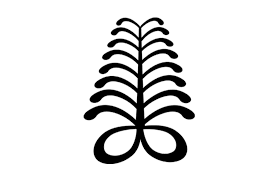
***“The Political, Social, and Creative Power of Black Women in Collectives”***

Fifth Annual

Black Women in Academia Conference

February 17, 2021

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Hosted by the ***Sister-in-Session Caucus of James Madison University***

Supported by JMU’s Office of Access & Inclusion and Office of the Provost

Sisters-in-Session is happy to partner with the 11th Annual African, African American Diaspora Studies Interdisciplinary Conference whose theme is “Movement(s), Collectives, and Collectivity”. Information may be found at: <https://sites.lib.jmu.edu/aaadjmu/>

This year’s conference focuses on the sustaining power of Black Women in collectives and in collective action as rooted in a long history of Black women movements, evidenced in their continual political organizing that has supported positive efforts for greater inclusion, and sustained by transformational self-care practices.

**Registration Link:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E4FA9AE2FA0F49-black>

*The deadline is Friday, February 12, 2021*

Keynote Speaker:

The Honorable Sharon Weston Broome

Mayor, Baton Rouge, LA

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“***Witnessing the Growing Political Power of Women in National Movements.”***

Sharon Weston Broome is a firm believer in achieving progress through inclusion, innovation and information. She is the first female Mayor-President of the City of Baton Rouge & East Baton Rouge Parish, LA and has served as a Council Member, A Louisiana State Representative and a Louisiana State Senator – where she served as Speaker Tempore in the House and President Por Tempore in the Senate. Mayor Broome has been recognized for her service and dedication by the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the American Heart Association, Every Child Matters, and National Congress of Black Women.

**Brief Conference Overview**

8:00 – 8:15 a.m. Zoom Link Opens

8:15 – 8:50 a.m. Conference Opening

9:00 am – 10:15 a.m. Concurrent Sessions [Selection sign-up required]

Session 1: Preserving Our Social and Creative Energy in Collectives

(Special guests: Wintergreen Women Writers Collective)

Session 2: Movement in Blackness: Black Women’s Mental Wellness in the Academy

Session 3: Revolutionary and Transformational Healing: A Collective Act

Session 4: Black Women Movements: The Legacy of Uplift

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Keynote Speaker:

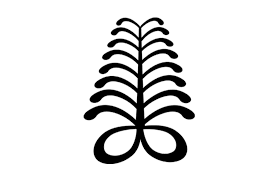
Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, Baton Rouge, LA

“Witnessing the Growing Political Power of Women in National Movements”

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Wrap-up

***Sisters-in-Session*** is the initial name given to a gathering of JMU Black women following a presentation at a JMU Diversity Conference on student led research that sought to identify diverse women on campus for student support. The numbers were so low that connecting and organizing became essential for our sustainability.

The ***Black Women in the Academy Conference*** is organized by the Sisters-in-Session Caucus who seek to affirm the contributions of Africana women to higher education and to establish space for seeking answers to dilemmas of inclusion. The epistemology of Black women “knowing” comes from a deeper cultural perspective that supports historical practices of black women sitting around the kitchen table, on the stoop watching their children play or at the community gathering spots. These are places of not simply connecting and supporting but of theory-building about Black women’s lived experiences. This informs our conference building perspective where our experiences, technologies, and strategies are highlighted through processes of storytelling, reimaging, conceptualizing through black body experiences, and scholarship. By design sessions are small to promote engagement. Black women are more powerful together than alone.  The isolation can be overwhelming but connecting increases visibility and self-care.

The ***AYA*** (fern) has been established as our symbol -

Symbol of endurance and resourcefulness

The fern is a hardy plant that can grow in difficult places. It suggests an individual who wears this symbol has endured many adversities and outlasted much difficulty. (*Willis, The Adinkra Dictionary*)

**Session descriptions with presenters**

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| **Session** | **Description/Presenter(s)** |
| **1** | ***Preserving Our Social and Creative Energy in Collectives***  Moderator: Joanne Gabbin, PhD, Furious Flower Director  Presenters:   * Dr. Daryl Dance, Professor Emerita, University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University * Dr. Trudier Harris, University Distinguished Research Professor, Department of English, the University of Alabama * Ms. Opal Moore, Independent Scholar, Poet, Fiction Writer, Essayist   The panel will focus on the 33 years of the Wintergreen Women Writers Collective, addressing the factors impacting their beginning, what binds them together, and the lessons learned over the years at annual gatherings. |
| 2 | ***Movement in Blackness: Black Women’s Mental Wellness in the Academy***  Presenters:   * Celeste Thomas, Senior Adviser to the President for Diversity and Inclusion and the Director of Multicultural Student Services, EMU * Traci Ballou-Broadnax, Clinician and Coordinator of Multicultural Student Outreach, JMU Counseling Center * Briana Gaines, JMU THRIVE Coordinator & PhD Student in Counseling & Supervision Program * Zenobia Lee-Nelson, Senior Communication Studies major, JMU Undergraduate Student   As four national crises converge, Black women are experiencing greater stress in the academy as the personal and professional intersect. We are challenged to meet the demands of self, family, community while also serving students and supporting each other. What are our realities? What are our strategies for thriving? |
| 3 | ***Revolutionary and Transformational Healing: A Collective Act***   Presenters:   * Marsha E. Mays-Bernard, JMU AVP Stu Affairs & Multicultural Services * Shanza A. Isom, Assistant Professor, JMU Social Work   Black women have been integral to the collective well-being of family and community and replicate this in the academy. Revolutionary and transformational healing requires a holistic shift in the way we think and approach our wellness. There’s an acknowledgment that a balance of inner and outer being is necessary in order to heal and ultimately flourish. Collectively, it is a movement that is radical, unapologetic, centering, and communal in practice leading to wholeness not only individually, but as a people. Collective healing calls for us to care for one another, holistically addressing and transforming the impact of oppression on our entire beings and community |
| 4 | ***Black Women Movements: The Legacy of Uplift***   * Nikuyah Walker, Mayor Charlottesville, VA * Amy Lewis, Instructor, Future Faculty Fellow, JMU from Michigan State University * Taylor Geyton, Social Work PhD Student, Morgan State University and JMU Future Faculty Fellow   The historical relevance of Black women’s movements holds significant connections to Black community uplift, especially in response to critical injustices being experienced. The recognition of Black Women as major activist and organizers for addressing local injustices and for gaining political power hold unique currency for engaging issues of personal and community well-being. |

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**Honoring Dr. Iona Black**, posthumously

***Santos Innovation Award***

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***Dr. Iona Black*** was an amazing member of the JMU community as a professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, faculty in the Center for Faculty Innovations, and a beloved member of Sisters-in-Session who passed away unexpectedly in August 2020. Dr. Black conducted research on transition metal complexes in cancer therapy, published widely, and was an internationally known STEM educator and activist. Her efforts with colleagues and students are felt by hundreds of doctors, scientists and students of color with a special focus on the development of Black, Indigenous, and international science students. Dr. Black’s memorial illustrated her generosity of spirit as many stories were shared of how she gave selflessly to others regardless of location or position within the JMU community and internationally. The Center for Faculty Innovations (CFI) recognizes Dr. Iona Black as the 2020 recipient of the***Santos Innovation Award***. CFI was among Dr. Black’s homes on campus as she created a sanctuary for faculty across campus. This award recognizes the intersection of faculty empowerment for self and others through innovations in teaching, scholarship, service, and leadership. Dr. Black’s focus on student professional development is recognized as this award supports the conference participation of graduate students for the SIS and AAAD conferences in Spring 2021. While her physical presence is not among us, her spiritual presence and generosity will always light a path for those left behind.

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**Presenter Information**

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| A picture containing person, wall, smiling, posing  Description automatically generated | ***Daryl Cumber Dance*** is Professor Emerita, University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University. She is the author of three literary studies, including In Search of Annie Drew, the Mother and Muse of Jamaica Kincaid. Her numerous folklore studies such as Honey, Hush!, Shuckin’ and Jivin’, and From My People have resulted in her being dubbed “The Dean of American Folklore.” She has recently turned her attention to fiction and was celebrated locally for completing four new books in 2020 during the pandemic. |
| A close - up of a person smiling  Description automatically generated | **Trudier Harris**is University Distinguished Research Professor, Department of English, the University of Alabama. Her book publications include *Fiction and Folklore: The Novels of Toni Morrison* (1991), *The Scary Mason-Dixon Line: African American Writers and the South* (2009), and *Martin Luther King Jr., Heroism, and African American Literature* (2014). In 2018, she received the Richard Beale Davis Award for Lifetime Achievement in Southern Literary Studies and was awarded a Resident Fellowship to the National Humanities Center. Harris was named the 2018 recipient of the Clarence E. Cason Award for Nonfiction Writing, for which her memoir, *Summer Snow: Reflections from a Black Daughter of the South*(2003), was a deciding factor. |
| A picture containing person, person, smiling, posing  Description automatically generated | **Opal Moore** is a poet, fiction writer and essayist, and author of *Lot’s Daughters*, a collection of narrative poems*.*  Her poems and stories appear in various journals and anthologies, including *The Boston Review; Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry;* *Honey Hush! An Anthology of African American Women’s Humor*, *Trouble & Hope: An Anthology of Poets in Performance and Conversation, The Notre Dame Review*, *Homeplaces: Stories of the South by Women Writers,* and other places. |
|  | ***Celeste R. Thomas*** is currently serving as the Senior Adviser to the President for Diversity and Inclusion and the Director of Multicultural Student Services at Eastern Mennonite University.  Prior to her current position, she served as a Counselor and Coordinator of the Peer Mentor Program at James Madison University.  Additionally, she is co-creator of the non-profit Precious Gems Academy. |
|  | ***Dr. Traci Ballou-Broadnax*** is a clinician and Coordinator of Multicultural Student Outreach at the James Madison University Counseling Center. In addition to her individual work with students, she also coordinates the Multicultural Peer Mentor Program, offers perfectionism and self-compassion therapy groups, and supervises clinicians-in-training. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from Princeton University, and her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Rutgers University. |
|  | ***Briana Gaines*** is a Ph.D. student in the Counseling & Supervision program at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. Briana currently holds a Licensed Associate Counselor (LAC) credential in the state of New Jersey. With a specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy, she has practiced as an outpatient therapist and clinical case manager at a non-profit organization where she worked with underserved and underrepresented populations. Briana’s research interests include trauma, particularly Race-Based Trauma and Vicarious Trauma, as well as Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome. |
| A picture containing person, computer  Description automatically generated | ***Zenobia Lee-Nelson*** is a senior Communication Studies major with a double minor in Women’s, Gender and Sexuality studies and African, African American and Diaspora studies. She is the founder of Shades of Pride, a black and brown based LGBTQ+ organization here at JMU. She is an active advocate and student leader through her organizational and scholarly work. |
|  | ***Marsha E. Mays-Bernard*** is the Associate Vice President for Health and Wellness at JMU which includes the units of JMU’s Counseling Center, the University Health Center, Medical Services and The Well, Orientation and University Recreation. She has a special interest in holistic wellness through the use of multiple modalities. |
| A picture containing person, wall, indoor, smiling  Description automatically generated | ***Shanza A. Isom***, is an Assistant Professor in Social Work at JMU where she serves as Field Director. Her areas of practice and scholarship focus on holistic well-being, and mindfulness practices. Her current research includes multiple aspects of the social work field experience and exploring the COVID-19 experiences of Black students with an emphasis on wellness practices. |
|  | **Nikuyah Walker** has served as Mayor of Charlottesville, VA since 2018 and is a homegrown advocate for racial and social justice. We are happy to welcome her back to our conference. She has a commitment to authentic inclusion, equity, and progress as she helps to move their city to its World Class designation. |
|  | ***Amy Lewis*** is an Assistant Professor of Music Education and African, African American, and Diaspora Studies at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. Previously she was a graduate teaching assistant at Michigan State University in music education and a community activist in Lansing, Michigan with organizations such as Black Lives Matter - Lansing and One Love Global. She was also Future Faculty Fellow at James Madison University. She received the 2019 Black Faculty, Staff, and Administrators Association Emerging Leader Award and was also named the 2015 Illinois Education Association Teacher of the Year. She is an active clinician and guest lecturer on topics pertaining to equity work. Her research interests include Critical Race Theory, antiracism education, and activism within music education |
| A picture containing indoor, person, posing  Description automatically generated | ***Taylor Geyton*** is a Social Work PhD Student, Morgan State University and JMU Future Faculty Fellow. Her dissertation focus is the identity formation or Black women activists. Taylor is the 2020 recipient of the Council on Social Work Education's Council on Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity Doctoral student award. Taylor holds an advanced clinical license in social work in the state of Maryland where she own's and operates a private therapy practice targeted specifically toward the healing needs of Black women. She earned her BSW from Mary Baldwin university, and her MSW from University of Maryland at Baltimore. Taylor is an activist through her scholarship and in her practice and is dedicate to the elevation of Black women's issues. |

**Conference Registration Link:** [**https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E4FA9AE2FA0F49-black**](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E4FA9AE2FA0F49-black)

**Deadline: February 12, 2021**