note: Correction for Millicent
P. Eubanks, C'78, text omitted
the Certified Financial Planner™
Practitioner Certification.

Picture the Possibilities

One of the most important roles of a college president is leading the development of the strategic vision for the institution. This is an important opportunity to bring members of the community together to share in shaping our collective future through the development of a strategic plan.

I am so excited to have arrived at Spelman in time to help create our 2024 Strategic Plan and so grateful that – thanks to the leadership of my predecessor, Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell – there is already a model of what effective strategic planning and implementation for the College looks like.

Spelman's last strategic plan centered on goals for student success, faculty development, operational excellence, and academic innovation. Much was accomplished under that plan, and it inspired the most successful capital campaign in Spelman's history. The College raised \$339 million – 36 percent more than the goal of \$250 million – including \$141 million for student scholarships; \$24 million for endowed faculty professorships; \$40 million for talent development and technology; and \$87 million for our new Center for Innovation & the Arts, which will be named in honor of Dr. Campbell.

With an eye toward building on these achievements, this spring, the College engaged CREDO, the consulting firm that supported the development of the last plan. CREDO led the senior leadership team in an assessment and preliminary discussions about where we are and where we see ourselves going. We later explored

these ideas with our Board of Trustees.

The assessment looked at the five areas where thriving institutions of higher education focus their energy: student learning and success, transformative environments, net revenue and strategic finance, institutional self-esteem, and the institutional story. It also looked at the four essential elements thriving institutions use to advance their work: a compelling



vision, culture of planning and innovation, habit of reflection and intentionality, and courageous and collaborative leadership.

I am pleased and not at all surprised that, overall, Spelman is on very solid ground. The assessment showed that while we are stronger in some areas than others,

we are well positioned to address any areas of concern. And it confirmed that we have many strengths on which to build and accelerate our progress. Through this assessment, we landed on two key pillars on which to build our strategic plan: An Extraordinary College and Activating Change. These pillars encapsulate the main themes that we believe will help us build towards an exceedingly bright future for Spelman; an educational institution like no other in the world that transforms and prepares women to lead meaningful change.

One outcome of our strategic planning process will be the creation of a roadmap that outlines our top priorities, specific goals, and strategies designed to align our human and capital resources to accomplish the things that are critical to our mission and vision. But even more

important, we hope the strategic plan will help the entire Spelman community focus our time and energy on the areas we think will best position us for even greater success for our future.

Ideally, the strategic planning process itself will be valuable. By bringing together students, faculty, staff, alumnae, and supporters to talk about their hopes and dreams for the College, we will affirm our institutional identity and values, deepen our sense of community, and inspire individual and collective accountability for the work needed to make those dreams a reality.

Building on our two pillars, I anticipate that our new strategic plan goals will include some of the themes I have mentioned often: ensuring that a Spelman education is affordable for qualified students; expanding our global experience and impact; using our scholarship and voice to speak out and act on the critical issues of our day; building on areas of our academic strengths and the Centers of Excellence we want to be known for; and playing a larger role in positively affecting the West End community that is our home.

This fall, CREDO organized community engagement events for Spelman stakeholders to discuss and help shape what the College can be and what it can do in the next phase of our history. I look forward to continuing these important conversations as we envision the possibilities for Spelman's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helene D. Gayle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "G".

*Helene D. Gayle, M.D., M.P.H.
President, Spelman College*

A Forever Blue Spring at Spelman College

BY KIA SMITH, C'2004

Each spring, as the weather gets warmer and the flowers begin to bloom, Spelman College's campus becomes abuzz with remembrance of the past, anticipation of the future, and our connection to one another. It is during this time that Spelman College alumnae and students gather to celebrate the College through Founders Day, Reunion and Commencement. It is at these events that alumnae and students re-ground themselves in the College's legacy, recommit to ensuring the College's longevity and are nourished by the Spelman sisterhood and the founding principles and values that continue to connect us to one another.

FOUNDERS DAY

In April, we recognized our founders, Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles, and the founding principles of Spelman College. During the 142nd anniversary of the College's founding, alumnae and students celebrated Black women of the African diaspora, our sisterly bonds and our diverse faith principles.

While Giles and Packard knew they wouldn't meet you, it was you and over 20,000 alumnae worldwide, that they imagined would sustain Spelman as a beacon of heavenly light for what has now been 142 years," director of Alumnae Operations, Linda Hart Patton, C'88, shared with alumnae and students during Founders Day Convocation.

Three alumnae received awards during this year's Founders Day Convocation, held in the historic Sisters Chapel. Author Tayari Jones, C'91, was awarded the College's highest honor, an honorary degree, recognizing her distinguished career in the arts as an accomplished writer and model of excellence. In addition to preserving and sharing our cultural stories and experience through her writing, Jones also continues her commitment to service and Spelman College, which was ignited during her time as a student. Most recently, she focused her efforts to Dream the Boldest Dreams, an endowed scholarship she co-founded to honor Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, the College's first Sister President. This endowed scholarship will continue

the College's legacy by supporting students who are the first in their families to attend college. Currently, the endowment boasts hundreds of alumnae donors and is three-quarters of the way to its \$1 million goal.

"I thank you for the treasures of the last 35 years. This sisterhood is the greatest gift of my life. I am forever grateful, and I am forever Spelman," Jones said as she received her honorary degree. "Spelman College made me the woman that I am today. Whenever I hear the opening notes of our sacred hymn, I am overcome with gratitude and re-energized to pave the way for the next generation of Black women to make a choice to change the world."

Additionally, Ernestine Dearing Hogan, Ed.D., C'68, received the Founders Spirit Award, an annual award given to an alumna who graduated 50 or more years ago and has had contributions to the College and her community that reflect the spirit and tenacity of the College's founders. An educator, administrator and community advocate, Hogan spent 31 years working at Atlanta Public Schools (APS) as a high school mathematics teacher and school administrator, touching the lives of thousands of students. The highlight of Hogan's career was becoming the administrator of the Science and Math Summer Enrichment Academy (SMSEA), a student academic initiative between APS and Spelman College founded by a \$25 million grant to APS.

Sandra Sims Patterson, Ph.D., C'70, received the College's True Blue Award, recognizing her dedicated service and commitment to the mission of Spelman College. Patterson is associate professor of psychology at the College. During her time at Spelman, she has served on more than 60 committees, programs, administrative positions, task forces, think tanks, conferences and faculty-student programs and projects. She also has served on numerous community boards and consulted with agencies such as Leadership Atlanta, the Task Force on Violence Prevention, and the American Psychological Association Task Force on Adolescent Girls.



REUNION

Each May, hundreds of alumnae venture back through the gates of Spelman College to celebrate being Forever Blue with their graduating classes. This year, more than 800 alumnae, 21% of the reunioneering class, traveled to Atlanta to reminisce with their Spelman siblings and renew their commitment to the College. Among those alumnae who celebrated Spelman's lasting legacy were 105 Golden Girls from the class of 1973 and 74 Diamond Daughters who graduated more than 75 years ago, including Annie Jewell Moore, C'43, who celebrated 80 years since graduating from Spelman College. Reunioneering alumnae ensured that Spelman's legacy continues by raising a five-year class total of \$5,414,452.90. The 25-year reunioneering class, Class of 2003, contributed \$1,135,786.12 to that total.

COMMENCEMENT

Reunioneering alumnae also led the Class of 2023 through the Alumnae Arch and welcomed them into the alumnae fold during Reunion activities. Chandler Nutall, C'2023, a co-valedictorian, recognized how unique the Class of 2023's journey to becoming alumnae had been.

"Through global crises and personal hardships, we have become the epitome of resilience and determination," she shared during Commencement.

After having their first year at Spelman disrupted by Covid-19, the Class of 2023 navigated the physical, mental, emotional and economic strains of living through a global pandemic while creating intentional digital spaces to build relationships,

connection and community with each other despite the distance that separated them. The Class of 2023 were undaunted by the fight as they persevered in the face of a global pandemic, cowardly bomb threats that targeted HBCUs and the everyday challenges of college life, and through it all they "embod[ied] the College's values for ethical, intellectual and innovative leadership with a heart for service," Nutall reflected.

"To be a Spelman woman is to understand Spelman's rich legacy, standing firmly on the shoulders of those who came before us. It is to cherish the sisterhood that extends beyond graduation and deepens with every passing year," Nutall continued. "Spelman chose us to carry its legacy, sisterhood and values, so that is what we must do. The world needs us now more than ever, so let us embrace the opportunities that we receive, lift each other up along the way and extend the hand to those who need it because we are Spelman women and that is what Spelman women do."

Nutall, an English major from Washington, D.C., is one of four co-valedictorians from the Class of 2023. The others are Maya Blasingame, a pre-med biology major from Columbus, Ohio; Amaia Calhoun, an economics major with a double minor in Spanish and management and organization from Cleveland, Ohio; and Sydney DuPree, a senior theater major and transfer student from Port St. Lucie, Florida.

KIA SMITH, C'2004, is a writer and culture enthusiast from Atlanta, GA. When she is not enthralled in all things culture, she is working as a faith-based non-profit executive.

Spelman College Empowers Black Entrepreneurs to Thrive Through Innovation and Strategic Partnerships

BY TARA WOODIN

With its longstanding reputation as the No. 1 HBCU, Spelman College has consistently been a frontrunner in fostering business and innovation among young Black and brown entrepreneurs. In recent years, the institution has taken its commitment to innovation to new heights, significantly increasing its impact on entrepreneurship and economic mobility through strategic partnerships, funding initiatives, co-curricular activities, and the establishment of key centers such as the Center for Black Entrepreneurship (CBE) and the upcoming Center for Innovation and the Arts. These programs empower students with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to thrive in the competitive business world.

Led by Grant Warner, the Center for Black Entrepreneurship is a collaborative effort between Spelman College, Morehouse College and the Black Economic Alliance Foundation. Its primary aim is to cultivate a new generation of Black entrepreneurial talent by offering a comprehensive entrepreneurship curriculum, mentorship programs, access to capital, and networking opportunities. By bridging the gap between students with innovative ideas and venture capital firms, the CBE plays a vital role in fostering economic mobility and wealth creation within Black communities.



Grant Warner

In January, Grant Warner assumed the position of the inaugural Bank of America Endowed Professor of Entrepreneurship and director of the CBE. Leveraging his experience at Howard University, Warner plans to approach the broader diaspora of Black entrepreneurship, further expanding the impact of the CBE.

One notable initiative facilitated by the CBE is the participation of Spelman student entrepreneurs in the European

Innovation Academy (EIA), an international summer entrepreneurship program. This immersive experience exposes students to startup fundamentals while providing opportunities to engage with diverse markets and compare different entrepreneurial approaches. Through teamwork and problem solving, students develop low-fidelity prototypes and pitch their ideas at the program's conclusion. Warner noted the importance of exploring opportunities related to the diaspora and maintaining a bidirectional flow of knowledge and resources, ensuring the continuous growth and impact of the CBE.

"They travel to Europe where they are exposed to the startup fundamentals and they get to go around and talk to people about the markets and compare and contrast the different fundamentals," said Warner. "They have a week to ideate and get together with multinational teams to explore a problem, put together a low-fidelity prototype and then pitch it at the end. It's an important part of what the center will do. Bidirectional flow is important — we really want to lean into that."

In addition to the CBE, Spelman supports aspiring entrepreneurs through events such as the Spelpreneur, a two-semester program that includes a 10-day pitch competition. Sahara Trask, C'2024, whose business, Zesha, emerged as the winner, shares her journey of involvement with the competition, starting as a sophomore in the Spelpreneur program and eventually becoming the treasurer of the executive board.

"We had a lot of resources from amazing people in the Entrepreneurship Center," said Trask. "They helped us throughout the process with our idea, our persona, our slides, branding and the graphics that go along with the brand. I started working on my pitch with one of the mentors in the program and then we won first place, which is very exciting."

The competition's success led Trask to further opportunities, including participating in the Create-X program at Georgia Tech and working for a hedge fund management firm that exclusively recruited Spelman students. Trask's



Spelman College students, winners of the 2023 annual Goldman Sachs Market Madness competition \$1 million grand prize.

experience exemplifies the comprehensive support and diverse experiences available to Spelman entrepreneurs, further solidifying their preparedness for real-world careers.

“Spelman was definitely the right choice for me,” said Trask. “The resources and opportunities I get at Spelman are honestly impeccable. And you can always find a professional to talk to you about your career path.”

Another significant entrepreneurship opportunity offered to Spelman students is the Market Madness: HBCU Possibilities Program, an initiative designed by Goldman Sachs. This comprehensive program spans an entire semester, providing students with a crash course in fundamental finance concepts and career paths. Participants gain exclusive access to senior executives at Goldman Sachs, engage in networking and mentorship activities, receive a \$10,000 stipend, and can compete in the renowned Market Madness competition.

Spelman College students won the \$1 million grand prize during the third annual Goldman Sachs Market Madness competition on April 24, 2023. The winning team included students Victoria Woodward, Princess India Dandoo-Young, Gabrielle Smith, Havelin Autry and Madison Porter.

Spelman students also won first place during the inaugural competition in 2021 and won second place in 2022.

Autry, C’2026, said she is grateful for the transformative experience provided by the program, particularly in opening doors in finance for Black women. She said Spelman provides her with a nurturing environment to grow and emphasizes the importance of HBCUs in creating more opportunities for their students during this influential period in society.

“At Spelman you can definitely find people who will pour into you,” said Autry.

The Market Madness: HBCU Possibilities Program is part of Goldman Sachs’ \$25 million, five-year commitment to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). In 2023, the program expanded to include 150 students from 12 HBCUs, selected from a competitive pool of more than



Spelman’s 2023 Goldman Sachs Market Madness Champions visit the New York Stock Exchange.

400 eligible applications. Divided into teams, the participants conducted extensive research on L’Oreal, the featured client, and proposed strategic business solutions.

Dandoo-Young, C’2025, who had the unique opportunity to be part of both the Spelpreneur Challenge and the Market Madness Competition, shared her experience and credited her team’s ability to think strategically and consider diverse perspectives as key factors in their success. Her achievements exemplify the value of Spelman’s support in nurturing entrepreneurial talent and preparing students for future success.

“It was really good. We got the opportunity to use all our strategic thinking and planning to come up with a solution that was catered towards consumers and that really put different perspectives into mind,” Dandoo-Young said. “Raquel Percell, a transformational officer at L’Oreal, said that really set us apart in the decision-making process of who was going to take the win. She said it was mostly because we had the ability to think about a current problem that was trending and that was becoming more prevalent. And to be able to take the consumer’s mind, that allowed us to bring the win home.”

By equipping aspiring entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources, Spelman ensures that its graduates are well-prepared for successful careers and are poised to make a positive impact in the business world and their communities. Through the Center for Black Entrepreneurship, Spelpreneur pitch competition, participation in international programs like the European Innovation Academy, and opportunities like the Market Madness competition, Spelman provides a comprehensive ecosystem that empowers students to excel as entrepreneurs and catalysts for change.

TARA WOODIN is an Atlanta-based freelance writer and a graduate student at Agnes Scott College.

THE SOUL OF BLACK MUSIC MONTH RESOUNDS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

BY LARRY CALHOUN

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter designated June as Black Music Month to celebrate the history and significance of African American music.

What's the magnitude of this recognition for our nation? "Black Music Month holds significance for our nation," said Hyunjung Rachel Chung, D.M.A., chair of Spelman's Department of Music. "It serves as a platform to recognize and honor the profound contributions of African Americans to the musical landscape of the nation. By commemorating Black Music Month, we celebrate the artists who have shaped American music across genres such as jazz, classical, blues, gospel, R&B, hip-hop and more. This also provides an opportunity to reflect on the cultural significance of Black music, its power to inspire and uplift, and its role in promoting social justice."

Nearly a century before President Carter's elevation of Black music on the nation's calendar, Black music was integral to the groundwork of Spelman College and flourished into a stellar music department that has become one of the school's gems.

"Since the College was established in the basement of Friendship Baptist Church [in 1881], church music was tied to the educational mission," said Chung. "This, along with the tradition of singing—vital in communications in Black culture—created such a strong foundation that it has led us today to an outstanding curriculum in professional performance and music education."

She added that, throughout the year, numerous performances are given by student ensembles and solo artists who act as College ambassadors, as well as guest artists, on and off campus, to satisfy the high volume of requests and commitments.

With the Arts@Spelman initiative, the department is continuing to modernize the curriculum to stay abreast of current creative industries. One example is the launch of the music technology concentration in fall 2022.

"In support of Spelman's holistic environment, our music technology/songwriting curriculum will enable students to create and produce music using various tools and techniques," said Chung.

"Essential skills such as theory, songwriting and composition, recording techniques, music production, and business practices in the industry will be covered in depth. The new

concentration ensures that students will graduate with a well-rounded understanding of the field, especially critical for underrepresented women of color."

During the inauguration of President Helene Gayle, M.D., M.P.H, two alumnae, Kathleen Bertrand, C'73, and Omelika Kuumba, C'81, performed in tribute to the new leader. They offered their thoughts and reflections on the College and its influence on their paths.

SING WITH BERTRAND

While most strive for *one* engaging and rewarding career, Bertrand has had *two*. One was as a nonprofit executive with such prominent organizations as the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the other in the performing arts as a jazz vocalist. The Atlanta native with a three-octave range said at an early age, singing hymns in church, she was unknowingly guided by her older brothers.





“My brothers loved jazz and played jazz records heard throughout the house,” she said. “And my influences became Dionne Warwick, Barbara McNair, Minnie Riperton, Dianne Reeves and Nancy Wilson. It’s their elegance and grace that I try to capture in my performances.”

Bertrand has toured internationally with such artists as Tony Bennett, Ray Charles, Rachele Ferrell and Roy Ayers, and has released six CDs. Her “Hello, Love” was a piece she revised lyrically to pay homage to President Gayle at one of her welcome receptions last year. And as a part of Black Music Month this year, the songbird received an Outstanding Georgia Citizen Award from the State Senate.

A former Miss Maroon and White and English major, a pre-college program and Spelman mentors are credited with ushering her into the College. She spent her collegiate days to the fullest serving as a radio disc jockey, spinning jazz at WAUC and working on the newspaper staff as the only female in the Morehouse Photography Club. A couple of summers were spent at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica, studying the arts and creative writing. During Spelman’s 2018 Founders Day, Bertrand received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

“I was truly filled with gratitude,” she said. “And for my family to bear witness and join in the celebration meant everything to me.”

At her 50th class reunion, Bertrand reflected on the awards she received and that they were just a small part of the celebration.

“My heart is full of unbridled joy whenever I am with my Spelman Sisters, on campus, out in the world, or at one of my performances,” she said. “Spelman changed my life, affirmed who I was as a woman, and as a Black woman when Black Power came to the forefront again during the ’70s.”

DANCE WITH KUUMBA

With the beat of her African drum, professor Kuumba dances on, with a steady commitment of service to the College that spans 25 years. The Brooklyn, New York, native is a third generation Spelmanite and an instructor of African dance forms in the Department of Dance Performance and Choreography.

“Although a philosophy major, I was always a student of the arts,” Kuumba said. Affectionately called Sister Omelika, she was introduced to the arts by her family who enjoyed music, dance, and theater.

“My genes pulled me into the performing arts, and I started dance at around age eight,” said the professor. “Music education is important for children because learning music helps them learn other subjects, like English, math, and history. And it’s

fun, so children don’t even know they’re learning. Remember how we learned the alphabet by singing the ABC song?”

The president of Chadwick Hall during her freshman year, Kuumba swam on the synchronized swimming team as a freshman and sophomore, and was sophomore class president. She pledged Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. (Eta Kappa Chapter), became SGA president, and was crowned Miss Maroon and White.

The co-founder of GIWAYEN MATA, an award-winning dance, percussion and vocal ensemble, explained how dance is in the DNA of African people, and thus African Americans.

“African people dance to celebrate. When you see Black students walk across the stage at commencement, receive their degrees, and do a dance, they are actually being themselves. They are answering the call of their DNA, despite this being frowned upon in a program of pomp and circumstance.”

Kuumba also mentioned that the popular step shows presented by Black fraternities and sororities have an African root, a reminiscence of the Gumboot Dancers of South Africa.

“Although each fraternity and sorority has its own signature, choreographed steps that are easily recognizable in distinguishing one group from another, the base of the choreography is the same. It’s all from our DNA,” she said.

On being a Spelman alumna: “I feel so honored to walk in the footsteps of my ancestors,” Kuumba reflected. “Whenever I sit in Sisters Chapel, I just feel full, knowing my mom and grandmom sang in the glee club. And when I walk the grounds today, I feel I’m in a hallowed place, doing the best I can to live up to the examples set for me.”

In fall 2023, Kuumba will begin teaching a West African drumming class.

And the beat goes on... as the College continues to build on its legacy of developing artists who inspire and change our world!

LARRY CALHOUN is a strategic communications and special projects consultant, a Morehouse Man and Spelman uncle.

Cover
STORY

A Transformational Leader for an Unprecedented Time

BY LOÁN C. LAKE



“You have to feel Spelman to know it, and there’s nothing like experiencing it firsthand...There is something magical that happens here! That’s what I want to continue...to perpetuate the magic.”

– Dr. Helene D. Gayle, President, Spelman College

USHERING IN A NEW ERA

Ushered in with the pomp and circumstance befitting a college president, Dr. Helene D. Gayle entered the doors of the Martin Luther King Jr., International Chapel at Morehouse College to the rhythms of an African drum procession and took her seat onstage among the past presidents of Spelman College.

Amidst an air of anticipation and in the presence of family and friends, Gayle listened as one speaker after another heralded the attributes that led to her unanimous selection by the Spelman College Board of Trustees as the College’s eleventh president, during her investiture ceremony on April 28, 2023, themed *Honoring Our Past – Claiming Our Future*.

Aptly described as a transformational leader who leads with vision, focus, compassion, and knowledge, Gayle was hailed throughout the program as the ‘ultimate role model for turning knowledge into action in service to people who are fortunate to share her time and space.’ She is a woman who cares and a leader who lives for caring.

So much so, that her first year has been one of listening and gathering the intelligence and gaining the greater awareness needed to adequately serve the Spelman community.

The ceremony was a pinnacle moment of the inaugural weekend, which also included an academic symposium, campus celebration, a day of service, and an interfaith service – all executed with the excellence for which Spelman College is known.

Among the roster of speakers who affirmed Gayle’s qualifications was outgoing student government association president, Chandler Nutall, C’2023, who charged Gayle with a call to action on behalf of the student body.

Nutall charged Gayle to “maintain a listening ear, continually prioritize students’ best interests, and uphold her commitment to ensure that Spelman remains an inclusive, dedicated, and welcoming space for academic excellence and the wellbeing of the student body.”

Morehouse College president David A. Thomas, Ph.D., called her a “leader who will accelerate and steep the trajectory of excellence and impact that has defined Spelman College since its inception in 1881,” commending the Board in recognition of her impending impact.

Gayle, a distinguished alumna of Barnard College, was also hailed as a gift – a global leader who tends to the world’s needs as a shaper and builder.

Barnard president Sian Beilock, Ph.D., shared that Gayle’s track record and experience could not be more suited to this moment in time.

During her remarks, Gayle attributed her choice to pursue a career in medicine to her time at Barnard.

“There, I grew in my understanding of myself as a woman, and I developed a sense of solidarity with movements to empower women around our globe. Thanks to the strong pre-med program at Barnard, I found a way to

channel my vague notion of liberating all oppressed people into a more tangible way to contribute to positive social change,” she said.

Despite the numerous titles and accolades she has amassed, Gayle, during her acceptance remarks, expressed that her greatest honors were the titles bestowed by her loved ones: daughter, sister, aunt, godmother, wife, stepmother, and grandmother. It is that sense of community that fuels her drive to leave the world even better than when she entered it.





(r-l) President Helene Gayle, M.D., M.P.H., with Spelman President Emeritae: Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D.; Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D.; Audrey F. Manley, M.D. and Johnnetta B. Cole, Ph.D.



Spelman Board of Trustees Chair Emerita Rosalind G. Brewer, C'84, and Board Vice Chair Ronda E. Stryker celebrated Dr. Gayle following the Investiture and presentation of the president's medallion.

As she accepted the mantle of leadership, she assured the audience that “Spelman will always be a special place where a young Black woman with a dream of making the world better, will be nurtured and affirmed, educated wholly, and encouraged to be and become her best and authentic self.”

AN OPPORTUNITY SHE COULD NOT REFUSE

Over the past 40 years, Gayle’s career has intersected with issues that directly impact the health, wealth, and strength of Black communities across the globe.

Gayle, a trained physician and epidemiologist with expertise in economic development, humanitarian causes, and health issues, spent 20 years with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, working primarily on HIV/AIDS. She also led the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s programs on HIV/AIDS and other global health issues.

From 2006 to 2015, Gayle was president and CEO of CARE, a leading international humanitarian organization. In that role, she led efforts to empower girls and women around the world to bring lasting change to poor communities. Under her leadership, CARE strengthened its focus on advocacy efforts and policy work to have a long-term impact on reducing poverty across the globe. She also introduced signature programs that focused on financial inclusion, maternal health, and improving girls’ access to quality primary education.

From October 2017 to June 2022, she served as president and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust, one of the nation’s oldest and largest community foundations. Under her leadership, the organization adopted a new strategic focus on closing

the racial and ethnic wealth gaps in the Chicago region. When she assumed this role in her early 60’s, she was sure it would be her last full-time job.

“I loved my work at the Chicago Community Trust and was looking forward to seeing the impact of our work continuing to grow. But when asked to consider Spelman and give back to young women who represent ‘who *I* am’ in the world, it felt like a calling and the most meaningful mission I could contribute to at this stage in my career.”

It was not the first time she had been asked to consider this type of role in academia, but she said Spelman presented a unique and singular opportunity that spoke to her in a way that other institutions did not.

In fact, for Gayle, saying yes to Spelman and relocating to Atlanta was like returning to her second home. Originally from Buffalo, New York, Gayle has spent the majority of her professional life in Atlanta. Now, having completed her first year as president, she is focused on establishing initiatives that broaden the reach and impact of the Spelman community, locally and globally.

Much of Gayle’s career has been focused on equity and social justice, particularly as it pertains to issues that disproportionately affect people of African descent around the world. The skills that she has gained over time – in public health, global health, and global and local economic development – are all germane to the moment our society is facing today. Gayle hopes that her example and vision will engender programs that will empower the next generation of women who want to change the world.

“I hope my range of experiences can bring something to bear in the way that we shape the lives of our students, help them



Prior to the investiture ceremony, Dr. Gayle (m) was joined by Atlanta University Center institution leaders and former Spelman College presidents: (l-r) Atlanta University Center Consortium executive director Michael Hodge, Ph.D.; Morris Brown College president Kevin James, Ph.D., Spelman's 7th - 10th presidents (Johnnetta B. Cole, Ph.D.; Audrey F. Manley, M.D.; Helene Gayle, M.D., M.P.H.; Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D.; Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D.); Morehouse School of Medicine president Valerie Montgomery Rice, M.D.; Morehouse College president David A. Thomas, Ph.D.; and Clark Atlanta College president George T. French, Ph.D.

to become attuned to these issues, and understand the roles that they can play to bring about the kind of social change we need," she said.

RIGHT CHOICE FOR SPELMAN

Spelman College has a long, proud history of excellence and global leadership in the education of women of African descent and is committed to addressing racial inequities in education and ensuring equitable opportunities for students of all economic backgrounds. In keeping with this tradition, during its months-long search for the institution's next leader, the Presidential Search Committee sought a visionary who embodied Spelman's mission of academic excellence and global leadership, and whose experience and expertise would build on the College's momentum in key areas, including affordability, entrepreneurship and innovation, and the STEAM fields.

In considering the Search Committee's recommendation, the Board of Trustees considered key priorities for Spelman's 11th president, which included improving the student experience for safety and housing, building on Spelman's fiscal strength, and maintaining the College's attraction of diverse and talented students, faculty, and staff.

"Our commitment to the Spelman Promise—where every Spelmanite graduates with a competitive edge—guides every decision we make for our College," said Rosalind G. Brewer, C'84, chair of Spelman's board of trustees at the time of Gayle's selection.

"It resonates with our students and speaks to how we shape their pathways for the future, promising that we deliver not just academic excellence, but a model to help build their character.

We knew we needed a leader equipped with the right skills to lead a complex organization through many facets of transformation," said Brewer.

"The board of trustees searched for a leader who not only embodied the idea of delivering on the *Spelman Promise*, but whose experience and expertise would create a solid foundation for success in a changing landscape. I'm excited about Dr. Gayle's selection and confident that her demonstrated ability to address complex issues in communities of color -- many of which involve the strength of Black females -- and her success factors, coupled with her commitment to equity, will further build on Spelman's legacy and propel the College into the future," she continued.

BOLD ASPIRATIONS

As Spelman's 11th president, Gayle has assumed the presidency at a time when the College is thriving.

Spelman was rated among the nation's top 50 liberal arts colleges in 2023 and rated the No. 1 historically Black college or university for 17 years in a row by *U.S. News and World Report*. The College is a top producer of Fulbright scholars and is the National Science Foundation's No. 1 baccalaureate institution of Black or African American science and engineering doctorate recipients.

But such impressive accolades and accomplishments will not have Gayle resting on the school's laurels. While she is careful not to hold preconceived notions of what the College needs, Gayle has bold aspirations to build upon the strengths of her predecessors. Among them, to expand Spelman's trajectory as a global force in educating women, but in a way that is more



In celebration of the 50th Reunion Class of 1973, Golden Girls (l) Dorothy Thompson Ingram, C'73, and (r) Marilyn Singleton McCain, C'73, were joined by President Helene Gayle for an afternoon tea and social in the June Gary Hopps Atrium during Reunion 2023.



Dr. Gayle with members of the NAASC South Florida Chapter (March 2023).

affordable, more accessible, more connected to community, and more extensive in fields of study. This is based upon her belief that educating women means educating communities.

She envisions a day when the cost of attending Spelman will not hinder qualified prospects from entering the school's gates.

"[Our] application rates are going up and we could accept many more students, but we are currently limited by our financial ability," said Gayle.

"How can we make Spelman affordable for any young woman who is able to gain acceptance? We have a high-need population and want to continue serving them. To do so, we must raise the resources to create endowments that allow us to provide scholarships so that financial reasons do not disqualify deserving students. Thankfully, today we have alumnae who are in positions to make this a reality and we will enlist them as we think about fundraising goals."

Gayle also has a desire to see Spelman's global footprint expand. She wants to provide students with greater opportunities to see the world and extend the school's educational opportunities to young women outside of the United States.

"Africa is the continent with the greatest population growth expected over the next fifty years," Gayle said. "When women are educated, nations do better. There is a lot we can do to serve our students in new ways that instill in them a global perspective and identify opportunities that ensure that young women everywhere have access to the unmatched education that Spelman provides and bring Spelman to the world, be it in-person or online."

Spelman ranks in the top ten among all U.S. Colleges and Universities supplying the highest number of Black medical school applicants. This presents greater opportunities to address the structural racism that has resulted in unequal health outcomes for Black people. During her tenure, Gayle plans to explore how Spelman can do more to be the leader in defining issues pertaining to women's health.

As a researcher and practitioner, Gayle recognizes the value of systems, not only in the lives of individuals and households,

but in the broader context of how those systems impact the community at large. While at the Chicago Community Trust, she developed a holistic change strategy focused on the household, the neighborhood, and the community. Similarly, her vision for Spelman looks beyond the campus grounds to ensure that Spelman's success spills out into the surrounding community.

Gayle also firmly believes that if you change a household, you can change a neighborhood, and ultimately the overall community. To that end, another one of her priorities is to ensure that Spelman can be a better neighbor to residents in the West End community, especially in women's health, entrepreneurship, and economic development.

"Households, neighborhood, community -- those are the elements of change, no matter how you look at it," she said. "People often think of change primarily at the individual or household level, but there is the context in which the individual lives, as well as the broader society and community aspects, which impact lasting change."

She acknowledges the work that Spelman students are doing in schools throughout West End Atlanta, such as helping to teach students to read and improve their math skills, yet she understands there is room for even greater impact at the community level.

"We are already doing good work in the neighborhood through our volunteer programs and by giving young people entrepreneurial tools to create business and create wealth. But there is more we can do to have an economic impact in the West End and provide greater opportunity for the neighborhood that has been our home for over a century.

"Lastly, the work our students do through social justice programs and by learning how to use their voices to advocate for change is similar to focusing on collective power, at the community level. While our pedagogy won't be shaped by a focus on the household, the neighborhood, and the community, those three things can influence how we teach our students to create change and how we look at the disproportion of any of the inequities that we face," she said.



Given her comprehensive perspective and her own work in public health, Gayle looks forward to Spelman becoming the premier institution in defining issues pertaining to women in health as she builds upon the school's strong reputation in incorporating STEM fields as part of a broader liberal arts education.

Her background in health sciences and STEM has provided her with a firm foundation for helping the College develop and inform future initiatives to produce more Black women in STEM fields and even more Black women who pursue Ph.D.s. Spelman currently graduates more Black women who pursue Ph.D.s. than any other school in the nation. Most importantly, Gayle plans to remain open to new possibilities and listen to what the Spelman community needs as she leads it into the future.

MAKING SPELMAN HOME

Gayle has called Atlanta home since the mid-1980s and has considered Spelman part of her life for many years, thanks to the numerous colleagues, friends and relatives who are affiliated as alumnae or faculty. While she didn't attend an HBCU, she has always been culturally immersed in the type of supportive environment that Spelman provides its students, be it her home community in Buffalo, her peers in medical school, or other parts of her journey. Joining the Spelman community has been an extension of her experience of being nurtured by a community and network of Black people.

"So many of our students are coming from predominantly white environments and now they have the opportunity to exhale. They no longer have to explain or battle misconceptions that devalue who they are," she said. "By living and working on campus, I have a chance to receive what my students are experiencing: an environment by us, for us, and through an Afrocentric lens. This moment in time is my HBCU do-over."

Gayle has a heart for Spelman and the current students and alumnae who have walked these hallowed halls. Now that she is fully immersed, she understands why the institution holds such a special place in the heart of those who attend.

"You have to *feel* Spelman to know it, and there's nothing like experiencing it firsthand. It's not just an intellectual conversation. In the year that I've been at Spelman, it's already been life-changing for me. There is something magical that happens here! That's what I want to continue ... to perpetuate the magic," she said.

To do so, she plans to continue mobilizing the alumnae community. She describes Spelman alumnae as some of the most engaged she has ever seen, with some of the highest alumni giving rates in the country, and she knows that there is still room to do more.

"Our alumnae are such a talented force," she said. "I go everywhere in the world and meet someone who is a Spelman sister. They are making an impact on so many industries and there are definitely opportunities to mentor our current students on how to succeed in their careers."

As she looks ahead, Gayle plans to connect with alumnae on a deeper level and identify avenues for them to be stewards of Spelman's future growth.

"There are lots of ways our alumnae can give back – through internships and by connecting us with people who have the opportunities and resources to help our students. I encourage our alumnae to give beyond what's comfortable so that other young women can look back and say that Spelman changed *their* lives, as well," she said.

"The more of these experiences we give young Black women, the better off we will be as a society."

LOÁN LAKE is a strategic communications and public relations consultant and freelance writer, based in Charlotte, North Carolina.

A TIMELINE OF SPELMAN'S 11 PRESIDENTS

COMPILED BY DONNA WILLIAMS LEWIS

SOPHIA B. PACKARD, 1881 – 1891

- 1881 Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary founded by Packard and Harriet E. Giles, missionary teachers from New England. School opens April 11 in basement of Friendship Baptist Church
- 1882 John D. Rockefeller pledges \$250 to the school and later contributes \$5,000, discharging its remaining debt
- 1883 School moves to present site, occupying nine acres and five frame buildings
- 1884 Name changes to Spelman Seminary, honoring Rockefeller's wife, Laura Spelman Rockefeller, and her parents, longtime activists in the antislavery movement
- 1885- *Spelman Messenger* debuts
- 1886 Rockefeller Hall, first brick building on campus, is dedicated
- 1886 Nurse training department begins
- 1887 Students in first graduating class receive high school diplomas

HARRIET E. GILES, 1891 – 1910

- 1893- Giles, Morehouse and Morgan halls, MacVicar
- 1905 Hospital, Reynolds Cottage and Upton Home are dedicated
- 1897 College department opens
- 1901 First college degrees are granted to Jane Anna Granderson and Claudia T. White

LUCY HALE TAPLEY, 1910 – 1927

- 1910 Granddaughters Club is organized
- 1917- Bessie Strong Hall, Laura Spelman Rockefeller
- 1925 Memorial Building and Tapley Hall are dedicated
- 1924 Spelman Seminary becomes Spelman College, a four-year liberal arts institution

FLORENCE MATILDA READ, 1927 – 1953

- 1927 Spelman College Glee Club organizes. First annual Spelman-Morehouse Christmas Carol Concert takes place Dec. 21 in Sisters Chapel, dedicated the same year

1929 "Agreement of Affiliation" signed by Spelman, Morehouse College and Atlanta University gives the colleges immediate access to graduate programs. Creates foundation of Atlanta University Center, established in 1947

1951- Read Hall and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall are
1953 dedicated

ALBERT MANLEY, ED.D., 1953 – 1976

- 1953 Manley becomes first Black and first male president
- 1956 Merrill Foreign Travel-Study program begins
- 1958 College receives accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
- 1960 Atlanta University Center students draft "An Appeal for Human Rights," published in the *Atlanta Constitution* and national newspapers on March 9
- 1964- Campus building boom includes dedications of
1974 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Fine Arts Building, Dorothy Shepherd Manley Hall, Howard-Harrelld Hall, Sarah Sage McAlpin Hall, Morehouse-James Hall and Albert E. Manley College Center

DONALD STEWART, PH.D., 1976 – 1986

- 1976- Endowment grows from \$9 million to
1986 \$41 million
- 1978- Office of Freshman Studies, Honors Program and
1980 Continuing Education Program are created
- 1981 Centennial celebration
Women's Research and Resource Center is established, founded by Women's Studies Professor Beverly Guy-Sheftall, C'66
- 1985 Academic Computer Center opens
- 1986 Donald and Isabel Stewart Living-Learning Center is dedicated

JOHNNETTA B. COLE, PH.D., 1987 – 1997

- 1987 Cole becomes first Black woman president
- 1989 Living & Learning Center II is erected; dedicated as Johnnetta Betsch Cole Living & Learning Center in her honor in 2005
- 1991 Community Service Program is designated White House Point of Light #563, two years after its launch

- 1992 Spelman is named No. 1 regional liberal arts college in the South by *U.S. News & World Report*
- 1995 Spelman is designated one of six Model Institutions for Excellence in undergraduate science and math education by National Science Foundation and NASA
- 1996 “The Spelman Campaign Initiatives for the Nineties” concludes, raising \$113.8 million
- 1996 Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby Academic Center and Spelman College Museum of Fine Art open

**AUDREY FORBES MANLEY, M.D., C’55,
1997 – 2002**

- 1997 Dr. Manley becomes first alumna president
- 1997- Endowment grows by more than \$63 million and more
2002 than \$70 million is raised in private and federal funds
- 1998 Spelman is awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s premier honor society
- 1999 The Association of Medical Colleges ranks Spelman No. 2 in placing Black students in medical school
- 2001 Division of Media and Information Technology (now Spelman Technology Services) is established
- 2002 Albro Falconer Manley Science Center is dedicated

BEVERLY DANIEL TATUM, PH.D., 2002 – 2015

- 2002- Scholarship support for students doubles
2015
- 2003 Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (LEADS) is established
- 2005 SpelBots Robotics Team participates in International Robocup
- 2008 Gordon-Zeto Fund for International Initiatives is established with a \$17 million gift
- 2008 The Suites, a new “green” residence hall, increases residential housing by more than 25 percent and is the first LEED Silver certified building on an HBCU campus. Dedicated as The Beverly Daniel Tatum Suites in 2015
- 2013 Tatum receives a 2013 Academic Leadership Award from the Carnegie Corporation of New York
- 2012 Wellness Revolution launches on campus
- 2014 Fundraising campaign initiated in 2009 exceeds goal, generating \$157.8 million

MARY SCHMIDT CAMPBELL, PH.D., 2015 – 2022

- 2015- Applications to Spelman nearly triple, from 5,051
2022 when Campbell arrived to 13,600

- 2015- Endowment grows from \$342 million to about
2022 \$525 million
- 2015 Wellness Center opens at Read Hall
- 2015 Spelman LEADS, a strategic plan focusing on leadership, excellence, accountability, diversity and sustainability, launches
- 2017 College receives \$30 million gift from philanthropist Ronda Stryker and her husband William Johnston
- 2018 First-ever chair of queer studies at an HBCU is established
- 2019 Atlanta University Center Collective for the Study of Art History & Curatorial Studies launches
- 2020 College receives \$40 million gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott and \$40 million gift from philanthropist Patty Quillin and Netflix CEO Reed Hastings
- 2021 Renovated theater and supporting areas at the John D. Rockefeller Fine Arts Building are named the LaTanya Richardson Jackson (C’71) and Samuel L. Jackson Performing Arts Center
- 2021 Public phase of capital campaign Spelman Ascends is announced, with a goal of \$250 million
- 2022 Arthur M. Blank Innovation Lab is established with \$10 million gift
- 2022 Center for Black Entrepreneurship is jointly launched by Spelman and Morehouse colleges with \$10 million grant from Bank of America
- 2022 Construction begins on the Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D., Center for Innovation & the Arts, the first campus building erected outside Spelman’s gates. Scheduled for completion in 2024

**HELENE D. GAYLE, M.D., M.P.H., 2022 –
CURRENT**

- 2022 Dr. Gayle, a pediatrician, public health professional and former president and CEO of the international organization, CARE, begins serving as president of the college. Previously worked as president and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust and in leadership roles with the CDC and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- 2023 March: College concludes the Spelman Ascends capital campaign after raising a record-setting \$339 million
- 2023 April: Gayle is inaugurated as the 11th president of Spelman College

‘AN UNBROKEN LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP’

The Official Ceremonial Chain and the Ceremonial Mace

BY DONNA WILLIAMS LEWIS

Two hours into her investiture ceremony, Helene D. Gayle, M.D., MPH, leaned forward to receive the official Ceremonial Chain worn by Spelman College presidents for more than 20 years. Spelman College Board of Trustees then chair Rosalind Gates Brewer, C’84, and trustee Kathy N. Waller stood by as trustee Ronda E. Stryker placed the shimmering vermeil chain connecting three vermeil medallions over Gayle’s shoulders.

As Brewer described it, the chain is a symbol of the Office of President and an emblem of the authority with which Spelman’s 11th president is now invested and the solemn responsibilities laid upon her.

Gayle sees the inaugural ritual of placing the necklace as a symbol of an ‘unbroken legacy of leadership.’

“It was a very special and almost sacred moment as I recognized the incredible responsibility that had been placed upon me, but also the tremendous support that I had, as well as the support the College had,” she said. “It just adds to the stature and the incredible history of the role, as well as the institution, and so I’ll wear it with pride as a symbol of who Spelman is, of our place in the world.”

Commissioned by the College’s first alumna president, Audrey Manley, M.D., C’55, the chain was designed by Tiffany & Co. and debuted at the Founders Day 2002 Convocation.

Manley, Spelman’s eighth president, also commissioned the College’s first-ever Ceremonial Mace, which was created by metalsmith Charnelle Holloway, C’79, an associate professor of art at Spelman.

“I was happy to do it,” Manley said of securing the iconic emblems for the College. “They’re small things, but they’re things that are important.”

The Ceremonial Chain’s two side medallions pay homage to Sisters Chapel, the College’s nearly century-old religious and spiritual center. The hand-constructed chain features links separated by squares inspired by the columns of the Chapel.

The bottom medallion features the Spelman seal, which symbolizes service. The star of service within the seal is a Spelman blue buffed epoxy star with a .20-carat diamond.

Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D., Spelman’s 10th president, said the chain’s “combination of elegance yet sturdiness speaks to qualities expected in Spelman’s presidential leadership.”

“When I first wore the medallion, I remember that it was taken out of its velvet-lined case with extraordinary reverence,” Campbell said. “From the moment someone lifted it above my head and placed the weighty presidential symbol around my neck, I literally felt the physical weight of responsibility of my position settle squarely on my shoulders. Wearing the medal from then on was a point of enormous pride and humility.”

The first Ceremonial Medallion and Chain

Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Ph.D., who became Spelman’s first Black woman president in 1987, was the College’s first president to wear an ornate medallion and chain. Cole said the anthropologist within her was operating as she prepared for her inauguration.

“I had this sense of the importance of rituals and ceremony and I wanted to make sure that the inauguration captured the significance of this presidency,” said Cole, whose academic attire incorporated fabric woven in the Nigerian village of the late novelist Chinua Achebe.

“Symbols do matter and Spelman alumna, artist Charnelle Holloway, so fully understood that as she imagined and then crafted the presidential medal that I wore,” Cole said.

Holloway, who said she thought of the necklace as “the crown jewel of the college,” produced a sterling silver chain that holds a circular, sterling silver medallion bearing the College seal with a blue enameled triangle. The medallion has 14-karat gold and bronze elements and a small diamond at its center. It bears an inscription presenting the medallion to Spelman in honor of Cole’s 1988 inauguration.

The medallion, chain and Cole’s academic attire are now part of the permanent collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture.

Creating the Ceremonial Mace

Holloway practically grew up on Spelman’s campus as the daughter of Jenelsie Walden Holloway, who taught art at Spelman for 38 years.

She began teaching at the College at about the same time Cole arrived and was soon commissioned by Cole to create gifts for distinguished guests of the College. Among them, she crafted

Commissioned by the College's first alumna president, Audrey Manley, M.D., C'55, the chain was designed by Tiffany & Co. and debuted at the Founders Day 2002 Convocation.



wall art pieces made of metal and marble for the Rockefeller family, cufflinks for singer Lou Rawls, a commemorative box for sculptor Selma Burke, and brooches for Maya Angelou, Camille Hanks Cosby, Jessye Norman and Oprah Winfrey.

The Ceremonial Mace she designed and executed for Spelman was created in collaboration with fine woodturner Nick Cook. It debuted in 2001 on the 100th anniversary of the awarding of Spelman's first baccalaureate degrees and is held by the Head Marshall in the College's academic processions.

"As an alumna of this institution, I was honored by the request to create such an important, symbolic representation of the College that would be present at significant rituals of the academic year," Holloway said.

Made from the wood of a tulip poplar and embellished with sterling silver, 14-karat gold and bronze, the staff bears the College seal and an engraving of Sisters Chapel within the leaves of Spelman's distinctive magnolia trees.

"Materials were carefully chosen to best represent the spirit of the institution. The wood was chosen as the closest match

to the wood of the existing magnolia trees on campus," she explained. "The colors of the College are represented with genuine, blue aquamarine stones and sterling silver accents. The hand-constructed seal is seated at the top of the mace and a blue glass dome is set at the bottom of the piece."

"Many academic institutions have acquired special objects that bring a sense of regality to the ceremonies held. These objects can remain as a testament to the character, sophistication and importance of the institutions they served," said Holloway, who also created a presidential medallion and chain for Morehouse College.

She said she designed Spelman's Ceremonial Mace "as a strong, but feminine representation of the women of Spelman College."

"Seeing it reminds me of the respect for the hard work invested and of my 'forever love' for Spelman College," she said.

DONNA LEWIS, C'79, is a freelance journalist who previously worked for 30 years as a reporter and editor at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

HBCU Game Jam Brings Black Players to the Game of Video Design

BY VICKIE G. HAMPTON

More than 150 students from 14 historically Black colleges and universities converged in Atlanta for the first ever HBCU Game Jam. Hosted by the Spelman Innovation Lab, the weekend event held in February 2023 was a beginner's crash course in video game development. In fact, 65 percent of the attendees reported that they had no experience in game design.

Created by Jaycee Holmes, C'2016, a co-director of the Innovation Lab, Game Jam was a fun and supportive introduction to the gaming and tech industries, and was designed for students regardless of their major, classification or level of experience in coding.

Holmes, who also is a professor of interactive media, is dedicated to ensuring that students of color have access to this and other burgeoning STEM careers. She is striving to reshape how students see science and technology by using her influence as an art and visual culture professor.

Mentors from the community and gaming industry were on hand to teach attendees everything they needed to know about making games from scratch, as well as share information on career paths. Students also soaked up knowledge in skill-based workshops.

Although coding knowledge was not required, students were asked to bring other talents—such as artistic ability, storytelling and music—to help bring their video games to life.

They also were asked to bring sleeping bags. Working in teams of four, they worked around the clock for 24 hours in the AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library and produced 29 original games. The teams competed for \$5,000 in awards, sponsored by industry heavy-hitters Google, Microsoft, Zynga and Unity.

Madelyn Brown, C'2024, a computer science major who won honors at the jam, said video game development is an accessible medium that will allow her to tell Black female stories.

"I want to be able to show a Black woman's experience through gaming," she said. "Gaming allows people to step into somebody else's shoes, and so it builds community with someone you oftentimes wouldn't have as much interaction with."

VICKIE G. HAMPTON is a full-time editorial consultant specializing in editing, writing and publication management from concept to delivery.



Jaycee Holmes, C'2016

GAME JAM CREATOR, JAYCEE HOLMES IS STRIVING TO RESHAPE HOW STUDENTS SEE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BY USING HER INFLUENCE AS AN ART AND VISUAL CULTURE PROFESSOR.



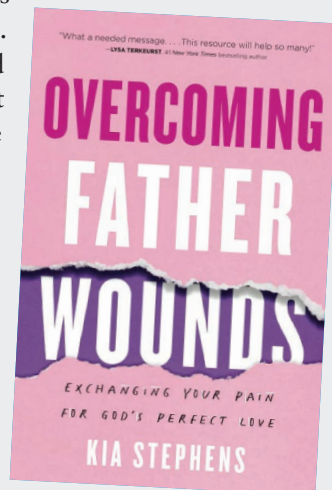
book NOTES

Kelly Michele (Miller) Nolen, C'96, self-published the latest children's book in her Glitter Girls series in January 2023. *The Royal Touch* tells the story of Grace, who has just moved to a new town. Her excitement about new friends, a new school, and a new home dwindles when a classmate shares disparaging words that make Grace doubt her self-worth. Grace's mother reminds her of her many strengths and royal heritage, and Grace ultimately chooses kindness over revenge. Grace's mother also imparts the Golden Rule: treat others as you wish to be treated. This heartwarming tale emphasizes believing in yourself and that goodness comes from being kind.



In *Overcoming Father Wounds: Exchanging Your Pain for God's Perfect Love*, **Kia Stephens, C'2001**, pulls wisdom from biblical scripture to create a helpful, healing guide for women who may have had tenuous relationships with their fathers. She shares her own stories and practical tools to overcome hurt and move forward in life. The book was published by Revell in March 2023.

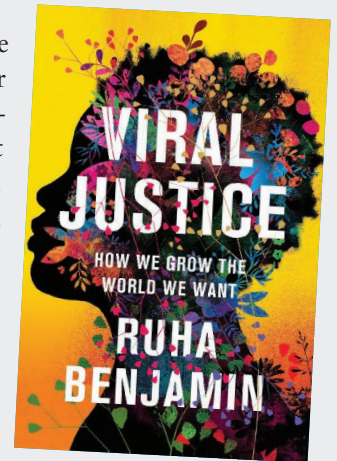
She states: "I dedicate this book to you. Our stories are different, but our ache is the same. If you have ever felt unloved, unwanted, unimportant, or wounded by your father, this book has been crafted with you in mind. It is my sincerest prayer that God fills and overflows every father-shaped vacuum in your soul. May you complete the pages of this book knowing that you are: Loved. Wanted. Valued. Important. Beautiful. Precious. Cherished. Healed. Fathered."



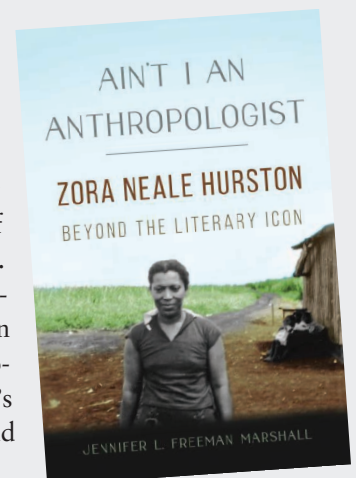
Ruha Benjamin, C'2001, focuses on structural changes through years of groundbreaking research on race, technology and justice in her new book *Viral Justice*, which offers an inspiring and practical vision of how small changes have the potential to grow into large ones that can transform our relationships and communities for the better.

The onset of both anti-Black police violence and COVID-19 inspired her to rethink the importance of individual actions. Part memoir, part manifesto, *Viral Justice*, published by Princeton University Press in October 2022, is a deeply personal exploration of how people can transform society through everyday choices.

Through the lens of her family's experiences and her own, Benjamin shows how seemingly minor decisions and habits could spread virally and have exponentially positive effects. She juxtaposes her father's premature death with community organizers who work in collective healing. She describes her brother's experience with the criminal justice system and her own challenges as a young mother and balances them with the compassionate actions of activists who have real impact that stretches beyond their day-to-day actions.

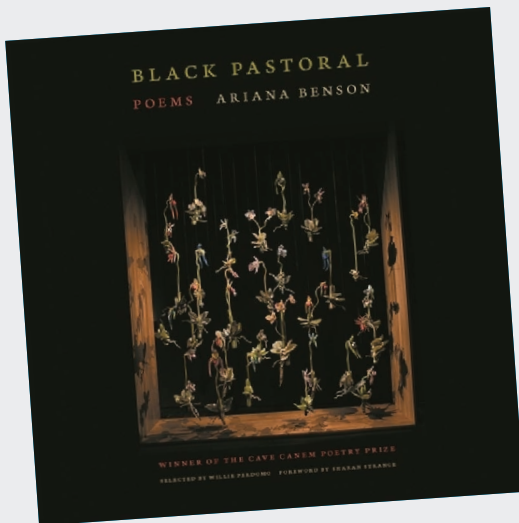
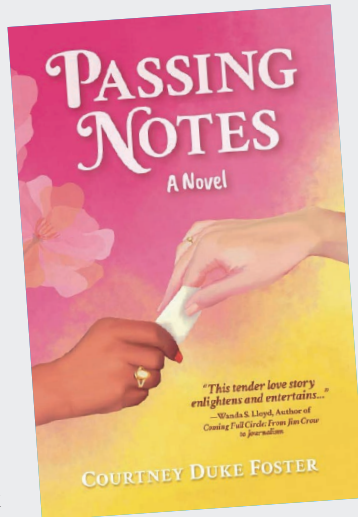


Jennifer Marshall, Ph.D., C'90, sheds light on the novelist and popular culture figure Zora Neale Hurston in *Ain't I an Anthropologist* published by the University of Illinois Press in February 2023. Marshall considers the receptions to Hurston's work both in the literary space and in anthropology and reassesses Hurston's place in American cultural and intellectual life.



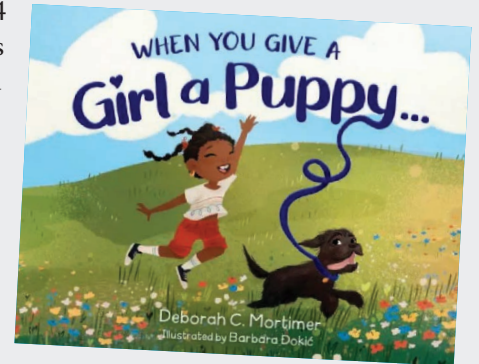
book NOTES

A double-life and a budding romance are at stake in a historical fiction written by **Courtney Nichole Duke Foster, C'98**. *Passing Notes*, published by McQueen Road Press in June 2022, is a novel set in 1951 that focuses on two young women, Cheryl and Bettie, who leave the Jim Crow South for New York City. They soon discover that career prospects for Black folks are equally limited in both places. Things take a turn when Cheryl takes a position with advancement potential, with the caveat that she keeps her background a secret.

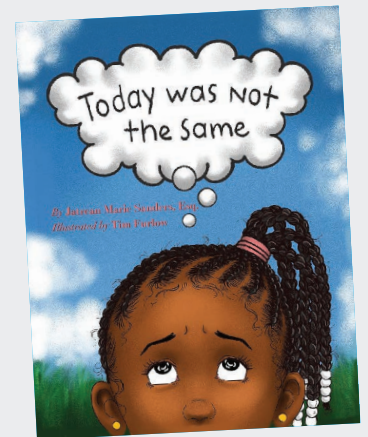


Black Pastoral: Poems by **Ariana Benson, C'2019**, serves as both a love letter and elegy to the relationship between blackness and nature. Published in September 2023 by the University of Georgia Press, the book surveys the ways in which Black and ecological histories are forever intertwined. Benson's poems meditate on the violence and tenderness that characterize these histories in the form of ecopoetic musings. The book is the winner of the Cave Canem Poetry Prize.

Deborah C. Ocona Mortimer, C'96, has written a children's book, *When You Give a Girl a Puppy*, is about the wonderful bond between a girl and her canine BFF. The book, written for ages 4-10, threads themes of responsibility and unconditional love into the story. It was published by Leap Forward Publishing in October 2022.



A children's book written by **Jatrea Marie Sanders, C'2006**, tackles a difficult subject matter for parents and their young children, *Today Was Not the Same* follows a precocious young girl as she tries to understand why adults are acting differently during the day. At the end of the evening, she overhears her family discussing an encounter between the police and an unarmed Black man, which leads to a meaningful family discussion. The book was published by Jatrea Sanders Enterprises, Inc., in June 2021.

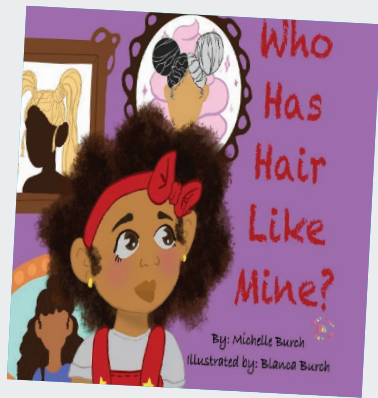


Stacey Abrams, C'95, has co-written a book with Lara Hodgson and Heather Cabot, to show how businessowners can confront the forces that keep small businesses small. *Level Up: Rise Above the Hidden Forces Holding Your Business Back*, published by Portfolio in February 2022, is an inspiring and revelatory guide to starting and scaling a small business. After



15 years in their joint entrepreneurial journey, Abrams and Hodgon share lessons through their inspiring story that arms readers with the know-how, confidence and business savvy to overcome the obstacles that hold their businesses back.

Who Has Hair Like Mine?, written by **Blanca Burch, C'2022**, and illustrated by her mother, Michelle Burch, invite readers to journey with Sophie and her mom as they learn about different hair textures. The children's book is written for ages 2 to 9 and was published by Culturally Kreative in July 2020. In launching Culturally Kreative, the Burch family endeavors to diversify the children's book industry by publishing diverse books with diverse authors and artists.

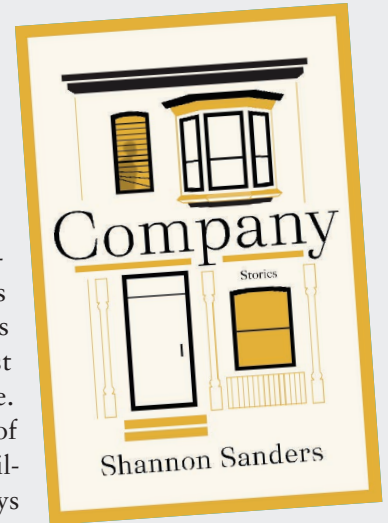


I Miss My Friend and That's Okay is a part of a four book series written by **Shermaine Perry-Knights, C'2008**. The series teaches empathy for the feelings and experiences of military-connected kids.

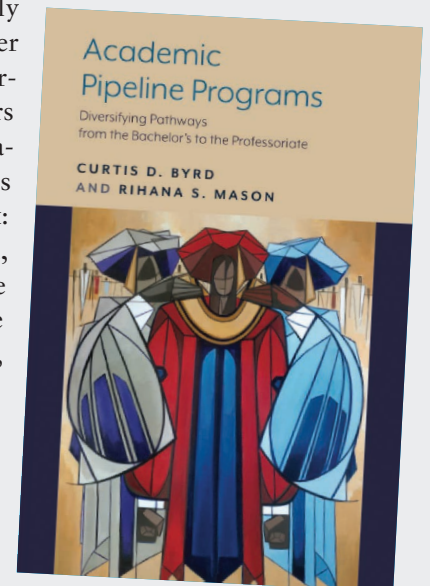
This heartwarming story is about two best friends, Grace and Kerrington, who live far apart from one another and share their lives through letters. This picture book, published by Innovation Consultants of DeKalb in May 2023, shows how children can adapt to new situations while celebrating the enduring power of friendship.



Company is a debut collection of 13 stories in a multifaceted, multigenerational saga written by **Shannon Sanders, C'2007**. Centered around the Collins family and their acquaintances, each story in *Company*, published by GrayWolf Press in October 2023, includes a moment when a guest arrives at someone's home. These stories share themes of intimacy, societal and familial obligations, and the ways inheritances shape our fates.



Dr. Rihana Mason, C'99, and Curtis D. Byrd have written *Academic Pipeline Programs: Diversifying Bachelor's to the Professoriate*, published by Lever Press in August 2021. The book details best practices of successful public and privately funded pre-collegiate, collegiate, graduate and postdoctoral/faculty development pipeline programs. These programs are critical to effectively help increase the number of diverse students entering academia. The authors explore 21 hallmark academic pipeline programs using their THRIVE index: Type, History, Research, Inclusion, Identity, Voice and Expectation. The book prepares parents, college advisers, faculty and higher education administrators to identify academic pipeline programs that fit their needs.



Columbus Area Scholars Celebrated on Spelman's Campus

BY DR. SHERRIE GILBERT, C'2008 AND MRS. ANN CAGGINS, C'68

Nine amazing Spelman College students were alerted that their scholarship awards would be presented on campus. What came next? Members of the Columbus, Georgia Chapter of the National Alumnae Association of Spelman College's (NAASC) Scholarship Fundraising Committee, chaired by Dr. Sherrie Gilbert, C'2008, completed the plans and journeyed to Atlanta to fulfill that assignment.

October 29, 2022, was the first time a delegation from the local Columbus chapter of the NAASC conducted the scholarship presentations on campus. It was another recognition of women who, by enrolling at Spelman, have made "a choice to change the world," upholding the college's motto.

With much enthusiasm, Dr. Gilbert stated, "We are all proud of our scholarship recipients. These outstanding young Spelman women represent Columbus with dignity and grace, and they deserve our financial backing." The scholarship fundraising committee was then gearing up for the return of their flagship scholarship fundraising event, *Shades of the Blues*, an evening of dining and live entertainment, which was held in September 2023.

Spelman College students from the Columbus, Georgia area who were awarded funds for the 2022-2023 year included Dasia Anderson (Northside High School), Jordan Brown (Brookstone School), Olivia Bruce (Sacred Hearts Academy) Adelyn Chaney (Pachelli High School), Brittany Mahone (Columbus High School), Asia Moore (Northside High School), Alanna Ramsey (Northside High School), Keitra Sherman (Northside High School), and Josefina Williams (Columbus High School).

Members of the NAASC Columbus, Georgia Chapter Scholarship Fundraising Committee were Dr. Sherrie Gilbert, C'2008, (Chair), Mrs. Jennifer Johnson McCall, C'88 (Chapter President), Mrs. Ann Caggins, C'88, (Membership Chair and Senior Advisor), Ms. Judith Buckhanon Tucker, C'72 (Sponsorship Chair), Ms. Unetia Turner Perry, C'80, (Finance Chair), and Ms. Smithie Thomas Vaughn, C'83 (Communications Chair).



Officers and Alumnae of the Columbus, Georgia Chapter of the National Alumnae Association of Spelman College (L-R): Atty. Danielle Forte, Ms. Smithie Thomas Vaughn, Dr. Sherrie Gilbert, Ms. LaNora Emziah, Mrs. Vicki Hardaway (Financial Secretary), Mrs. Jennifer Johnson McCall (President), Ms. Angel Chaney (President Elect), Dr. Valerie Richardson, Mrs. Ann Caggins, Atty. Teriel Dixon, Ms. Tammy Henry, and Ms. KeyAndra Hodge (Recording Secretary). Members not pictured: Ms. Judy Bryson, Mrs. Geniece Granville, Ms. Mattie Hall, Ms. Unetia Perry (Treasurer), Ms. Monique Smith, Ms. Judy Tucker, and Mrs. Maxine West.



October 29, 2022, a first time delegation of members from the local Columbus chapter of the NAASC conducted scholarship presentations on campus.



Officers and Alumnae of the Columbus, Georgia Chapter of the National Alumnae Association of Spelman College (L-R): Ms. Smithie Thomas Vaughn, Dr. Sherrie Gilbert, Mrs. Vicki Hardaway (Financial Secretary), Mrs. Jennifer Johnson McCall (President), Ms. Unetia Turner Perry (Treasurer), Ms. LaNora Emziah, Ms. Judith Buckhanon Tucker, and Mrs. Geniece Granville. Members not pictured: Ms. Judy Bryson, Mrs. Ann Caggins, Ms. Angel Chaney (President Elect), Atty. Danielle Forte, Ms. Mattie Hall, Mrs. Tammy Henry, Ms. Keyandra Hodge (Recording Secretary), Dr. Valerie Richardson, Ms. Monique Smith, and Mrs. Maxine West.

1982

Dr. Pamela E. Scott-Johnson

Professional: Appointed provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Spelman College, effective August 1, 2023.

1985

D'Lynn Jacobs

Professional: Named Executive Director of Open Horizon.

1989

Heather Hawes

Professional: Joined Jazz 91.9 FM-WCLK, a broadcast service of Clark Atlanta University.

1992

Janet Gipson Darden

Professional: Named head of Talent Acquisition at Yale University effective, December 1, 2022.

Shelita Knight Compton

Professional: Joined CIM Group on June 13, 2022, as an associate of the Real Estate Development team of Centennial Yards, a 50-acre, \$5 billion redevelopment in Atlanta.

1994

Dr. Lisa Herring

Professional: Joined the U.S. Department of Education as a consultant and strategic advisor to the Secretary.

1995

Haydee Searcy

Professional: Joined Framebridge, a custom framing, digital printing, e-commerce, home décor company, as its chief marketing officer.

1996

Cheryl Williams

Professional: Named the executive director of the National Association for State Community Services Programs.

1997

Dr. Lisa N. Herring

Professional: Named president of PROPEL, effective September 18, 2023.

1998

Latonda Henderson

Professional: Promoted to vice president, chief DEI officer for AMB Sports and Entertainment.

Natasha King

Professional: Promoted to executive vice president and chief people, culture and diversity officer at The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

1999

Christine Hollis

Professional: Named chief talent and diversity officer at Marshall, Gerstein & Borun LLP.

2000

Hana Sharif

Professional: Appointed artistic director for The Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater.

2001

Andrea Jackson Gavin

Professional: Appointed the inaugural program director of the HBCU Digital Library Trust, a partnership of the HBCU Library Alliance and Harvard Library.

Tamaria Kai Perry

Professional: Promoted to vice president for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at the Thurgood Marshall Fund.

Nzinga “Zing” Shaw

Professional: Named the chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer for the Recording Academy.

Deanna Davis Shoyoye

Professional: Named assistant director of Lower School Admissions at Westminster in Atlanta.

2002

Nicole Crowder

Professional: Appointed to the board of directors for CHRIS 180, an Atlanta-based nonprofit organization dedicated to providing trauma-informed mental health services for children, youth and families.

2007

Ashley Brown

Professional: Named director of the Martha Graham School.

Amanda L. Aiken

Education: Earned doctorate in educational leadership from Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

2008

Kristen A. Rome

Professional: Promoted to co-executive director at the Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights.

2009

Isata Elizabeth Yansaneh

Professional: Named director of marketing and communications at The Studio Museum in Harlem.

2012

Chandra Byrd Chambliss

Professional: Named special assistant to the provost for Academic Affairs at Spelman College effective September 1, 2023.

Alex Ebanks

Professional: Named the vice president for Communications at ESSENCE Ventures (Essence Communications Inc, AFROPUNK, Beautycon and Essence Studios).

Alexandria Phillips

Professional: Named director of Strategic Communications at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

2013

Kamille L. Coney

Birth: Son, born April 26, 2023.

Yoshiko Smith Jackson

Professional: Named neuropsychology examiner/research associate at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Vanessa Harvey

Professional: Joined Sony Pictures Television Studios as vice president for Business Affairs Operations Administration.

2014

Shanice West

Professional: Named a director at SGH Marco Advisors.

2020

Venus Montgomery

Professional: Named a product manager for Real-Time Liquidity at Citi.

2023

Wanda Anderson

Education: Earned a bachelor's degree in May 2023 and has a new title, telecommunications operator, at Spelman College.

Faune Watkins

Education: Named a Pauline E. Drake Scholar at Spelman College.



Sabir-Holloway



Buchanan

Dr. Jeanette Sabir-Holloway C'76 and Dr. Zerita C. Buchanan, DDS, MP, C'2010, recently formalized a groundbreaking national partnership with Listerine aimed at diversifying the dental workforce. Listerine has donated \$150,000 to their 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Increasing Diversity in Dentistry (IDID). The donation will be used to provide test prep, scholarships and new practice grants to minority pre-dental students. Furthermore, they have created a limited-edition Listerine bottle, which will be available for purchase at Target and Walmart stores across the nation.

Also involved in the initiative is Latriece Watkins, C'96, executive vice president and chief merchandising officer at Walmart U.S. The plan is to feature several Spelman College alumnae in the national campaign. Amanda Hodge, a senior at Spelman, joined the team in New York City for the charity kick-off event in September.



Ambassador Ruth A. Davis, C'65, delivered remarks on "From Resistance & Persistence to Impact: Celebrating the Role of Black Women in International Affairs" at the State Department Operations Center Virtual Black History Program on February 23, 2023.



Omelika “Sister O” Kuumba, C’81, celebrated 25 years of teaching African dance at Spelman College at an event held on May 3, 2023, in Sisters Chapel. The event featured several African dance performers and drummers, as well as alumni from Spelman and Clark Atlanta University.

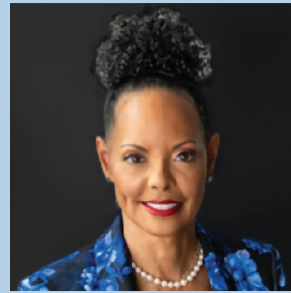


Sonya Malunda, C’84, has announced that she will step down as president of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest on December 31, 2023. She plans to start a consulting practice in 2024. As the eighth president of the ACM, Malunda led a transformational period in the consortium’s 65-year history.

Stacey Abrams, C’95, has joined Howard University as the inaugural Ronald W. Walters Endowed Chair for Race and Black Politics.



Brewer



Russell



Edwards

Spelman College announced in May 2023 the retirement of distinguished alumna Rosalind (Roz) Brewer, C’84, from the College’s board of trustees after 17 years of service. Brewer joined the board in 2006 and has served as board chair for the past 12 years. She assumed a new title on June 1, 2023, as chair emerita, becoming the first former board chair to receive this designation. She will be succeeded by board member, Lovette Twyman Russell, C’83. The board also welcomed the new alumna trustee Sherina Maye Edwards, C’2005, currently one of the youngest Black CEOs of a \$500M+ company, INTREN.

Emily Nichols-Mitchell, C’89, founder and CEO of Accelerations Group, was named one of the 2023 Mentors for the 10th Annual Bizwomen Mentoring Monday event sponsored by *The Atlanta Business Chronicle*.



Dana Tippin Cutler, C’86, was present with the 2023 National Conference of Bar Presidents Fellows Award for her dedication to the NCBP mission and her commitment to bar leaders nationwide.

The U.S. Senate recently confirmed award-winning economist Lisa D. Cook, Ph.D., C’86, for a full 14-year term on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. She originally was confirmed to the board in May 2022, making her the first Black woman to be confirmed as a Federal Reserve governor.



Stacey Marie Weston-Azim, C’88, recently started She Travelin, a travel business dedicated to empowering women through travel.



Alysa Story, C’86, received her second EMMY award as a contributor for her work in graphic design for: 2021-2022 News & Documentary Emmy® Awards, Outstanding Live News Special, The 15TH Annual CNN Heroes All-Star Tribute, CNN.

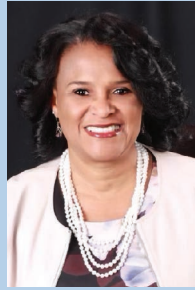
Take NOTE



Ngina Bowen, C'93, was chosen by Obsidianworks to be part of the 2023 Hennessy Legacy Makers Campaign. A short film released in conjunction with the “Creed III” franchise was premiered at various events, including the VIP Boxing Pop Up in Los Angeles and the “Creed III” premiere in New York. The film also was released online in celebration of International Women’s Day.

Dr. Dorian Brown Crosby, C'91, is the founding director of the new refugee and forced migration studies minor, the first and only minor on the subject at Spelman College. The minor, which became available in fall 2023, makes Spelman the only HBCU to offer a degree in global forced migration.

Schonay Barnett-Jones, C'90, was recently elected to a three-year term as a trustee on the America Hospital Association Board of Trustees. She also serves as a board member for the Children’s National Hospital in Washington, D.C.



Dr. Maléka Ingram, C'95, has been appointed the executive dean for Online Campus at Adler University. She will oversee academic programming and day-to-day operations of the Online Campus and the Department of Educational Design & Innovation, which also supports the university’s Vancouver and Chicago campuses.



Dr. Celeste Watkins-Hayes, C'96, has been named the Joan and Sanford Weill Dean of Public Policy at the Ford School at the University of Michigan. Her renewable five-year term runs through June 30, 2028.

Georgina Crawley, Esq., C'91, who serves as the general counsel for Democracy Prep Public Schools, recently served on a panel of legal professionals in a virtual event commemorating Law Day to discuss how to educate scholars about the multi-faceted nature of the legal field and the various avenues it offers.



Andrea Wright, C'97, received the Emerging Leader Award from the International Technology and Engineering Education Association. She was also recently named one of 10 K-12 IT Rising Stars to Follow by *EDTech Magazine*. Also, Wright was named to the School of Rock’s JOIDES Expedition. In October 2023, educators from across the country will come together aboard the JOIDES Resolution to find creative ways to empower science teachers and learners through ocean drilling data.



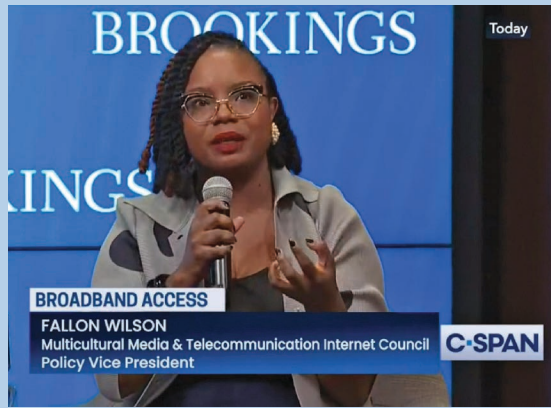
Dr. Sheila Chamberlain, C'81, was honored during the Inaugural HBCU Honors Program in February 2023 at the Black Archives-Historic Lyric Theater in Miami. She received the “Breaking Barriers Award” for being the U.S. Army’s first African American female combat intelligence pilot. The event creator and co-executive producer was **Michelle Bailey, C'89**. The live broadcast aired on Plex TV, Crackle TV and LG TV.



Kila Jones Johnson, C'94, is the recipient of the 2022 American Association of Public Health Dentistry Public Service Award (past recipients include Marian Wright Edelman and C. Everett Koop), at the AAPHD Annual Conference Awards Ceremony in April 2022 in Fort Worth, Texas.



Natalie Shinhoster Palmer, C'92, has been named senior director of IT engagement for SoX, a Georgia Tech-affiliate organization that serves nonprofit education, research and government entities with cyberinfrastructure and global high-performance connectivity. She will focus on growth in the area of new participants from smaller organizations, as well as digital divide and rural broadband initiatives.



the co-founder of #BlackTechFutures Research Institute, was invited to be a member of the World Economic Forum's Edison Alliance in December 2022. The alliance is supporting the institute's 1 Billion Lives Challenge, a commitment to improve 10 million black people's lives by giving city leaders actionable strategic plans on how to deploy broadband, computers, digital upskilling and digital equity policies.

Fallon Wilson, C'2005, joined other policy advocates and the former commissioner for Federal Communications Commission for a discussion on broadband access at the Brookings Institute. The discussion, titled "Can attainable broadband deployment be achieved without the Affordable Connectivity Program?" aired on CSPAN. Wilson,

Cynthia Bowman, C'91, chief diversity and inclusion officer at Bank of America, was presented the BLACK ENTERPRISE CDO Changemaker Award and Lifetime Diversity Crusader Award, sponsored by *Black Enterprise*, along with Fidelity Investments, Merck and Publicis Group. The presentation was held on June 28, 2023, at Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center in New York City.

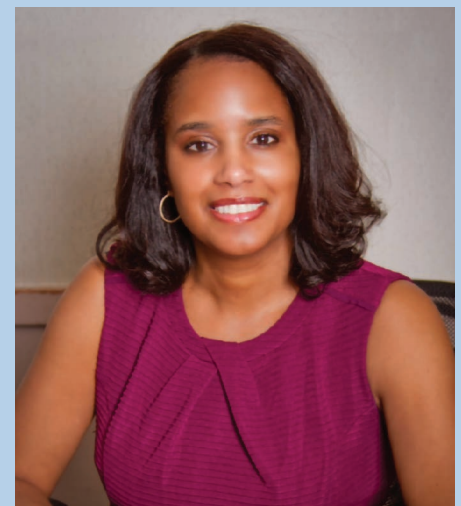


Tawnya Plummer Laughinghouse, C'95, manager of the Technology Demonstration Missions Program Office at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., was interviewed on WHNT-TV News 19 Huntsville, where she discussed how Spelman prepared her for her successful career when she was a student in the dual-degree engineering major and the WISE Scholars Program.

Marionette Holmes, Ph.D., C'90, associate professor and chair of the economics department at Spelman College, is the principal investigator of a grant funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation that she is using to



help increase the representation of Black women in economics doctoral programs.



Danielle Forte, C'91, is the clerk of the Superior and States Courts of Muscogee County, Georgia. She won in a special election, and later was elected unopposed in 2020 for a four-year term.

Take NOTE



In May 2023, **Tiffany Brown, C'97**, facilitated a Q&A with Spelman president, Dr. Helene Gayle, M.D., MPH, during the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's DEBIA/CORE forum. The session focused on Gayle's contributions to advancing health equity and addressing health disparities, as well as her contributions to STEM and her global leadership. Since January 2021, Brown has served as the deputy chief of staff to the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Kristen Rome, C'2008, was promoted to the role of co-executive director at the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights in October 2022. She will focus on LCCR's external-facing work, which includes policy, advocacy and communications. She previously led LCCR's staff attorneys as director of the juvenile life without parole legal representation.



Christine Hollis, C'99, is a 2022 recipient of the Women Worth Watching award by *Profiles in Diversity Journal*. She also was a co-panelist at the Center Force Driving Diversity in Law & Leadership Conference, held in September 2022, where she presented on "Mentorship Matters but Sponsorship Moves the Needle." Additionally, Hollis was featured in an article, "Successful Leaders Don't Materialize in Silos," in the *Women Worth Watching in Leadership, Diversity Journal*, September 2022 issue.



U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff honored **Kornisha McGill Brown, C'98**, for her lifetime of service on behalf of Georgia's families with an official U.S. Senate commendation. Brown is currently serving her second term as national president of Jack and Jill of America, Inc.



On February 18, 2022, three alumnae were panelists at the U.S. Department of State's 13th Annual Virtual HBCU Foreign Policy Conference. A session by **Kashmiere Dotson, C'2018**, titled "Department of State Study Abroad Opportunities as Paths to Service, Policy, and Practice" centered on how her study abroad experience as a Benjamin A. Gilman Scholar (2017) helped her become a global scholar. **Dineo Brinson, C'94**, was a panelist on the "Being Black Abroad: HBCU Alumni Testimonials of the Fulbright Student Program," and **Heather Joy Thompson, C'99**, joined the "Business on a Global Scale" panel.



HBCU Prep School, founded by **Claudia Walker, C'99**, was a part of Target's 2023 Black History Month collection. The collection featured the school's best-selling titles, *The ABCs of HBCUs* and *The ABCs of Black Wall Street*, in hardcover and coloring-book versions.



Elizabeth Blount McCormick, C'2000, president and owner of Uniglobe Travel Designers, was recognized by *Columbus CEO* magazine as the 2022 CEO of the Year Award's Small For-Profit winner.



Dana Banks, C’97, national security senior advisor for the Biden Administration, was instrumental in bringing the second U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit to Washington, D.C., in December 2022. Leaders from Africa attended the three-day summit, hosted by President Joe Biden. The summit primarily focused on trade, investment and security of the continent.



In 2022, **Precious L. Williams, C’2001**, became a pitch trainer and co-host of a new Fox business show “America’s Real Deal” (which can also be streamed on Roku, FireTV, AndroidTV, and AppleTV+). Also, she was interviewed by CNBC’s “Make It” and talked about how her road to success led to the founding of her company, Perfect Pitches by Precious. In February 2023, Williams started the Perfect Pitch Academy, which is “an individualized experience for entrepreneurs to develop a pitch that will launch their careers to new heights.”

Dr. Maranda Ward, C’2002, talked on the topics of the significance of Juneteenth for all Americans, DC’s equitable approach to PrEP uptake, and health disparities with Kidd O’shea on the live Juneteenth segment of “Good Morning Washington.”

E. Vanessa Spearman-McCarthy, M. D., C’2001, is the recipient of the 2022 AMWA (American Medical Women’s Association) Inspire Award, which recognizes accomplished women physicians who exemplify the highest values in vision, integrity, service and collaboration in medicine. She is also a recipient of the 2022 Academy of Consultation Liaison Psychiatry Special Recognition Award and the 2022 Association of Medicine and Psychiatry President’s Award.



Heather Lowery, C’2001, president and CEO of Femme It Forward, was selected as a *Vibe Magazine’s* Voices of the Year 2022 honoree as part of its collaboration with SHE Media.



Jacquelyn Omosunbo Omotalade, C’2000, has received a 2023 Burning Man art grant honorarium for her work, “The Star Kingdom of Oba.”

Take NOTE



Jana J. Edmondson-Cooper, C'2005, was appointed to serve as a full-time magistrate judge. On Jan. 1, 2023, she filled the vacancy created by Judge Sonja N. Brown's election to the Cobb County (Ga.) Superior Court.



In August 2023, The Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta recognized Warren Club executive director **Gail Johnson, C'80**, for her 45 years of service to Metro Atlanta youth. She oversees afterschool programming for kids ages 6 to 18.



Shermaine Perry-Knights, C'2008, was interviewed by City Lights with Lois Reitzes on 90.1 FM WABE, where she discussed her new children's book, *I Miss My Friend and That's Okay*. The book teaches youth the power of adaptability and friendship.



Allilia L. Price, Ed.D., C'2006, received a 40 Under 40 honor from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Southeastern Region at the organization's 91st conference held in Huntsville, Ala.

Erika C. Stallworth, C'2000, was sworn in as the first African American judicial officer in LaPorte County, Indiana, in April 2022.



Cheryl Renee, C'89, of WTVM-TV Channel 9 received the Anchor of the Year Award at the Jumping Jane Digital Humanities Conference in Durham, North Carolina.



Donnica Hawes-Saunders, C'2008, was featured on the November 2022 cover of *World's Leaders Magazine* for being an innovative, result-driven executive who excels in highly regulated industries. She creates and manages public relations outreach and external communication engagements for Philip Morris International.

Brandi Russell Wallace, C'2003, senior designer for Kids at J.C.Penney, was a part of the JCPenney Creative Coalition team responsible for bringing the Juneteenth collection of t-shirts to market.



Sukie Jefferson, C'2009, is the owner of a premium soy wax candle brand, Sukie's Candle Co., which was featured in the 2023 Women in Music Billboard Awards show gift bags curated by American Express. The

company is also a part of a Wayfair initiative, Celebrate Black Makers, led by Sharde Marchewski, C'2009, who is Wayfair's head of supplier diversity.



The *Atlanta Business Chronicle* recently recognized Dr. Zerita C. Buchanan, DDS, MP, C'2010, as one of the honorees for its 2023 40 Under 40 class, which honors emerging leaders in Atlanta's business community who are dedicated to fostering

a more inclusive and equitable city. Buchanan was recognized for successfully training more than 20 pre-dental students from Morehouse and Spelman as certified dental assistants. Her

goal is to strengthen medical and dental pipeline programs at HBCUs. The awards ceremony is scheduled for November 2, 2023, at The Stave Room in Atlanta.



Etteleon Burchall, C'2020, is the recipient of the 2023 BF&M Post Graduate John Wight Scholarship, which will support her pursuit of a master's degree in global health policy at the University of London.



J'Aimeka "Jai" Ferrell, C'2005, the chief commercial officer and deputy general manager at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, was featured in *Atlanta Magazine* in its 2023 Women Making the Mark issue, where she credited her outstanding career to the inspiring women in her life. She also was recently named to the Georgia State University Alumni Association's 40 Under 40 list.



Adrianna Mitchell, C'2013, made her Broadway debut as "Opal" in the 2022 Pulitzer Prize-winning "Fat Ham," a Black interpretation of Hamlet. She originated the role at The Public Theater.

Tai Livingston, C'2023, has been selected to participate in the inaugural class of the Spike Fellows at Gersh Program, a partnership between filmmaker Spike Lee and the Gersh Agency that supports students at the Atlanta University Center Consortium. At the end of the program, students are eligible to receive full-time jobs and \$25,000 in academic debt relief.



Layilah Nasser, C'2017, was voted Pageant Planet's #1 Pageant Coach in the country.

Christine King Farris, C'48, A Faithful Spelman Sister, Dedicated Faculty Member and Beloved Community Leader

*'To take stock of my life and to share it
with others'*

Dr. Christine King Farris, Spelman Alumna, Professor, and King Family matriarch, passed at the age 95. Dr. Farris transitioned peacefully on the morning of June 29, 2023, with family members at her side. She was the first child of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., and Mrs. Alberta Williams King and the sister of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and Rev. Alfred Daniel Williams King.

Dr. Farris was born Willie Christine King on September 11, 1927. Following in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother, Dr. Farris attended Spelman College earning a bachelor's degree in economics in 1948. Two years later, she earned a master's degree in the social foundations of education from Columbia University and a second master's degree in special education in 1958. Dr. Farris received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree from Bennett College.

Dr. Farris began her teaching career in the Atlanta Public Schools System at W.H. Crogman Elementary School. After serving eight years, she returned to her alma mater, Spelman College, serving as the Freshman Reading Program's director and subsequently as Associate Professor of Education. She was one of Spelman College's longest-serving, tenured professors, impacting students' lives for 56 years, from 1958 to 2014. During her tenure, Dr. Farris also served as adjunct professor at Morehouse College and Atlanta University.

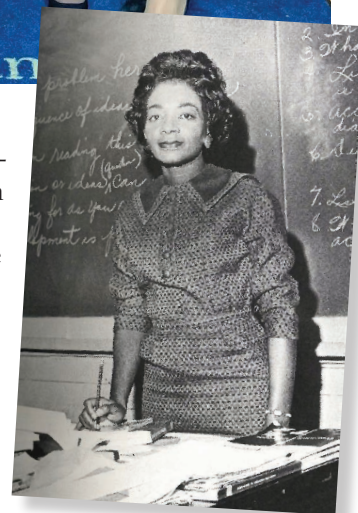
On August 19, 1960, Dr. Farris married Isaac Newton Farris, Sr. Their marriage remained an example of love and commitment for 57 years, until his death on December 30, 2017. Her husband, was an entrepreneur, ordained deacon and trustee at Ebenezer Baptist Church and supported his wife throughout her work as an educator, activist, and church trustee.

Dr. Farris' life overflowed with acts of faith, service, love, and education, that inspired the world for almost a century. She was the longest-serving member of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where she was a long-time trustee, former soloist, and church leader. Her family is etched in Ebenezer's 137-year history, starting with her grandfather, Rev. Adam Daniel Williams, her father, and her brothers, who served as senior pastors and co-pastors, respectively. Dr. Farris served as one of the producers of Ebenezer's televised service which was one of the first among Atlanta churches to televise worship services



in the 1970s. The church broadcast aired Sunday mornings on WAGA-TV, now Fox5 Atlanta. Influenced by her mother's love for gospel music, church hymns, and spirituals, Dr. Farris became one of Ebenezer's soloists

Dr. Farris worked diligently to help build The King Center, founded by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Coretta Scott King in June 1968. As a founding board member and long-time volunteer, she served as vice president, treasurer, and chief financial officer; later becoming senior vice-president and treasurer. Dr. Farris led a cadre of educators in developing Kingian Nonviolence curricula, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Infusion Model for Teaching Nonviolent Principles, for grades K through 12. She also wrote the first intermediate-level textbook on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Farris served as the first director of The Martin Luther King, Jr. Early Learning Center. Dr. Farris chaired the planning committees for The King Center's Salute to Greatness Dinner and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ecumenical Service, which later became The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Service, held in honor of her brother's birthday and national holiday. For more than thirty years she also served as a presider for the Ecumenical/Commemorative Service. In 2015, The King Center established The Christine King Farris Distinguished Legacy of



Service Award, as one of its Salute to Greatness Awards. Dr. Farris was also its first recipient. In 2021, the award was renamed The Christine King Farris Legacy of Service in Education as a part of the inaugural Beloved Community Awards.

Dr. Farris received numerous awards and commendations including Spelman's first Fannie Lou Hamer Outstanding Community Service Award, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work, the International Reading Association (IRA) Teachers' Choice Award, The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) Septima Clark Award, and the Hyatt Hotels Heritage Community Service Award.

Dr. Farris authored two children's books, *My Brother Martin*, and *March On: The Day My Brother Changed the World*, as well as her autobiography, *Through It All: Reflection on My Life, My Family, and My Faith*.

The Christine King Farris Legacy Foundation, Inc., was established in 2022 at the time of her 95th birthday. The foundation raises funds to support education, leadership development, and the Christine King Farris Scholarship at Spelman College.

Dr. Farris was preceded in death by her husband, Isaac N. Farris, Sr. in 2017. She is survived by her children Isaac Newton Farris, Jr. and Dr. Angela Farris Watkins (Class of 1986) and her granddaughter, Farris Christine Watkins (Class of 2019).

Family, friends, national, state, and local officials, special guests, Spelman alumnae, Sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and The Links gathered for a week of wonderful services to celebrate her homegoing. The first of these services was held in Sisters Chapel, where Dr. Farris laid in state, on July 10, 2023. The funeral for Dr. Farris was held on Sunday July 17, 2023 at the Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Roslyn Pope, C'60, Wrote Official Manifesto of Atlanta Student Movement

'I felt like the shackles had been taken off me'



Roslyn Pope, Ph.D., C'60, was a senior and student government president at Spelman College when she wrote an appeal for students of the Atlanta University Center in one night that has since had a lasting impact for more than six decades. She passed away January 18, 2023, at the age of 84.

Pope described how she was able to write with such passion and clarity about freedom after spending a year in Europe as a Merrill Scholar at age 20, she finally felt it was like to be free.

"There were no boundaries — no places I couldn't go, no programs I couldn't take advantage of, no limits to my existence. I could eat where I wanted — I couldn't do that in Atlanta," she said in an interview with the Associated Press in March 2020 in its coverage of the 60th anniversary of the Appeal for Human Rights. "I felt like the shackles had been taken off me."

In *An Appeal for Human Rights*, Pope wrote: "We do not intend to wait placidly for those rights which are already legally and morally ours to be meted out to us one at a time."

In a race against the clock (AUC college presidents had asked students to explain their motives in a public document) Pope pulled an all-nighter in the house of her professor, historian Howard Zinn, who had a typewriter. She wrote in longhand, then handed pages to be typed to Julian Bond, who would later become a Georgia state senator.

Pope had essentially provided the Atlanta Student Movement with a roadmap for engaging in boycotts and sit-ins, some of which eventually included Martin Luther King Jr., that forced white leaders to negotiate with the Black students to desegregate stores, theaters, schools and other institutions.

The Appeal followed Pope throughout her life. It quickly became a civil rights manifesto after it appeared as a full-page advertisement in Atlanta's newspapers. It was denounced by Georgia's segregationist Gov. Ernest Vandiver but celebrated around the country, reprinted for free in *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*, and entered into the Congressional Record.

On April 11, 2013, Pope stood center stage in Sisters Chapel and accepted an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters in recognition that her exceptional and prophetic writing sparked the student civil rights protests in Atlanta. She also was among the group of alumnae who were recognized with the Spelman's Founders Spirit Award for their involvement with the Atlanta Student Movement.

In 2014, a historical marker was placed at Atlanta Student Movement Boulevard by the Commission to Honor an Appeal for Human Rights and the Atlanta Student Movement, Atlanta City Council member Michael Julian Bond, and then-Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed. The historical marker describes the manifesto's origins and its impact.

Pope went on to teach religion, music and English literature to generations of college students in New York, Pennsylvania and Texas while raising two daughters.

In reflecting on the document that has placed her in the annals of history and continues to shape the future of a new generation of student activists throughout the nation and the world, Pope once said: "It's just as relevant now as when I wrote it."

Simply the Best: Jean LeRue Foster Scott, C'53



Jean LaRue Foster Scott, C'53, died on January 13, 2023. A native of Auburn, Alabama, she attended Spelman College from 1949–1953, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics. She served as a member of the Student Government Association, Sunday School Council, Granddaughters

Club, University Players, and class productions. In 1957, she earned a Master of Arts degree in Education at New York University and taught in the Atlanta Public School System. Jean later married the love of her life Harvey Scott and in 1981, she joined the Friendship Baptist Church, in Atlanta, Ga, where she faithfully served and was recognized as one of the 2001 Women's Day honorees.

Jean was a dedicated alumna and active member of her local National Alumnae Association of Spelman College (NAASC) chapter. She served as president of the Atlanta chapter from 1968-1970 and later as coordinator of the Southeast Region, vice president, and assistant treasurer of the NAASC. Jean was a faithful President's Society donor to the College. She received the prestigious Founders Spirit Award in 2016 and numerous other awards. Her generosity and volunteerism earned her the moniker, "simply the best" by the NAASC Atlanta chapter, who recently established a scholarship in her honor.

Carolyn Bailey Collins, C'56



Carolyn Bailey Collins, 88, died at her home in Fairfield, AL, on Friday, July 28, 2023, after an extended illness. She was born on October 14, 1934, in Columbia, SC, to the late Charles Bruce and Blakie (Farmer) Bailey.

Carolyn accepted Christ at an early age. She attended and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Columbia, SC; Spelman College (BA) in Atlanta, GA; and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (MACG) in Birmingham, AL.

Carolyn married Leland Rushin in 1956 and they settled in Birmingham, AL. She was a loving wife and mother to two daughters, Barbara and Betty. After 17 years of marriage, Leland passed away.

She later married William Collins and was a loving wife for 25 years until his passing.

Carolyn taught English at Brighton High School and later transferred to Shades Valley High School where she worked as a guidance counselor until her retirement. Carolyn reorganized the Birmingham Chapter of the Spelman Alumnae Association and was a member of the Cultural Arts Committee of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church. She was also an avid Alabama Football fan.

She is survived by daughters, Barbara A. Rushin of Birmingham, AL, and Betty A. Rushin-Daniels (Larry) of Gainesville, VA; granddaughter, Leah Breck Daniels of Alexandria, VA; bonus daughter, Angela Collins Butler (Joel) of Atlanta, GA; grandson, Marcus Watts (Kaleena) of Trussville, AL; sister, Hazel Bailey Ray of Massillon, OH; sister-in-law, Barbara Mims Bailey of Columbia, SC; and several nieces, nephews and cousins. In addition to her parents and first husband, she was preceded in death by her brother, Charles Bruce Bailey, Jr.

Carolyn Odom, C'66 Climbed the Ranks in Communications Earl Graves, Ltd.



Carolyn Odom, C'66, who had an illustrious career in public relations and marketing at Earl Graves, Ltd., publisher of *Black Enterprise Magazine*, died on April 10, 2023.

In December 1987, when announcing her promotion from vice president of corporate communications promotion to senior vice president of Earl G. Graves Ltd., Graves stated: "When she talks, we all listen."

Odom, who earlier served as coordinator for the National Health Council in New York City, was educated in Augusta and New York schools. After graduating from Spelman, she worked in communications at AT&T in New Jersey and Atlanta and eventually ran her own consulting firm, Marketing, Communications and Public Relations Solutions.

In MEMORIAM

1943

Florence Irving Francis
Died: January 13, 2023
Service: January 28, 2023, C.A. Haywood, Sr. Memorial Chapel, Raleigh, North Carolina

1945

Annie Brown Kennedy
Died: January 17, 2023
Service: January 25, 2023, at Wait Chapel on the campus of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

1949

Emma Stone Jeffries
Died: May 27, 2023

1951

Ms. Effie B. Williams
Died: June 8, 2023
Service: June 16, 2023, New Hope Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, New York

1956

Gloria Strong Boyd
Died: August 14, 2023
Service: Friday, August 25, 2023, Antioch Baptist Church North, Atlanta, Georgia

Rev. Hulda Wilson

Died: April 16, 2023
Service: May 6, 2023, Atlanta First United Methodist Church, Atlanta

1958

Jean Alta McRae
Died: March 13, 2023
Service: April 1, 2023, Christ United Methodist Church, Washington D.C.

Minister Kathryn J. Broughton

Died: June 22, 2023
Service: June 30, 2023, Cascade United Methodist Church - Midtown, Atlanta, Georgia.

1960

Ann Haygood Jenkins
Died: December 3, 2022
Service: December 10, 2022, *Allen Temple AME Church*, Atlanta, Georgia

1965

C. Jean Whipple Brown
Died: August 3, 2023
Service: August 12, 2023, Murray Brothers Funeral Home Cascade Chapel, Atlanta

Carolyn E. Jones

Died: February 7, 2023

1968

Dorothy Ann Brown
Died: June 18, 2023
Service: June 24, 2023, Calvary Hill Missionary Baptist Church, Ellenwood, Georgia

Saundra Evelyn Aldridge

Died: February 20, 2023
Service: February 27, 2023, Green Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Auburn, Alabama

Sheryl A. Harris-Dortch

Died: April 18, 2023

1969

Dr. Yvonne Beauford Oliver
Died: December 29, 2022
Service: January 11, 2023, Trinity Baptist Church, Fort Valley, Georgia

1970

Dr. Carol Stewart-Mungo
Died: May 15, 2023
Service: May. 22, 2023, Andrew's Chapel United Methodist Church, Jonesboro, Georgia

1971

Lois Edwina Harris
Died: November 23, 2022
Service: December 2, 2022, Sherman Oaks United Methodist Church, Sherman Oaks, California

1972

Shirlene Mobley Davis
Died: August 20, 2023
Service: August 26, 2023, First Baptist Church, Warner Robins, Georgia

Diane Herbert

Died: March 17, 2023

1973

Patricia W. Scruggs
Died: July 2, 2023
Service: July 8, 2023, Bethlehem Church of God Holiness, Atlanta, Georgia

Gwendolyn L. Kemp

Died: May 11, 2023
Service: June 9, 2023, L.A. Lee YMCA / Mizell Community Center, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

1976

Carmen Epps Brown
Died: February 19, 2023
Service: February 25, 2023, Simmons Funeral Home and Crematory, Orangeburg, South Carolina

1978

Darele B. Campbell
Died: July 19, 2023

1979

Pamela Prater
Died: February 10, 2023

1980

Dr. Michelle L. Browne-Barnum
Died: July 15, 2023
Service: July 24, 2023, Shannon Funeral Home, Bradenton, Florida

1986

Cheryl Chisholm
Died: June 17, 2023

1989

Patrice Gayden Coleman
Died: December 20, 2022
Service: January 6th, 2023, Grant Ame Church, Chicago, Illinois

2002/2007

Tamika Mcdowell-Randolph
Died: May 4, 2023
Service: May 19, 2023, Upper Shady Grove Baptist Church, Wellford, South Carolina

2011

Austra Ranée McCants West
Died: April 9th, 2023
Service: April 22, 2023, Cook Brothers Funeral Directors Chapel, Fairburn, Georgia

2012

Morgan Ashlee-Carrington (Maite) Stewart
Died: December 6, 2022
Service: December 15, 2022, Christian Life Center-Tinley Park Campus, Tinley Park, Illinois

2018

Gabrielle Nicole Cleveland
Died: July 19, 2023
Service: July 27, 2023, Willie A. Watkins Douglasville Chapel, Douglasville, Georgia

2020

Lauren D. Hicks
Died: February 11, 2023
Service: April 20, 2023



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