

# Still We Rise

### Truth, History, Future, Solidarity & Change

BFSA

#### Friday, June 20, 2025

Johns Hopkins University Homewood Glass Pavilion - Levering

# ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION AND THE INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday, June 20, 2025

Today's Juneteenth Program $2$	IRB Ceremony Program 13
BFSA President Welcome Message $\ldots$ 3	About the IRB: Indispensable Role of Blacks $\ \dots \ 14$
JHU President & JHU Provost Message 4	2025 IRB Inductees 14
About the JHU Black Faculty & Staff Association $\ \dots \ 5$	Joel Blankson
The Juneteenth Flag	Shani Mott
What is the Juneteenth Story?	IRB Inductees since 2012 21-22
Author Talk and Book Signing: Lady Brion $\ldots$ 9	Special Acknowledgment
Keynote Speaker: Lou Fields 10	Special Thank You
Invocation Speaker: Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Hathaway, Sr <b>11</b>	
IRB: Indispensable Role of Blacks 12	2025 Juneteenth Planning Committee 25 Lift Every Voice and Sing Back cover
	LIIL EVERY VOICE and Sing Dack COVET

<b>Co-S</b> ponsors and <b>P</b> artners	
Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA)	JHU Office of Human Resources
JHU Office of the President	JHU Office of Government, Community & Economic Partnerships
JHU Office of the Provost	JHU Office of Finance and Administration JHU Staff Advisory Council TOWSON UNIVERSITY Black Faculty and Staff Association
Development and Alumni Relations	
Society of Black Alumni	
JHU Office of Diversity and Inclusion	
JHU Office of the General Counsel	Towson Black Alumni Alliance

Г

THE BLACK FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

# **Annual Juneteenth Celebration** Friday, June 20, 2025

Juneteenth Evening Celebration Overview of Juneteenth Video

Message from **Dr. Opal Lee,** Juneteenth Museum Video

Welcome and Introduction of Black Faculty and Staff Association Leadership

Emcee – **Dr. Iris Turay** Black Faculty and Staff Association Homewood Caucus Co-Chair

BFSA Leadership Remarks Jerrell Bratcher President, Black Faculty and Staff Association

> Call to the Ancestors Gordon "BaBa Soorah" Parks

African Drumming Interlude Brinae Ali & Friends

Invocation and Remarks **Rev. Dr. Alvin Hathaway** 

Musical Selections Singing Sensations Youth Choir, Inc.

*Lift Every Voice & Sing* Singing Sensations Youth Choir, Inc. Juneteenth Performance: Brinae Ali & Friends by Alexandria "Brinae Ali" Bradley

Introduction of Keynote Speaker Dr. Iris Turay

Keynote Address Lou Fields, co-founder and President of the Baltimore African American Tourism Council of MD, Inc.

Acknowledgment of IRB Inductees Calvin L. Smith Jr., IRB Co-Chair and Past President, Black Faculty and Staff Association

Lorraine Smith, IRB CO-Chair and 2023 IRB Inductee

Juneteenth Artistic Performance Set Brinae Ali & Friends

Acknowledgments & Closing Remarks Jerrell Bratcher

> Celebration Through Dance DJ Rod Madd Flava

A heartfelt thank you to all of the minority- and Blackowned businesses, vendors, partners, and sponsors who helped make this program a tremendous success. Your contributions, talent, and partnership are deeply appreciated — we could not have done it without you!



Members of the BFSA extend our gratitude to all the minority and Black-owned businesses, vendors, partners, and sponsors for contributing to the success of this annual program!





A message from **Jerrell Bratcher** President, Black Faculty and Staff Association at JHU/JHM/JHHS

Dear Johns Hopkins and Extended Community,

n behalf of the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA), we proudly commemorate the 160th anniversary of Juneteenth—an enduring celebration of freedom, truth, and resilience. This moment calls us all to pause, reflect, and recommit to the work of equity, justice, and solidarity.

This year's theme, "*Still We Rise*," reminds us that our truth must be defended, our history honored, our future empowered, and solidarity & change must be our diving force. Juneteenth is not only a milestone—it is a movement. A call to action. A living tribute to the journey of Black Americans and a declaration that our stories, our labor, and our lives matter. Legacy lit the torch. We carry it forward.

Since its founding in 1995, BFSA has been a steadfast advocate for inclusion, dignity, and progress at Johns Hopkins. For nearly three decades, we have served as a home for mentorship, cultural celebration, and courageous dialogue. Through initiatives like the Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB) exhibit and induction, equity forums, and advocacy for institutional accountability, BFSA continues to be a cornerstone for belonging and structural change.

Juneteenth is more than a date on the calendar, it's a living tribute to our ancestors' resilience—and a call to action for our collective future. As institutions across the country reevaluate their commitments to diversity, we reaffirm ours—loudly, visibly, and joyfully."

Yet, in a time of rising threats to democracy, civil rights, and truthful education—from book bans to the rollback of DEI policies—the urgency of our work has never been greater.

We invite you—faculty, staff, students, alumni, and allies—to stand with us. Renew or begin your BFSA membership as an annual dues or lifetime membership. Together, we can ensure Johns Hopkins continues to live up to its values—not just in word, but in action.

Membership is open to all members of the Hopkins community who believe in the power of equity, community, and change.

#### **Executive Board and Caucus Leaders**

2024–2025 Jerrell Bratcher, President Calvin L. Smith, Jr., Past President Dr. James Calvin, Faculty Representative Gay Williams, Co-Events Director Reginia Hawkins, Co-Events Director Cordelia Lee, Parliamentarian Sikoka Fret, Community Outreach Chair

Lisa M. Jones, Treasurer

Applied Physics Lab (APL) Caucus

Malaika Wanjihia, Chair

Julian Alford, Rep. | Amaya Butler, Rep.

East Baltimore Caucus (includes JHMI, SOM, SON, BSPH, CCP, JHPIEGO, JH Bayview, Sibley, Suburban):

Lorraine Smith, Interim Chair

Constance Mercer, Representative

Homewood Caucus (includes Eastern Campus, DAR, Keswick, Mt. Washington, CTY, SOE, and Peabody)

Yvette Bryant | Dr. Iris Turay: Co-Chairs

\_\_\_\_\_

Carey Business School (SAIS, Bloomberg Center (Washington, DC), and the School of Government and Policy):

Miller Simmons, Chair

Kerry G. Johnson, Representative





Dear BFSA colleagues and everyone joining us to celebrate Juneteenth,

Today we mark the 160th anniversary of a profound moment in our nation's history. On June 19, 1865 more than two years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation—the last enslaved African Americans in Texas finally learned of their liberation. It is a day that honors resilience and is a testament to the enduring hope and courage of generations who held fast to our nation's founding promise: that all people are created equal.

At Johns Hopkins, we observe Juneteenth not only as a commemoration of a pivotal chapter in the American story, but as a celebration of the\_many contributions that Black faculty, students, and staff have made—and continue to make—across every facet of our institution and world. We offer our heartfelt congratulations to this year's *Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB)* honorees who have shaped our institution in meaningful and lasting ways.

Thank you to the BFSA for your continued partnership and commitment to the Hopkins community and for the IRB's efforts to tell the impactful stories of the people who help make Hopkins the vibrant and innovative place it is.

We wish everyone a joyful, rejuvenating and meaningful Juneteenth holiday and celebration.

With appreciation,

am lo

Ron Daniels President

approcedhenc

Ray Jayawardhana Provost





www.bfsa.jhu.edu | https://jhu.campusgroups.com/bfsa/home/ | e: BFSA@JHU.EDU

#### **BFSA'S Mission**

The mission of the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) is to help foster a culture of oneness for all by serving as an advocate that is dedicated to promoting and enhancing identity and professional welfare and growth through collaborations, community service, education, research, outreach and cultural activities among faculty, staff and students; and to be a critical resource for the continued success of Johns Hopkins in pursuit of its objectives towards an inclusive community by developing and cultivating working relationships with key adminis trators and operating units.

#### **BFSA History and Purpose**

The BFSA was first envisioned during a lunch meeting at the Polo Grill in the Colonnade Baltimore, in early 1995 as seven Hopkins employees, all Black from seven difference departments, who held positions of senior staff or faculty, discussed what they saw as the University's inadequate response to a white staff's physical assault of a Black colleague.

The BFSA continues to serve the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) community by helping to provide an environment where all may feel valued and respected. BFSA acts in the role of an advocate, information resource, provider of networking and professional development opportunities, and community outreach provider for JHU faculty and staff.

The BFSA and the JHU administration have a formal relationship by which communication between and on behalf of employees and administration is facilitated. The BFSA engages in advocacy for Black faculty, students, and staff, host community building events, programs, and initiatives, and curates the Indispensable Role of Blacks exhibit.

The BFSA role is to help ensure the fair and equitable treatment of Blacks at Johns Hopkins University and to be a critical resource for growing inclusivity in pursuit of its objectives towards an inclusive community. We continue to develop and cultivate working relationships with our senior administration and operating units here at Johns Hopkins. We serve as a trusted resource for JHU faculty and staff by providing a forum for meaningful exchanges that identify and address issues of value to us and our community, in and around Johns Hopkins. We also partner with the community to conduct outreach activities and cultural events. We are dedicated to serving you and the community.

Black Faculty &

Staff Association

#### Membership

Membership of the BFSA is open to ALL. The group is an active organization with many exciting events planned for this year. Please find time to join us. You do not need to be a financially current member of the BFSA to participate in our activities or events, but you will find that there are benefits to becoming a financially current member.

You can sign up to become a member by going visiting this link: https://bfsa.jhu.edu/bfsa-membership/

Membership is \$10 annually or \$100 for lifetime membership.

Individuals become 'active members' in good standing upon payment of dues. Members can manage their account information by logging into the BFSA site. If you are unable to login, contact the membership director for assistance. We encourage you to subscribe to the BFSA listserv to keep up to date with our programs, meetings, events, and work.

Since it's the founding in 1995, the BFSA pre-eminently stands as an active organization across this institution with a strong mission, indispensable history, and deep legacy. Our events, programs, and initiatives embody values that embrace members, people, culture, personal enrichment, professional development, advancement, institutional knowledge, resources, and a strong network for advocacy and change across the Johns Hopkins enterprise and ecosystem.

Continued on Page 6





www.bfsa.jhu.edu | https://jhu.campusgroups.com/bfsa/home/ | e: BFSA@JHU.EDU

Black Faculty &

Staff Association

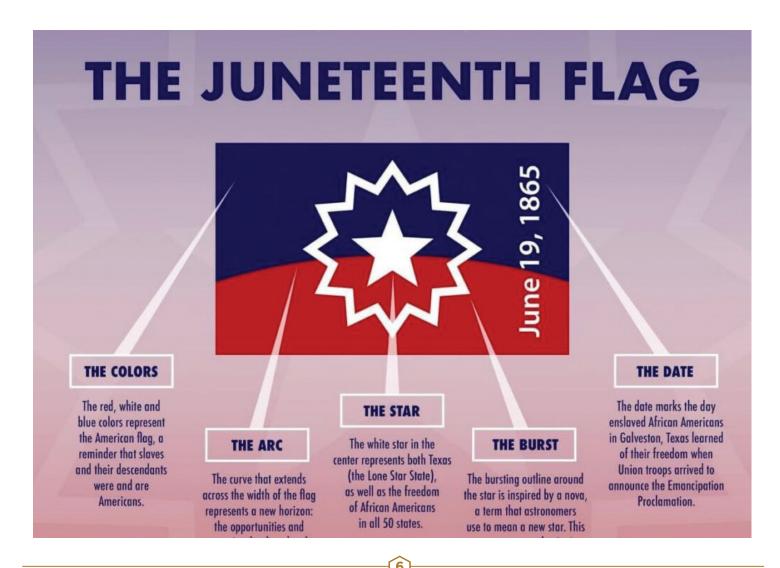
#### Continued from Page 5

#### The BFSA is dedicated to serving members and the Johns Hopkins community.

The BFSA is committed to ensuring that the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) leaders prioritize people, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), and black employees interests at heart while ensuring that learning and working environments, and facilities are free from all forms of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. Membership to join the BFSA is open to ALL faculty and staff, students, and affiliates *(full or part-time)* employed at Johns Hopkins or at Hopkins facilities, regardless of religion, age, race or color, marital status, national origin, disability, gender, or sexual orientation.

All BFSA members are expected to agree and abide by the rules and regulations of the university. Individuals become members in good standing upon payment of dues.

#### All BFSA Caucus meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month.



### What is the Juneteenth Story?

Juneteenth is a historical tipping point for the African American community and the nation, recognizing the monumental moment that ended slavery. On June 19, 1865, Union Major-General Gordon Granger issued General Order #3 in Galveston announcing freedom from slavery in Texas, one of the last places to receive the news.

The date, since dubbed "Juneteenth," is now observed annually as a federal holiday to celebrate the Emancipation Proclamation's enforcement and the liberation of the remainder of the enslaved both in Texas and throughout the newly reformed United States.

#### December 31, 1862

Freedom's Eve, the first Watch Night service was held amongst enslaved and free African Americans at churches and homes, awaiting the news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect.

#### January 1, 1863

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln.

#### March 3, 1865

The creation of the Freedmen's Bureau, a federal agency created to help African Americans transition from slavery to freedom.

#### June 19, 1865

Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, TX, and announced the end of the civil war and the end of slavery.

#### **December 6, 1865**

The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified: Abolition of slavery in the United States.

#### April 6, 1866

Civil Rights Act of 1866, the nation's first civil rights law declaring that all persons born in the United States to be citizens, *"without distinction of race or color; or previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude."* 



The first Juncteenth was celebrated, marking the one-year anniversary of the official end of the US Civil War and slavery.

#### June 19, 1867

The first official Juneteenth celebration took place in Austin, Texas established with the help of the Freedmen's Bureau.

#### June 19, 1868

The 14th Amendment granted African Americans the right of citizenship.

#### February 3, 1868

The 15th Amendment asserted that the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on the account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

#### 1900s

Emancipation Day (Juneteenth) Celebrations.

#### 1950-1960 Civil Rights Era

Public Juneteenth celebrations dwindled in favor of more private celebrations, as the move towards greater freedom for African Americans expanded during the Civil Rights Movement.

Continued on Page 8 >>

To discover more about Juneteenth and the National Juneteenth Museum visit: **nationaljuneteenthmuseum.org** 



### What is the Juneteenth Story?

Continued from Page 7

#### 1965

Voting Rights Act directed the Attorney General to enforce the right to vote for African Americans.

#### May 12-June 24, 1968

The Poor People's Campaign led more than fifty thousand people to gather to commemorate Juneteenth at the Solidarity Day and march on Washington, D.C., inspiring a "spirit of Juneteenth" to be spread across the country in local communities.

#### 1970

A revival of Juneteenth celebrations emerged across the United States in major cities.

#### **January 1, 1980**

Texas is the first state to declare Juneteenth a state holiday led by Al Edwards, a state legislator.

#### 1989

Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1989 prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, and family status.

#### 1994

The era of the "Modern Juneteenth Movement" began when a group of Juneteenth leaders from across the country gathered in New Orleans, LA to work for greater national recognition of Juneteenth, birthing several national Juneteenth organizations.

#### 1997

Through the leadership of Lula Briggs Galloway, President of the NAJL and Rev. Ronald V. Myers, Sr., M.D., Chairman of the NAJL, the U.S. Congress officially passed historic legislation recognizing Juneteenth as "Juneteenth Independence Day" in America.

The first flag representing the Juneteenth holiday was created by Ben Haith, founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation (NJCF).

#### 2014

Juneteenth Historical Marker erected in Galveston by the Texas Historical Commission.

#### 2016

Dr. Opal Lee conducted a symbolic walk from Fort Worth, TX to Washington, D.C., leaving in September 2016 and arriving in Washington in January 2017 to petition to make Juneteenth a federal holiday

#### 2020

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee introduced a resolution recognizing the historical significance of the Juneteenth. Many corporations began recognizing Juneteenth as a company holiday.

#### 2021

The day was recognized as a federal holiday in 2021, when the 117th U.S. Congress enacted and President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law.

#### 2026

8

National Juneteenth Museum is set to open to the public in Fort Worth, TX.



To discover more about Juneteenth and the National Juneteenth Museum visit: **nationaljuneteenthmuseum.org** 

# WRITE TO BE FREE: AUTHOR TALK AND BOOK SIGNING

*Welcome* Jerrell Bratcher President Black Faculty and Staff Association

Introduction of the Guest Author Alicia Wilson, JD Vice President for Civic Engagement & Opportunity

Book Discussion Lady Brion Author and Baltimore Poet Laureate of Maryland; international spoken word artist, activist, organizer, and educator

Fireside Chat, and Question & Answer Session Alicia Wilson, JD

> Closing Remarks Jerrell Bratcher

Lady Brion currently serves as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts and Entertainment District in Baltimore.

In 2024, she was appointed by Governor Wes Moore as the Poet Laureate of Maryland making history as the youngest person and the first spoken word artist to ever hold the prestigious title.



A proud alumna of Howard University, Lady Brion earned her B.A. in Communication and Culture, and later received her MFA in Creative Writing & Publishing Design from the University of Baltimore.

Over the course of her dynamic slam poetry career, she has garnered numerous national accolades, including championships at the 2016 and 2021 National Poetry Slams, the 2017 and 2019 Southern Fried Regional Slams, and the 2019 Rustbelt Regional Slam.

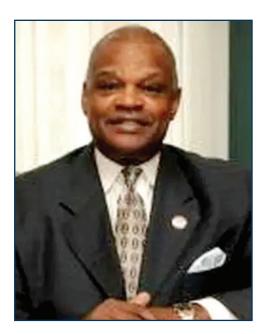
In 2021, she became both the Women of the World Poetry Slam Champion and the International Poetry Slam Champion (Team Slam)—ranking her as the number one woman slam poet in the world.

In addition to her performance career, Lady Brion is the author of the powerful poetry collection and album With My Head Unbowed (2018), a reflection of her voice as a cultural worker committed to justice, equity, and the transformative power of the arts.

A special thank you to Alicia Wilson, Vice President for Economic Development, and Lady Brion, Author and Baltimore's Poet Laureate of Maryland, for making our session truly delightful. Your presence, insights, and artistry elevated the experience for all in attendance.

# THE BLACK FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

# 2025 Keynote Speaker Lou Fields



Lou Fields is a distinguished founder of the Baltimore African American Tourism Council whose life's work has been dedicated to elevating the rich, yet often overlooked, Black history of Maryland. A native of Baltimore, Fields has spent decades championing the stories of African Americans who helped shape the state—and the nation through resistance, resilience, and brilliance.

He is the founder of the Maryland Black Tourism Network and has been a tireless advocate for the preservation of Black historical landmarks throughout the city and state. Through walking tours, public lectures, historical reenactments, and books, Fields has introduced thousands to the enduring legacies of icons such as Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and lesser-known yet equally impactful Baltimore-based abolitionists and entrepreneurs. His recent work sheds light on Maryland's complex relationship with Black freedom struggles, including its role in African American resettlement efforts to Liberia.

He is also a dynamic media personality and host of *The Business Talk Show* on BDX Live, where he discusses economic development, Black entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. His scholarship and advocacy have been featured in the *AFRO-American Newspaper, Bal-timore Magazine*, and on major news outlets such as Fox45, where he has been lauded for his efforts to declare Maryland the true birthplace of American abolitionism.

Fields' work goes beyond historical recovery—it is a call to action. He bridges generations by connecting youth, scholars, and the broader community with their cultural inheritance and civic responsibility. His keynote remarks at this year's Juneteenth Celebration Dinner, themed *"Still We Rise: Truth, History, Solidarity & Change,"* reflect the depth of his commitment to both legacy and liberation.

A griot of modern-day Baltimore, Fields reminds us that history is not just what we remember—it's what we choose to honor, protect, and carry forward.

# ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION Invocation and Remarks Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Hathaway, Sr.

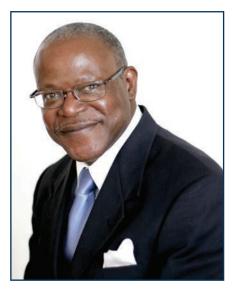
The Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Hathaway, Sr., now retired, was the 10th Pastor in Union Baptist Church's 173-year history, and the fourth longest serving Pastor. He was inducted into the prestigious Morehouse College of Preachers in 2012. He was given an audience with Pope Francis in 2015.

He was inducted into the 2021 Class of *Baltimore Sun's* Business and Civic Hall of Fame. He was recognized in 2021 by *The Daily Record* as an Influential Marylander. The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,

awarded him its Civic Engagement Award in 2022. In 2024 he was inducted into Baltimore City College Hall of Fame, given the Living History Honors by Baltimore City Historical Society and received Visit Baltimore's Bridge Award.

Dr. Hathaway has two terminal degrees: Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion from The North Carolina College of Theology and Doctor of Ministry degree from the United Theological Seminary. He earned his Masters of Arts for Church Ministries and a Certificate in Urban Ministry from St. Mary's Seminary and University.

As the President/CEO of Beloved Community Services Corporation, he passionately pursues a mission of culturally sensitive, culturally relevant and historically accurate community economic development. His extensive experience and commitment to under-served communities are evident throughout his career. He has actively participated in over \$4 billion worth of investments in under-served communities across the nation. His leadership extends to advisory roles on boards such as Urban America, Greenline



Ventures, Harbor Bank CDE and Baltimore Community Lending, contributing his expertise to shape impactful initiatives.

Dr. Hathaway's current focus lies in the Upton Community in West Baltimore, where he is spearheading a strategy to direct more than \$50 million of investment. This investment includes the \$15 million restoration of P.S. 103, the elementary school of Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African American member of the Supreme Court, the \$3 million restoration of the former law office

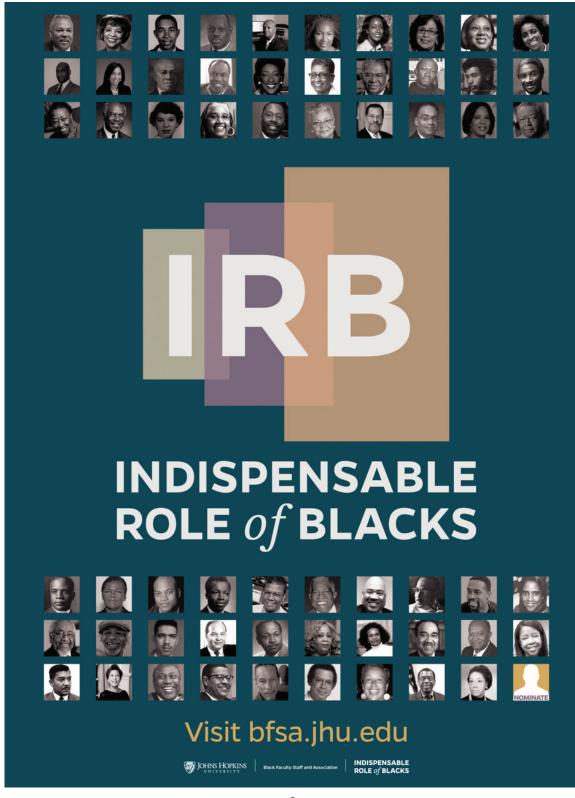
of Juanita Jackson Mitchell, the first African American female to graduate from the University of Maryland Law School, the \$13 million restoration of the Kaufman Storage Facility, a 118 year old continuous business in Upton, and the \$10 million restoration of Douglass Memorial Apartments and the proposed \$15 million restoration of the former School for the Friendless into The National Black Engineers and Innovators Hall of Fame.

He co-founded African Ancestry Neuroscience Research Initiative and is on the Board of Black Men's Brain Health as he pursues addressing the inequities in the health care system.

Dr. Hathaway's wife of 43 years is Kathleen Brice Hathaway, retired Department of Defense. They have two married children and three grandsons: Mr. Alvin C. Hathaway, Sr., Vice President, Comptroller, Texas Instruments, Shenika Hathaway, his wife, Alvin C. Hathaway, III and Issac Creed Hathaway, sons; Dr. Adaria Hathaway Sogbor, Counselor, Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, Sidney Delali Kobla Sogbor, her husband, Charles Delali Kobla Sogbor, son.

# INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday, June 20, 2025





# INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday, June 20, 2025

Welcome ...... Calvin L. Smith, Jr., IRB Co-Chair Past President, BFSA

> Lorraine Smith, IRB Co-Chair Past President, BFSA, 2023 IRB Inductee

About the IRB and BFSA Leadership ...... Jerrell Bratcher, BFSA President

Johns Hopkins University Leadership Remarks ...... Dr. Lainie Rutkow JHU Executive Vice Provost

> Meredith Stewart JHU Vice President of Human Resources

#### Presentation of the 2025 Inductees

#### Dr. Joel Blankson, MD, PhD

Champion of Science, Dedicated Mentor Presented by Dr. Kelly Gebo and Dr. Sara Cosgrove

#### Nathan Connolly, PhD Shani Mott, PhD

Historian and Scholar and Intellectual Leader Social Justice Champion Presented by Dr. Minkah Makalani, Dr. James Calvin, and Jerrell Bratcher

#### Dr. Cleon Davis, MS, PhD

Engineer, Teacher, and BFSA Leader Presented by Dr. James Calvin

#### Cherita Hobbs, MS

Human Resource Strategist, Community Pillar

Remarks by Meredith Stewart Presented by Kathy Forbush

#### Acknowledgment of Inductees

Calvin L. Smith, Jr. and Lorraine Smith

**Closing Remarks** Calvin L. Smith, Jr. and Lorraine Smith

#### **Invocation and Blessing of the Food** Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Hathaway, Jr.



### INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) INDUCTION CEREMONY FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2025

he Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB) at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) is a digital project and traveling exhibit that recognizes the contributions of Black students, faculty, and staff to the university's history. The project is a collaboration between the Johns Hopkins Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA), the Office of the President, De-

the Office of the President, Development and Alumni Relations, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The exhibit features photos and stories of people who represent the intertwined history of Black people and Johns Hopkins.

#### **Celebrating Excellence:** Welcome to Our Legacy

The BFSA at Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, take immense pride in recognizing the profound contributions of black and brown individuals throughout our esteemed history who have made contributions to the institution, community, and world at large. Our commitment to diversity, eq-

uity, and inclusion is exemplified through the "Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB)" exhibit, is a testament to the remarkable achievements and enduring legacy of Black men and women within our institution and community. View the profiles of the profound men and women featured in this project.

#### A Beacon of Resilience and Achievement

As one of the nation's oldest and most prominent employee-led volunteer groups, the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) stands as a beacon of resilience and achievement. With an unwavering dedication to advocacy and change, the BFSA champions the courageous contributions of Black and Brown, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) across the Johns Hopkins enterprise.

#### Honoring a Storied Legacy

The genesis of the "Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB)"

at Johns Hopkins exhibit stems from a pivotal conversation in 2012 between President Ronald J. Daniels and the BFSA. Inspired by a collective desire to elevate visibility and celebrate the multifaceted accomplishments of Black individuals, this exhibit serves as a poignant tribute to our shared heritage.

# A Dynamic Showcase of Excellence

Through meticulous curation and unwavering dedication, the exhibit showcases the indelible mark that Black men and women have left on Johns Hopkins

across generations. From pio-

neering breakthroughs in medicine and science to transformative contributions in the arts and humanities, this exhibit is a celebration of excellence and resilience. Learn More.

#### **Exploring Our Legacy**

Discover the captivating stories and achievements of the men and women featured in the "Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB)" at Johns Hopkins exhibit. From the halls of academia to the forefront of innovation, their contributions have shaped the fabric of Johns Hopkins University and continue to inspire generations to come.

Continued on Page 15 >>



# INDISPENSABLE ROLE of BLACKS



# **INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) INDUCTION CEREMONY** FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2025

Continued from Page 14

#### Join Us in Celebration

As custodians of this transformative legacy, we invite you to explore the

"Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB)" at Johns Hopkins induction exhibit and to bear witness to the resilience and brilliance of the Black community within our institution. We invite you to join us as we honor the past, celebrate the present, and pave the way for a future defined by unity, progress, and equity; during our annual induction ceremony hosted in June of every year during our Juneteenth Celebration event.

#### **Additional Historical Note About the IRB**

The "Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB)" at Johns Hopkins exhibit is made possible through the collaborative efforts of Johns Hopkins University President Ronald J. Daniels, Johns Hopkins & Medicine Development and Alumni Relations (formerly known as Johns Hopkins External Affairs and Development), and the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA). We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to this transformative project. We are also immensely thankful to John F. Guess, Jr., A&S '71, SAIS '76, Member, Fred Scott Brigade, and CEO of the Houston Museum of African American Culture for supporting the "Indispensable Role of Blacks (IRB)".

When the exhibit debuted, it consisted of a free-standing, traveling display and window decals featuring the photos of men and women whose stories offer glimpses of the intertwined history of blacks and Johns Hopkins.

This website includes brief narratives of past IRB individuals.

#### http://bfsa.jhu.edu/exhibits/exhibit-list/

RB

INDISPENSABLE

ROLE of BLACKS



# INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday, June 20, 2025

# 2025 IRB Inductee Dr. Joel Blankson, MD, PhD Champion of Science and Dedicated Mentor

As a clinical fellow at Johns Hopkins in the early 2000s, **Dr. Joel Blankson** encountered a patient living with HIV who, remarkably, required no medication to control the virus. Blankson's fascination with the phenomenon—known as elite suppression—set the course for his pioneering career in HIV research.

Blankson first recognized

the scientific urgency of HIV as a college student in New York City during the height of the AIDS crisis. Through a program across Cornell, Rockefeller University, and Memorial Sloan Kettering, he earned his Ph.D. in immunology and his medical degree backto-back.

Now a professor of medicine and molecular and comparative pathobiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Blankson is internationally recognized for his leadership in HIV cure research. He was the first to clearly demonstrate that elite suppressors those who control HIV without medication—aren't protected by a weakened virus, but by exceptional immune defenses. His findings helped shift HIV cure strategies toward immune-based control rather than total eradication, offering hope that a "functional cure of the disease is possible," his nominators for this award write.



As a clinician, Blankson has led the inpatient HIV service at Johns Hopkins since 2008, his work at the beside driving his clinical observations. As a teacher, he personally trained every Osler medical resident in HIV care between 2010 and 2020.

Blankson's scientific contributions have earned him election to the American

Society of Clinical Investigation and fellowship in the American Academy of Microbiology, and he has served as an associate editor for the Journal of Clinical Investigation. In recent years, his research has expanded into immune responses in COVID-19 and Mpox.

At Johns Hopkins, Blankson has also played a critical behind-the-scenes role advancing diversity in medicine—reviewing thousands of applications from underrepresented candidates and helping build a mentoring pipeline to strengthen graduate school, residency and fellowship programs for more than two decades. "That work matters to me," he says.

Many of those he helped recruit are now faculty at Johns Hopkins and other institutions, his nominators note, "and still consider Joel to be their mentor and advocate."

# INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday, June 20, 2025

### 2025 IRB Inductee Dr. Cleon Davis, MS, PhD Engineer, Teacher and BFSA Leader

As a Johns Hopkins engineer, **Dr. Cleon Davis** designs satellite constellations that help connect and protect the globe. As a leader at Johns Hopkins, he's worked from within to press for institutional change and expand opportunity.

"I've always wanted to make the places I've worked better for the people who come after me," he says.

Raised in Riviera Beach, Florida, Davis earned electrical engineering degrees from Florida A&M University then a PhD from the Georgia Institute

of Technology. Along the way, he modeled combustion engines for Ford, studied lasers at a Navy lab, and designed acoustic sensors to improve semiconductor packaging.

While finishing his doctorate, he found the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory through a career fair hosted by the National Society of Black Engineers. The lab's hybrid of research and real-world application appealed to him immediately—"not purely academic, not purely industry," he says. "APL was right in that sweet spot."

Today Davis leads both people and programs at APL. He serves as program manager in the National Security Space Mission Area of the Space Exploration Sector, where his team models satellite constellations essential to GPS, global internet, and national defense. "We can't afford to be wrong," he says.



Equally significant to Davis is his role as a professor—and, since 2024, as chair—of the Electrical and Computer Engineering program at Johns Hopkins University Engineering for Professionals. Under his guidance, the graduate program—now majority online—has grown to be the largest of its kind in the nation, with over 100 courses and 80-plus faculty members. Davis has personally mentored dozens of students through their thesis work.

Early in his time at Johns Hopkins, Davis found community in the

Black Faculty and Staff Association, where he served in various leadership roles before becoming president in 2015. In his two years at the helm, Davis opened new lines of dialogue with university leadership and worked to improve access and representation in hiring. During that time, he also helped launch a strategic mentoring program at APL, pairing junior staff with senior advocates to boost careers and overcome structural barriers to advancement.

Davis says he's proudest of the colleagues he's supported and watched thrive—those who were once overlooked or stuck, but now leaders. "If I've made it easier for someone else to succeed," he says, "then I've done something meaningful."



THE BLACK FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

# INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) **INDUCTION CEREMONY**

Friday, June 20, 2025

# 2025 IRB Inductee **Dr. Nathan Connolly, PhD Historian and Intellectual Leader**

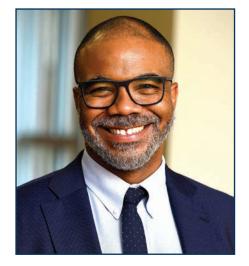
A leading historian of race, capitalism, and power, Dr. Nathan Connolly has spent his career exposing how institutions create and uphold inequality, with work that bridges academic scholarship and public discourse.

Connolly's 2014 book, A World More Concrete, reframed the story of segregation by showing how landlords, officials, and developers in South Florida-where he grew up-profited by systematically excluding Black communities from property and pow-

er in the Jim Crow era. As a lead architect of Mapping Inequality, the digital project that made 1930s redlining maps accessible to the public, Connolly helped uncover how government-sanctioned racism shaped American cities. The resource attracted over a million users, becoming indispensable to educators, policymakers, and activists.

After earning his PhD in history from the University of Michigan, Connolly joined Johns Hopkins in 2008. He immediately saw the university as both a place of profound potential and a reflection of historical exclusions. "I really do believe in the importance of universities as protectors of possibility for civil society," he says. "But you have to be willing to take a close investigation of your own intellectual practices."

That conviction pulled him into the university's inner workings: faculty searches, committees, curricular reforms. He has mentored students, launched programs, and pushed Johns Hopkins to reckon more deeply with its own history and responsibilities.



As director for five years of the Racism, Immigration, and Citizenship program (now the Chloe Center), Connolly helped secure a \$4.4 million Mellon Foundation grant to amplify Black humanities scholarship and deepen ties to Baltimore communities. A major outcome was the creation of the Critical Diaspora Studies major. "Students were telling us, 'We can't go out as doctors or scientists without understanding the cultural problems our patients will face,"" Connolly says.

With his late wife, Shani Mott, and Jennifer Kingsley, director of JHU's Program in Museums and Society, Connolly co-led Housing Our Story, an oral history project recording the experiences of Black staff at Hopkins. These narratives-capturing exclusion, resilience, and dignityhelped fuel structural change, including the launch of the university's Staff Advisory Council in 2023.

During his time at Johns Hopkins, Connolly has mentored an emerging generation of scholars who have become authors, professors, and leaders themselves, extending the influence of his teaching.

Connolly emphasizes that his legacy at Hopkins has been inextricably linked with Mott, a beloved Africana Studies lecturer who passed away in 2024. "In all things, and in all ways, my time at Hopkins is her time at Hopkins," he says. "She was my thought partner and collaborator, and so there is no distinction "



THE BLACK FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

# INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday, June 20, 2025

# 2025 IRB Inductee **Dr. Shani Mott, PhD** Scholar and Social Justice Champion

Anyone who took a class with **Dr. Shani Mott** learned quickly not to coast. Her expectations were high—because she viewed her students as thinkers whose ideas mattered.

"She made students have to respect Africana Studies as a major," said her husband and longtime collaborator, historian Nathan Connolly. "You couldn't just waltz in. You had to deal with Dr. Mott."

As a lecturer in the Center for Africana Studies and the Department of History at Johns Hopkins, Mott left an imprint beyond

her title. Her influence stretched across institutional reform, public scholarship, and the lives of students and colleagues who found in her an unflinching advocate.

Before joining Johns Hopkins, Mott earned her doctorate from the University of Michigan and led Africana Studies at Barry University. Her work often blurred the lines between the academic and the activist. Trained in American culture and literature, she probed how racial language is molded by intellectual hierarchies, funding agendas, and government policy. In her teaching, she pushed students to interrogate how those forces played out in their own lives.

She taught with "a rigor and perspicaciousness that was infectious," says Minkah Makalani, director of the Center for Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins. "Her students understood that she demanded they take themselves seriously as thinkers."

One of her most visible contributions at Johns Hopkins was the *Housing Our Story* oral history project, in which she interviewed Black campus workers whose voices had long been excluded from the university's archives. The effort led



to meaningful reform, including the 2023 launch of a Staff Advisory Council and shifts to equity policy. "She was an incredible interviewer," Connolly recalls. "In the wake of her earnest questions, many of these people wanted to know, 'What are you going to do with our story? How can we actually go about changing the institutional landscape?""

Mott also helped organize the Freedom Papers exhibit at the Sheridan Libraries in 2016 and, in 2017, the Life Sentences conference on incarceration and the humanities, projects that centered lives and perspectives rarely highlighted in official narratives.

A driving force behind the intellectual renewal of Africana Studies, Mott fought to make the field a space of both academic rigor and political seriousness. As the director of undergraduate studies for the center, she reshaped how the program was perceived, particularly by STEM students who gravitated to her courses. Beyond campus, she co-directed Orita's Cross Freedom School and created an educational YouTube series during the pandemic.

Mott died of adrenal cancer in March 2024, just shy of her 48th birthday. Her final public act was testifying in an eighthour deposition for a housing discrimination lawsuit she and Connolly had filed—arguing that their home in a historically white Baltimore neighborhood had been appraised at far lower value because they were Black.

"I had the chance to see firsthand her literally put her life on the line for justice," Connolly said. "Her ability to speak forcefully and be so crystal clear about how real estate works—it was a master class.

# INDISPENSABLE ROLE OF BLACKS (IRB) INDUCTION CEREMONY

Friday, June 20, 2025

# 2025 IRB Inductee Cherita Hobbs, MS Human Resources Strategist and Community Pillar

Baltimore-area native **Cherita Hobbs** started working at Johns Hopkins in 1981, a young administrator supporting the university's human resources office. That first job launched a path that would make her a defining presence in HR leadership at Hopkins, helping shape policies, culture, and support systems across nearly every corner of the institution.

Over the years, Hobbs has led HR programs and operations for the schools of Medicine, Public Health, Nursing, JHPIEGO, and the Johns Hopkins Federal Credit Union, and later assumed a university-wide leadership role in em-

ployee and labor relations. Today, as executive director of strategic human resources, she oversees HR services for 11 academic divisions and four academic centers, with a focus on efficiency, workforce diversity, central HR operations, and employee engagement.

"What excites me most is the opportunity to support staff at all levels," says Hobbs. "HR has given me a platform to navigate complex and sensitive staffing matters with care, fairness, and compassion."

Hobbs is known for pushing HR systems to evolve with the needs of the people they serve. Over the years she has negotiated numerous contracts with bargaining units and mentored thousands of employees and managers, showing "a tremendous capacity to listen and demonstrate empathy for the challenges employees



face," according to Kathy Forbush, executive director of Talent Management at Johns Hopkins.

As one of the longest-serving Black women in senior leadership at Hopkins, Hobbs has co-chaired diversity councils, advised on economic inclusion, and worked to advance equity in hiring and advancement. She was an early advocate for the "Hopkins-Local" initiative, partnering with university offices and leaders boost hiring directly from the surrounding Baltimore community.

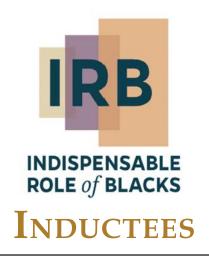
"Cherita has been a fierce advocate of creating more equitable workplac-

es where all JHU employees, especially those who are historically underrepresented, can grow, thrive, and be successful," Forbush says.

Hobbs holds both a bachelor's and master's degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Professional Studies and remains an active contributor to university committees focused on inclusion, policy, and HR strategy.

"It has been an honor to grow my career at JHU, and even more meaningful to know that my work has had a positive impact on both leadership and staff," Hobbs says. "I am deeply grateful to the IRB for recognizing my commitment and dedication, and for the privilege of being inducted into this prestigious program."





#### 2012

Bruce Baker

Catalyst for Campus Change Black Student Union Pioneer

Paula E. Goggs: Cross Country Legal Leader

Gwendolyn E. Boyd: Engineer for Diversity

Karen Freeman Burdell: Teller of Stories & Grower of Imaginations

Emmanuel Chambers: Benefactor of Mankind

Eileen Tate Clie: Dragon Slaying Music Maker

Lisa A. Cooper: Genius for Medical Equity

Miriam Decosta-Willis: Invincible Scholar

Shirley Dillworth: Legal Go Getter

Robert L Gamble: Legacy-building Neurosurgeon

Fannie Gaston-Johansson: Globe-Trotting Nursing Innovator, Researcher and Educator

Siba N. Grovogui: Justice Seeker

John F. Guess: Catalyst for Change Black Student Union Pioneer

Joseph S. Hall: University Community Convener

Minnie Hargow: Ambassador in the President's Office

M. Alfred Haynes: Architect of Social Justice in Medicine

Gertrude J. Hodges: Nursing Pioneer

Leslie King-Hammond: Force of Art

Thomas LaVeist: Health Care Gap Closer

Victor McCrary: Technology Innovator

Katrina Bell McDonald: Answer Seeker in Black and White

Douglas L. Miles: Perpetual Activist

Kelly Miller: Role Model for Future Heroes

Wes Moore: Author of His Own Success; First Black Governor of the State of Maryland

James F. Nabwangu: Son of Africa, Pioneering Neurosurgeon

David G. Nichols: Medical School Reformer

Percy A. Pierre Diversity Engineer

Edgar E. Roulhac University Growth Leader

Frederick I. Scott Rebel with a Cause

Ronald Thomas Smoot: Healer of People and of the Health Care

Gil Scott-Heron: Influential "bluesologist", Voice of a Generation

Lowery Stokes Simms: Museum World Boundary-Pusher

Clifford V. Smith, Jr.: Pioneering Engineer

Yvonne Theodore: Conflict Resolver and Curiosity Quencher

Claudia Thomas: Lifelong Boundary Crosser

Daniel Gary Thomas: Front Man of Jazz Studies

Vivien T. Thomas: Legendary Surgical Partner

J. Tyson Tildon: Champion for Children Through Medical Research and Education

James Turner: Air and Water Protector

Levi Watkins: Lifesaving Innovator and Activist

James E. West: Innovative Engineer, Electrifying Educator

Gail Williams-Glasser: University Cheerleader

**2014** James Calvin: Influential Business Philosopher

Martha Edgerton: Conservator of Books and the Black Community

Freda Lewis-Hall: Global Health Authority

Continued on Page 22

JHU-Black Faculty and Staff Association  $(\overline{BFSA})$ 



Continued from Page 21

Nicklaine Paul: Compassionate Pain Reliever, Healthcare Advocate

David Thomas: Keeper of Obligations, Supporter of Dreams

**2015** Janine Clayton: Physician/Scientist and Dedicated Mentor

Robert Clayton: Accomplished Litigator and Dedicated Mentor

Ron Owens: Facilitator of Success

Clifford Smith: Pioneering Engineer

2016 Ralph Etienne Cummings: A Brilliant Mind

Eich March: Civic Minded Undertaker

Devonna Rowe: An Operatic Artist for All Ages

Deborah Savage: Fearless Fighter

2017 No Induction: Held Wall Panels Commissioned

2018 Ernest Bates: Enterpreneurial Neurosurgeon Extraordinaire

Chance Glenn: Visionary Engineer and Creative Futurist

Lynnise Norris: Valiant Financial Facilitator

**2019** Barbara Bates-Hopkins: Connecting JHU with the Community

Ivor Benjamin: Caring for the Future

Black Students of Shriver Hall The Collective Experience of a Community Franklin Knight: Superlative Scholar of Latin America

#### 2020

Betty Addison: Innovative Public Health Careers Coach

Janice Bowie: Public Health Role Model: Creating Pathways and Opportunities

**David Boxer:** Distinguished Scholar and Champion of Jamaican Art

Ralph Bromery: Tireless Educator, Benefactor, Explorer

#### 2021

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Storyteller: Humanizing Stories for the World

Gregory Branch: Building Bridges, Blending Voices

Carlia Carter: Problem Solver: Behind the Scenes

James Cross: Engineering a Life of Service

Frank Spellman: Pioneering Retinal Surgeon, Gracious Mentor

#### 2022

Sherita Hill Golden: Physician Confronting Social Inequities

Sharon Morris: Curator of Black Excellence

Sharon Solomon: Role Model for Academic Medicine

Charles Sydnor, III: Politician for the People

#### 2023

Ethan Bartlett: Student-Athlete Leader

James Hildreth: Advocate for Diversity in the Laboratory

Hopkins Dining Services: Nourishing and Nurturing Generations

Regine Laforest-Shairif: A Servant Leader

Lorraine Smith: Advocate for Equality

#### 2024

Adriene Breckenridge: Academic Advisor and Campus Minister
Kenneth Brown: Mentor and Physician
Tameika M. Lunn: District Court Judge, Giving Back to Baltimore
Anita Norton: Collaboraady of the State of Maryland, Senior Policy Advisor

#### THE BLACK FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank the many individuals who played significant roles in advising and supporting the BFSA, the IRB project, and the various initiatives that promote the legacy, leadership, work, advocacy, history, and contributions of BIPOC members versity, helping generations of Black students thrive at Hopkins, just as he did. He is also an enthusiastic collector of contemporary glass and African American art and the driving force behind the resurgence of the Houston Museum of African American Cul-

across the Johns Hopkins enterprise. In addition to contributions from BFSA members, the Office of the President, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, we want to extend our gratitude to...

**Dr. John F. Guess, Jr.,** A&S '71, SAIS '76, Member of the Fred Scott Brigade; CEO of the Houston Museum of African American Culture; Managing Consultant of Guess Group, Inc., and **Melanie Lawson, JD.,** distinguished journalist and news anchor.

Businessman and noted arts patron John Guess emerged

as a passionate and unwavering advocate for civil rights in the late 1960s, playing a central leadership role in establishing Johns Hopkins University's Black Student Union on the Homewood campus. He became the first chairman of the Black Student Union and the first Black president of the university's student council. In the years since, Dr. Guess has proven to be an instrumental partner for the unium of African American Culture, where he serves as CEO.

> Dr. Guess has generously sponsored the IRB project, in addition to the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) and the Black Student Union (BSU), as one of the leading spokespersons and founders, alongside his late classmate Bruce Baker.

> A native of Houston, Dr. Guess became the first chairman of the Black Student Union and first Black president of the university's student council. He is the chief exec-

utive officer of the Houston Museum of African American Culture, a managing consultant at The Guess Group Inc., a real estate services company, and a partner in the Dallas-based Access Seminars and Consulting Services. An active art collector, his works have been displayed in museums across the country and in Europe. John Guess received an honorary Doctorate degree from the University in 2023.







THE BLACK FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY



As we commemorate the 160th anniversary of Juneteenth, we reflect on a powerful truth: the legacy of those who fought for freedom continues to guide us. Their light lit the torch—and now, we carry it forward.

Honoring our history means taking action in the present. By uplifting Black-owned and minority-owned businesses, we not only celebrate cultural resilience but also drive economic empowerment and systemic change. Supporting these enterprises is more than a purchase—it's a declaration of solidarity, progress, and shared purpose.

#### CATERERS

1876 Distinction – Hopkins Dining

Xquisite Catering LLC (GS 10KSB Alum): https://www.xquisitecateringllc.com/ KDW Catering, LLC: https://kdwcatering.com

#### ENTERTAINMENT

Singing Sensations Youth Choir, Inc.: https://www.sensationalsingersmd.org/ Dr. Hollie Hood-Mincey, Director

Alexandria "Brinae Ali & Friends" Bradley: http://brinaealimusic.com/ Gordon "Soorah" Parks, the Griot: 410-655-2118, e:gormarpar1@aol.com Face Painter: Janelle Jones, JJonesgraphics LLC - Instagram: @Jjonesgraphics Madd Flava Entertainment, Rodney Stevens, http://www.rodmaddflava.com

#### **DECORATIONS | FLORALS | AWARDS**

Something Unique by Vanessa Anderson: e: Vanessaranderson2@gmail.com Let's Do Linens, Inc.: https://www.letsdolinens.com/ Awarding You: https://www.awardingyou.com/

#### **GRAPHICS DESIGN, PRINTING & T-SHIRT PRINTING:**

Black Classic Press/BCP Digital Printing: https://www.agooddaytoprint.com/ KGJ Design & Illustration, Kerry G. Johnson: https://www.kerrygjohnsondraws.com/ Ne-Ri Sports, Custom Shirts by Brian Hall (410) 790-9333

#### A/V, COMMUNICATIONS, AND MEDIA JHU KIT-CATS

JHU Office of Communications, photographer, Will Kirk; Larry Canner and Calvin Hayes Kathryn Pearce, Freelance Writer



### 2025 Juneteenth and IRB Celebration Planning Committee Members

Jerrell Bratcher Hunter Bryant Yvette Bryant Amaya Butler Dr. James Calvin Sikoka Frett Reginia Hawkins Erica James Kerry G. Johnson Eric Jones Cordelia Lee Aminah Leekins Jennifer Payne Kathryn Pearce Tiffany Satterfield Allison Seyler Calvin L. Smith, Jr. Lorraine Smith Dr. Iris Turay Alicia Wilson, JD Gay Williams

REST

Get your limited edition 2025 BFSA Juneteenth commemorative shirt while supplies last!

Artwork by Kerry G. Johnson © 2025



1865

### **Lift Every Voice and Sing**

by James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing, Till earth and heaven ring,

Ring with the harmonies of liberty; Let our rejoicing rise, High as the list'ning skies, Let it resound, loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song, full of the faith that the dark past has taught us.

Sing a song, full of the hope that the present has brought us.

Facing the rising sun, of our new day begun. Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chast'ning rod, Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;

Yet with a steady beat, Have not our weary feet

Come to the place for which our fathers sighed? We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.

We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,

Out from the gloomy past, Till now we stand at last Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,

Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way; Thou who hast by Thy might. Led us into the light, Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,

Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee.

Shadowed beneath Thy hand, May we forever stand,

True to our God, True to our native land.