



**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

# **AFAM** *at* **50**

*Extending Our Reach*

**FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2022**

1:00 p.m. – 9:00p.m.



**Northwestern  
University**

# AFAM<sup>at</sup>50

*Extending Our Reach*

## *Planning Committee*

Charlene Carruthers

Meghan Haynes

Charina Herrera

CJ Jones

Karina Karbo-Wright

JM Nimocks

Mary Pattillo

Nitasha Sharma

Tracy Vaughn-Manley

As we celebrate AFAM @ 50 please use #nuafam50 if you post any photos, memories, tributes, or other comments.

# AFAM<sup>at</sup>50

*Extending Our Reach*

## *Greetings from the Chair*

Welcome and Welcome Back! We are delighted that you are joining us for **AFAM @ 50: Extending Our Reach** to commemorate 50 years of African American Studies at Northwestern University.

The African American Studies Department was born of the struggle and demands of students to create space on campus for the research and teaching of Black history, literature, arts, culture, politics, and social life, and to address that research to the aims of Black liberation. The May 3, 1968, peaceful takeover of the university's Bursar's Office by more than 100 students resulted in the May 4th Agreement, in which the University recognized "the importance of expanding studies of [B]lack history and [B]lack culture." Students' diligent leadership and vision turned their initial demands for "a Black Studies Course" into plans for a full academic department.



On October 18, 1971, in the minutes of the Northwestern University Board of Trustees, the Chancellor reported the "Establishment of The Department of Afro-American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences." In March of 1972, Lerone Bennett Jr.—celebrated editor of *Ebony* magazine, and author of *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America 1619-1962*—was announced as the first Department Chair. Courses began in the Fall of 1972.

The early years of African American Studies at Northwestern were contested, rocky, and underfunded. Novelist and literary scholar Leon Forrest was a stalwart leader and champion of the department during this time. He served on the faculty from 1973 until his untimely passing in 1997. Professor Forrest was Chair for over a decade and oversaw the establishment of the undergraduate major in African American Studies in 1982. Department faculty built on this foundation to create the PhD program, which accepted its first cohort in 2006.

Today, we are a robust and respected campus unit with world-renowned faculty, brilliant graduate and undergraduate students, a dedicated staff, and many allies and affiliates across the university.

We give honor and respect to all the people who did the work and made the sacrifices for us to exist today. We are proud that members of our community **extend the reach** of the department through the utilization of African American Studies frameworks and ideas in their families, communities, organizations, and jobs, and in their political and activist work. We pledge to build knowledge and train students in service of Black life for the next 50 years and beyond.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Pattillo".

Mary Pattillo  
Harold Washington Professor of Sociology and African American Studies  
Chair, Department of African American Studies

# AFAM<sup>at</sup>50

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**BLOCK MUSEUM AUDITORIUM**  
1:00PM - 6:00PM

**1:00PM - 1:30PM**

**Welcome and History**

Mary Pattillo, Chair, African American Studies  
Adrian Randolph, Dean, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences  
Charla Wilson, Archivist for the Black Experience at Northwestern

**1:30PM - 2:30PM**

**Beginnings**

**Moderated by Charlene Carruthers - AFAM PhD Student**

Clarence Bourne '83 - First African American Studies Major  
Ayesha Hakeem '72 - African American Studies Student Before the Major  
La TaSha Levy PhD '13 - First Class of PhD Students  
Charles Payne PhD '76 - Former African American Studies Faculty and Chair  
Marcus Poole '74 - FMO Education Committee Member  
Michelle Falls Sykes '84 - Second African American Studies Major

**2:45PM - 3:45PM**

**Extensions #1: A Conversation with AFAM Alums**

**Moderated by Alicia Webb, AFAM Major**

Andrew Golden '21 - Sports Reporter, *The Washington Post*  
Gretchen Wollert McLennon '97 - President and CEO, Ballet Memphis  
Dana Nickson '11 - Assistant Professor, University of Washington  
Torri Stuckey '04 - Head of North American Rail, bp

**3:45PM - 4:45PM**

**Extensions #2: A Conversation with AFAM Alums**

**Moderated by Alex Weheliye, AFAM Faculty Member**

Michael Collins '07 - Chief of Staff to Chief Diversity Officer, Google  
Eliza Gonring '21 - Coordinator, Prison and Neighborhood Arts Program  
Calvin Holmes '87 - CEO, Chicago Community Loan Fund  
Tara Stringfellow '07 - Poet, Author, Storyteller

**5:00PM - 5:45PM**

**Virtual Keynote: "Ziwe Returns"**

**Ziwe Fumudoh '14 - Comedian, Writer, Actress**

Introduction by E. Patrick Johnson, Dean, School of Communication  
In conversation with Karina Karbo-Wright and Onyekaorise Chigbogwu

**5:45PM - 6:00PM**

**Closing Remarks**

Marquis Bey, Assistant Professor of African American Studies

*Panelists & Keynote*

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**6:00PM - 9:00PM - DJ Reception and Awards Ceremony**  
**NORRIS UNIVERSITY CENTER - LOUIS ROOM**

**6:15PM - Reception Welcome**  
Meghan Haynes '01

**6:20PM: Black National Anthem and selection**  
Northwestern Community Ensemble (NCE) accompanied by Kent Brooks

**6:30PM: Dinner and Fellowship**  
Menu: Jerk chicken, vegetarian jambalaya, vegetarian red beans and rice, vegetarian collard greens, corn bread, peach cobbler, bread pudding  
Beverage: Wine, beer, and spirits from Black-owned vendors, plus soft drinks and water

**7:00PM: Program**  
*Tribute Video Highlights*

*Undergraduate and Inaugural Alumni Awards*  
presented by Tracy Vaughn-Manley

*Graduate Student Awards*  
presented by John Márquez

*Special Recognitions*  
presented by Martha Biondi

*Department Donors Recognition*  
presented by Charina Herrera

*Department Name Announcement*  
presented by kihana ross

*Acknowledgments*  
presented by Mary Pattillo

*Dance Performance*  
Black Dance Collaboration from Refresh and Fusion  
Introduced by JM Nimocks

**7:45PM: Sounds by DJ Bonita Appleblunt**

**9:00PM: Closing Remarks**  
JM Nimocks

*Reception & Awards Ceremony*

# Ziwe Fumudoh

## Keynote Speaker



Ziwe is a talented comedian, writer, and actress, who has taken the Internet by storm and captured audiences nationwide with her signature candor, wit, and salient commentary on race and politics in America. Critically acclaimed by *The New York Times*, *TIME*, and *Variety*, the multi-hyphenate comedic voice of 2020 garnered attention during the early months of the pandemic with her provocative and hilarious interviews on her Instagram Live & YouTube talk series, *Baited*. The show featured interviews full of hard truths with the likes of Caroline Calloway, Alison Roman, Rose McGowan, and Jeremy O. Harris.

Ziwe has an impressive career history in the television and comedy fields; she has guest starred on HBO's *Succession* and Apple TV+'s *Dickinson* and voiced roles on CBS All Access' *Tooning Out the News*, Fox's *The Great North*, and Showtime's *Our Cartoon President*. She was previously a Story Editor on *Dickinson* and Writer on Showtime's *Desus & Mero*, Comedy Central's *The Colbert Report*, *The Onion*, and BET's *The Run-down with Robin Thede*. Ziwe has built a fanbase in the podcast space as well, as a co-host of Crooked Media's *Hysteria*. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Ziwe also hosted the hit live event, "Pop Show," where she performed original pop songs and consistently sold out Brooklyn's Bell House.

Ziwe is currently writing a much-anticipated book of essays, entitled *The Book of Ziwe*, slated for release this fall, and Season 2 of her A24 produced late-night variety sketch show, *Ziwe*, premiered in Spring 2022. As one of *TIME*'s 100 Next Gen Leaders, her refreshing approach to broadcast journalism represents the renaissance of late-night. Additionally, Ziwe is in the studio recording new original music, which she plans to share later this year.

Ziwe is based in Brooklyn, NY and originally hails from Lawrence, Massachusetts. Ziwe graduated from Northwestern's School of Communication in 2014 with a double major in RTVF and African American Studies and a minor in English.

# Carolyn Strong

## Award Recipient

Winner of the Inaugural  
African American Studies Alumni Award



Dr. Carolyn Strong is a motivational educator with an ardent belief in equity and anti-racist practices. She has been described as a cultural light bringer with plenty of shade as well as a firebrand for the culture. An educator with more than 15 years of experience working with inner-city youth, she is currently serving as the Dean of Students in a high school serving more than 1,200 young people. Passionate about educational equity and rewriting society's often inaccurate narrative of Black women and girls, Dr. Strong strives to empower administrators, teachers, and students to exemplify these values on a daily basis.

Dr. Strong holds Master's degrees in both Curriculum and Educational Leadership and an Ed.D. in Curriculum and Social Inquiry. Dr. Strong is the author of *Black Girl Blues: Small Group Sessions, Activities and Discussions to Combat Intra-racial Bullying* (2014), a book that has been utilized as both an alternative to suspension and small group intervention in schools across the United States and parts of Canada.

Dr. Strong enjoys traveling to national conferences and presenting on a host of topics, ranging from cultural competence in schools to equitable discipline and conflict resolution. She has written and designed several courses for the Illinois Principal's Association Ed Leaders Network. Those course titles include Anti-racist Education and Bias and Microaggressions in the Classroom. In 2020, she co-founded Centering Sisters, an organization dedicated to unapologetically centering the needs of Black women and girls. Heralded as an expert on bullying signs and symptoms, Dr. Strong has appeared on ABC News, as well as a plethora of national panels regarding culturally relevant discipline and anti-racist school environments.

Dr. Strong is a true lover of literature. When she is not reading, she can be found working on her podcast, *Strong Conversations, Hot Takes From a Cultural Firebrand* where she has candid conversations about topics and issues impacting Black people and the education system.

# "Beginnings" Panelists



## **Clarence Bourne '83**

Clarence Bourne currently serves as Managing Director of Loop Capital Markets as an Investment Banker in the Public Finance Division. Prior to joining Loop, he spent 23 years at JP Morgan and has over 35 years of experience in banking and municipal finance. Clarence founded the Dora Bourne Scholarship Award Program at Hearst Elementary School K-8 in 2003, which annually awards the school's top two graduates for academic excellence. He currently serves as Director of the African American Museum in Philadelphia, Director of the Chicago Summer Business Institute, Chairman Emeritus of the DuSable Museum of African American History, and past Director of the NU Alumni Association. Clarence holds a B.A. from Northwestern University and an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis, where he was awarded the Consortium for Graduate Study in Management Fellowship.



## **Ayesha Hakeem '72**

Ayesha Hakeem is Executive Director of the Sankofa Youth Enrichment Program, a non-profit organization that seeks to connect African American Youth to their history and cultural heritage to improve self-esteem. The Sankofa Youth Enrichment Program is a culturally sensitive social and emotional skills building program that seeks to reduce violence and promote positive youth development. As the founder and Executive Director of the Sankofa Youth Enrichment Program, she brings her vast experience to the objective of engaging African American youth with African and African American history and culture in ways that enrich and expand life possibilities. She is a retired Civil Rights lawyer with over 20 years of legal experience. Ayesha is also an educator, who has taught African and African American history at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Ayesha received her B.A. and M.A. from Northwestern University and her Juris Doctorate from DePaul University.



## **Dr. La TaSha Levy, PhD '13**

Dr. La TaSha Levy is a Black Studies scholar and assistant professor in the Department of American Ethnic Studies at the University of Washington – Seattle. Her research and teaching interests include Black intellectual traditions, African American politics, Black Women's Studies and racism and resistance in the United States. In 2015, she taught one of the first college courses on #BlackLivesMatter and has since expanded resources for educators to understand and teach recent movements in historical context. TaSha is the founder of [www.blackstarrising.com](http://www.blackstarrising.com), a Black history curricula and consulting enterprise focused on key pillars of Black Studies – relevant education, cultural intelligence, and antiracism. She provides professional development training and Black history curricula for school districts and collaborates with dedicated teachers on K-12 instruction in Black Studies and Ethnic Studies. TaSha also serves as a facilitator for *A Long Talk About the Uncomfortable Truth* – an antiracism activation experience. In 2006, TaSha enrolled in the Ph.D. program in African American Studies at Northwestern University and was a member of the first cohort of doctoral students. She is also a proud "Turnerite" (in honor of James Turner, MA '68).



# "Beginnings" Panelists



## **Charles Payne, PhD '76**

Charles M. Payne is the Henry Rutgers Distinguished Professor of African American Studies at Rutgers University- Newark where he also directs the Joseph Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Research. He is a sociologist whose interests include urban education and school reform, continuous improvement research, social inequality, and the civil rights movement. His books include *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Education*; and *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. He is co-editor of the forthcoming *Dignity-Affirming Education: Cultivating 'Somebodiness' in Students and Educators* (Teachers College Press, May, 2022). He expects to finish *When The World Comes for Your Children: Defending Black Children After the Age of Trump* this fall. He is also working on a sequel to *So Much Reform*. He has taught at Northwestern University, Duke, Southern University and Williams College and served briefly as Chief Education Officer for Chicago Public Schools.



## **Marcus Poole '74**

Marcus Poole is a Business Consultant and Attorney with over 40 years of experience in Small Business Development and Telecommunications Consulting. Mr. Poole began his career while still in college, working for JAB Communications, a Black communications Think-Tank. Mr. Poole graduated from Law School in 1978, and moved to New York City, where he spent four years at Group W Cable, working in regulatory affairs and New Services Development. Following Group W, he spent two years as President of The Channel Black, a Cable TV Programming company, and three years as a principal at The Blak Game Group, the producer of a Black Trivia board game. Mr. Poole holds a B.A. in Communications from Northwestern University (1974) and a J.D. from Case Western Reserve University (1978). Mr. Poole has three adult children and currently resides in Cleveland, Ohio, with his wife, Roberta.



## **Dr. Michelle Falls Sykes '84**

Dr. Michelle Falls Sykes is dedicated to improving health outcomes and educating patients and students. Like her grandfather, Dr. Arthur Grandpre Falls, Sr. (NU Medical School Class of 1924), Michelle became a physician. She received her medical degree from New Jersey Medical School and completed her Pediatric Postdoctoral Fellowship through Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons. As Director of the Black Infant Mortality Reduction Resource Center, she significantly decreased the rate of premature births among Black women in New Jersey. At Vital Decisions, Dr. Sykes coached parents of terminally ill children to better understand their medical options and achieve memorable end of life experiences. Currently, she inspires students as Adjunct Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at County College of Morris in New Jersey.

# "Extensions 1" Panelists



## Andrew Golden '21

Andrew Golden is a sports reporter at *The Washington Post* covering the Washington Nationals after having served as an intern covering the Washington Commanders. Before working at the *Post*, he interned at the *Chicago Tribune* and *The Kansas City Star*. Andrew graduated from Northwestern in 2021 with a double major in journalism and African American Studies. He earned honors in African American Studies after writing his senior thesis on the racialization and masculinization of Althea Gibson and Serena Williams in sports media. He's originally from Reisterstown, Maryland, about 30 minutes outside of Baltimore, so he's glad that he's still an hour away from home and can drive back to his parents' house for dinner when he runs out of groceries at his apartment in D.C.



## Gretchen McLennon '97

Gretchen Wollert McLennon was named President and CEO of Ballet Memphis in August 2020. Entering executive leadership of a legacy arts institution during unprecedented and challenging times has bolstered Gretchen's unwavering commitment to bold and audacious leadership reinforced by strategic, long-range planning. In 2017, Gretchen founded her consulting practice, DI Studio, to leverage her over 15 years in the philanthropic and non-profit sectors. Gretchen's facilitation supports organizations in optimizing their capacity and program practices in innovative ways. She has worked with clients in Minneapolis, Atlanta, Chicago and Wisconsin on projects ranging from strategic planning to leadership coaching and organizational culture realignment. Gretchen serves on several local and regional boards, including SlingShot Memphis, The Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis, Memphis Tourism and Travel, and South Arts. A native Memphian, Gretchen has a BA in African American Studies from Northwestern and an MBA from Wake Forest University.



## Dana Nickson '11

Dana Nickson, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of education equity and justice in leadership, policy, and politics at The University of Washington. Dana studies the intersections of racial demographic change, politics of place, and families' educational agency and advocacy in U.S. metropolitan regions. Her research specifically centers Black families and students' diverse knowledge systems and educational experiences. Dana is the 2021 recipient of the American Education Research Association's Education Policy and Politics Outstanding Dissertation Award and a proud graduate of NU's African American Studies Department. Her time as an African American Studies major has been integral to her commitment to research that supports Black families' and communities' educational justice efforts.



## Torri Stuckey '04

Torri Stuckey graduated from Northwestern University in 2004 with a major in Communications and minor in African American Studies, and as a four-year letterman for the Wildcats football team. He currently serves as the Head of North American Rail at bp. In addition to his primary role as a group leader, he utilizes his passion for diversity, equity & inclusion to challenge the status quo and create step change within the organization. Since graduating, Torri has also published multiple books including, *Impoverished State of Mind*, *When the Music Stops*, and *His Dough, Her Cookie*, all under his independent publishing company—Cover Three Publishing. Much of Torri's work aside from this revolves around mentoring the next generation and spending quality time with his wife and four children.

# "Extensions 2" Panelists



## **Michael Collins '07**

Michael Collins is a talent and DEI leader who is passionate about creating sustainable inclusive and equitable company cultures. He currently serves as the Chief of Staff to the Chief Diversity Officer at Google, after spending two years leading diversity for Google's Cloud organization. Prior to joining Google, he was a management consultant at Accenture focused on organizational strategy and change management. He began his career as a researcher at a DEI think-tank and advisory group. Michael earned his BA from Northwestern University and his MA from Columbia University - both in African American Studies. He received his MBA from Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management. Raised in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, he currently lives in Brooklyn, NY, with too few Black neighbors and too many Black sweaters.



## **Eliza Gonring '21**

Eliza Gonring is an abolitionist organizer currently residing in Chicago. They began their entry into social movement work as a student organizer her freshman year. Her abolitionist work started with hosting student-prisoner correspondence nights her junior year and she was a founding member of NU Community Not Cops. Currently, they work full time with the Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project, a visual arts and education project that connects teaching artists and scholars to incarcerated students at Stateville Maximum Security Prison through classes, workshops, a policy think tank, and guest lectures. They also serve as a mentor for Dissenters, an organization that supports youth in fighting against militarism and imperialism. In her free time, they continue to develop their herbalism practice, make playlists, and play video games.



## **Calvin Holmes '87**

Calvin L. Holmes has served as the President of Chicago Community Loan Fund (CCLF) since 1998. CCLF is a nonprofit, U.S. Treasury certified Community Development Financial Institution with \$140 million in assets that provides responsible financing and technical assistance for community stabilization and development efforts that benefit low- to moderate-income neighborhoods throughout metropolitan Chicago. Holmes is a past Chairman of Community Development Advisory Board-CDFI Fund (appointed by President Obama) and currently serves on the U.S. Bank National Community Advisory council, PNC Bank Advisory Board (Illinois) and the advisory board of the Chase New Markets Corporation. Further, Holmes also serves as Vice Chair of the newly-formed African American Alliance of CDFI CEOs, which aims to leverage its members' resources to reduce the American racial wealth gap. In 2021, Holmes led CCLF to receive a \$10 million donation from Mackenzie Scott to further racial economic justice. Holmes holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning, with a concentration in real estate finance, from Cornell University and a bachelor's degree in African American Studies from Northwestern University.



## **Tara Stringfellow '07**

Poet, former attorney, Northwestern University MFA graduate, and semifinalist for the Fulbright Fellowship, Tara M. Stringfellow has written for *Collective Unrest*, *Minerva Rising*, *Jet Fuel Review*, *Women Arts Quarterly Journal*, and *Apogee Journal*, among other publications. She graduated from Northwestern with majors in African American Studies and English. After having lived in Okinawa, Ghana, Chicago, Cuba, Spain, Italy, and Washington, DC, she moved back home to Memphis, where she sits on her porch swing every evening with her hound, Huckleberry, listening to records and chatting with neighbors.



# Thank You!

The Block Museum  
Norris University Center  
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences  
Donors to African American Studies  
Suzette Denose  
Tyla Landry  
MGPG Events

Program designed by TS Design Studio

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