University of South Florida

INSTITUTE ON BLACK LIFE
and
THE CENTER FOR AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA

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IBL Newsletter
Fall 2017 – Spring 2018
From the Director:
Endings, Beginnings, and New Paths

When I began my journey as the third Director of the Institute on Black Life in 2006, I understood that IBL was founded on the idea that the histories, aspirations, dreams and achievements of people of African descent were all worthy of scholarly inquiry and critical to a complete and comprehensive education. Hence, for the last twelve years IBL has been an intellectual site for exploration and celebration of Black life and culture around the globe. With the support of staff and faculty, I sought to create symposia that included a rich and interdisciplinary collection of authors, artists, and fascinating speakers who examined compelling topics. During the fall semesters, the Sankofa Speakers Series offered weekly presentations by USF faculty for student audiences in both undergraduate and graduate courses. Two years ago, in collaboration with the USF Black Faculty and Staff Association, IBL initiated the “Freedom and Justice Film Series” as a unique contribution to Black Emphasis month. I also knew that historically, IBL had served as an important vehicle in the creation of linkages between USF and local community institutions and in linkages between diverse Black communities around the world. To that end, I was very proud to complete community-based projects on local after-school programs funded by the Florida Department of Education and a project in Buea, Cameroon, funded by the U.S. Department of State Citizen’s Exchange program. It has also been exceedingly rewarding to contribute to student success through IBL’s robust scholarship program and to work with donors who inspire and encourage our students. My journey as IBL Director has now ended. I am very excited to return to life as a faculty member, a community anthropologist and scholar of Africana Studies.

I have been extremely fortunate to work with Liz Dunham for the last six years. With her amazing creative mind and her enthusiasm for our work, Liz has made an outstanding contribution to every project we have endeavored to bring to life. I am sure that everyone on the 2nd floor of FAO will miss her as she moves on to her next adventure. Thank you, Liz, for inspiring me to soar every single day!

My deepest gratitude to faculty, staff and students who have supported IBL during my tenure as Director. Your generous contributions of time, ideas, and enthusiasm, have guided me through twelve years of exciting challenges!

The tremendous mission and vision of the Institute on Black Life will continue through the very capable leadership of Dr. Fenda Akiwumi, geographer and scholar of African history and culture. Welcome Dr. Akiwumi!

Cheryl Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Iris A. Elijah, “The Value of the Africana Studies Degree”
BA, USF Africana Studies/Economics 2008, J.D., FIU College of Law 2011

In 2015, Ms. Elijah became the first African-American attorney in the history of the State University System of Florida’s Board of Governors. She is currently the Assistant General Counsel, State University System of the Florida Board of Governors. Iris was named the University of South Florida 2017 Outstanding Young Alumna.

Maya Brown, “Activism: Advocate! Vote! Run!”
BA Africana Studies and Sociology

Maya is the Executive Assistant to the Hillsborough County State Attorney and Principal of MB Strategies, LLC - a political and nonprofit consulting and strategy firm. Maya was involved on campus as a member of several student organizations and held leadership positions. She was inducted into the Dean's Student Leadership Society of the College of Arts and Sciences.

In 2017, Maya founded Hillsborough County Young Black Progressives, Inc. a nonpartisan organization committed to legislative advocacy, voter education and engagement, and training millennials of color for public service.

Nicole Sealey
Africana Studies and English ’01 and MLA 2007
William H. Scheuerle Distinguished Humanities Graduate Award

Born in St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. and raised in Apopka, Florida, Nicole is the author of Ordinary Beast and The Animal After Whom Other Animals Are Named, winner of the 2015 Drinking Gourd Chapbook Poetry Prize. Her other honors include an Elizabeth George Foundation Grant, the Stanley Kunitz Memorial Prize from The American Poetry Review, a Daniel Varoujan Award and the Poetry International Prize, as well as fellowships from CantoMundo, Cave Canem, MacDowell Colony and the Poetry Project. Her work has appeared in The New Yorker and elsewhere. Nicole also holds an MFA in creative writing from New York University. She is the executive director of the Cave Canem Foundation, Inc.
### Institute on Black Life Scholarship Awardees 2018-2019

#### Ruth & Jerry Bell Endowed Scholarship
- Ciara Monroe - Behavioral Healthcare
- Serene Fields - Dance
- Aqueaya Isham - DEA/PNR
- Tawana Jerome - ESB/BCS
- Hiwot Zewdie - Biology/Psychology

#### Ivory Club Scholarship
- Trinity Daley - Russian
- Aham (Francis) Ikeokwu, Jr. - Business/Accounting
- Jonathan Jean - CHM Biology
- Tawana Jerome - Engineering
- Ngozichukwuka Agu - Public Health

#### Bank of America
- Angelique Diaz-Torres - Criminology

#### Xerox Endowed Scholarship
- Shaheim Ricketts - Business
- Aham Francis Ikeokwu, Jr. - DEA/PAC

#### Robert Lewis Allen Memorial Scholarship
- Kiona Edwards - Psychology
- Ariana Cook - English
- Zionna Wilson - POL
- Betty Maxi - CHM/BMS

#### Catherine & John Lott Brown Endowed Scholarship
- Kalen Hyde—DEA/PMS
- Aham (Francis) Ikeokwu, Jr. - Business/Accounting
- Anuoluwapo Aderinwale - Nursing
- Kayla Halls - DEA/BEC
- Jonathan Jean - CMS/BMS
- Ebonie Crittenden - DEA/SPBA
  (Athletic Training)
- Cheyenne Robinson - CHM/BMS

#### Janet and Samuel Okgobaa Memorial Scholarship
- Raven Ball - Bio Medical Science
- Maijah Levert - DEA/EPCH
- Timothy McDowell - DEA/EPME

### AFRICANA STUDIES TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Hiwot Zewdie, Cell & Molecular Biology,

Menkeoma Laura Okoli, MD Public Health with President Judy Genshaft

and Julisa Desir, Public Health

The Institute on Black Life administers a number of scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students that were established to provide academically talented students, from diverse backgrounds, the opportunity to study at the University of South Florida. Visit the IBL webpage: [http://www.ibl.usf.edu/Scholarship](http://www.ibl.usf.edu/Scholarship)
Ciara Monroe, will graduate in December 2018 with a degree in Behavioral Healthcare. Simultaneously, she is pursuing a minor in Africana Studies. “I have always been interested in the plight of marginalized minorities. However, my passion intensified when I selected my minor and took some of the most rigorous, yet captivating courses in the history of my academic career. Upon graduating with my bachelors degree, I will go on to pursue a master degree in mental health counseling. Once I have acquired my masters degree, I will go on to become a licensed mental health counselor. I now understand the importance and necessity of behavioral healthcare professionals of color.”

Hiwot Zewdie is a third year undergraduate pursuing a B.S. in Cell and Molecular Biology and Psychology. She is a member of the Dean’s Student Leadership Society in the College of Arts and Sciences. Hiwot currently serves as the President of the GloBull Ambassador Program, a program dedicated to sustaining a global community at the university by encouraging students to seek out international experiences.

SERENE FIELDS (class of 2020) is a proud dance major and the first Fine Arts student to receive the Ruth & Jerry Bell Endowed Scholarship. Currently employed by USF’s College of the Arts, this status not only gives her the opportunity to network among the school of dance, music, and theater, this prospect also allows Serene to naturally appeal to a wide range of demographic audiences and actively support diversity in the arts through performance and community service. As a contemporary-based artist, Serene aspires to create choreography that reflects the hearts of this generation and pours passion into the art form.
Institute on Black Life and the Center for Africa and the Diaspora Annual Symposium

The Institute on Black Life sponsored and co-sponsored events with the College of Arts & Science, the USF Humanities Institute, Black Faculty & Staff Association and the USF Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Equal Opportunity

March 20–Freedom & Justice Film Series

TAMPA TECHNIQUE: Rise, Demise and Remembrance of Central Avenue

Documentary: Travis Bell, Ph.D.,
USF Department of Communications

Attorney Kirk Bailey, Dr. Roy Kaplan and Dr. Cheryl Rodriguez discuss social justice issues with students at the Freedom & Justice Forum.
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