



BPA News

Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Grateful for the Village!

Dr. Patricia Newton, or "Nana," encouraged me for more than a year to consider becoming BPA President-Elect, to which I finally relented - with her promise of guidance and support. At my first trustee meeting, we received a written copy of her director's report, but Dr. Pat did not come. Her absence, we soon learned, was due to her untimely passing in her Baltimore condo - alone. The shock and devastation were painful, as she was in many ways

"the keeper of the soul" of BPA. Nana and I had developed a bond over the months before, preparing me for what was to come. I was bereft, having been deprived of the opportunity to work and learn from this phenomenal human being, psychiatrist, humanitarian, and world citizen.

This unfortunate event clearly interrupted what Dr. Pat believed would be a much longer life; she had no time for something so inconvenient as death. With limited business or financial records access, the BPA Trustees established a new virtual office (*cont.*)



*BPA President,
Dr. Cynthia Turner-Graham*



The BPA Spring 2024 Conference will be held in Los Angeles, California. Stay tuned for further details

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Ja'Nelle Blocker M.D.

President's Message, cont.

(in D.C. on K Street directly across from McCormick and Schmick), secured new phone numbers, and developed a new website.

With the team of BPA Trustees, I committed to building an infrastructure and processes upon which a trajectory of organizational growth could be established and sustained for the future. Notable milestones included:

- Hiring administrative support, a new Executive Director (Dr. Napoleon Higgins), and a CPA who filed back taxes, assuring the continuation of our non-profit status;
- Continuing fall and spring meetings without interruption, virtually in 2021 due to the pandemic (Thank you, Drs. Danielle Hairston and Nicole Washington!)
- Securing contracts with
 - Janssen Pharmaceuticals to develop a nationwide directory of Black psychiatrists and other mental health professionals;
 - The Danya Institute, wherein BPA trustees and other members provided virtual lectures on mental health and substance use disorders for front-line behavioral health professionals, the proceeds from which a steady revenue stream was established (Thank you, Dr. Anelle Primm and presenters!)
- Enhancing BPA's online presence, adding two social media interns to research, compose, and regularly post relevant content (Thank you, Dr. Nicole Washington!)

I would be remiss if I did not mention the diligence of our treasurer, Dr. Ikwunga Wonodi, and our board secretary, Dr. Tammara Davis. Thank you for the thoroughness and accuracy of the documents you have recorded and maintained. Equally important has been our growth, both in numbers and engagement of our members in committee activity where much of the work of BPA is accomplished.

As I prepare to hand the reins to our very able incoming president, Dr. Stephen McLeod Bryant, I personally thank Drs. Tiffani Bell, Welton Washington, Geoffrey Walcott, Gina Duncan, and Wilsa Charles-Malveaux, our regional trustees, and Ja'Nelle Blocker, our Member-In-Training. You have been faithful and diligent executing your fiduciary duties, and "doing the work" of BPA, for which I am deeply grateful.

For your help keeping me "on point" and guiding me around potential potholes and impediments, I thank our Council of Elders. I am thinking now of the former BPA Presidents who remain active and engaged: Drs. William Lawson, Cassandra Newkirk, Altha Stewart, Sam Okpaku, Ben Roy and Ezra Griffith. In big and small ways, you have been stellar examples of servant leadership. I extend a special thanks to all of you.

For overseeing the complex details of our small but mighty organization, Executive Director Dr. "Nap" Higgins - what can I say? There are no words. . . *(cont.)*

President's Message, cont.

To the Ancestors, your bold courage, the sacrificial gifting of your time, talent, and resources to BPA, you are the foundation upon which BPA will continue to build and expand our reach to address the mental and emotional health needs of Black and other people of color.

Last but not least - *Dr. Pat, thank you for your vote of confidence and ongoing encouragement from the other side!*

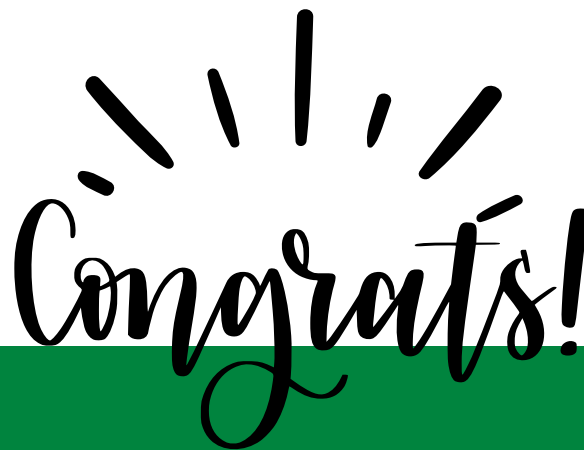
Peace and Power,



Cynthia Turner-Graham, M.D.
President

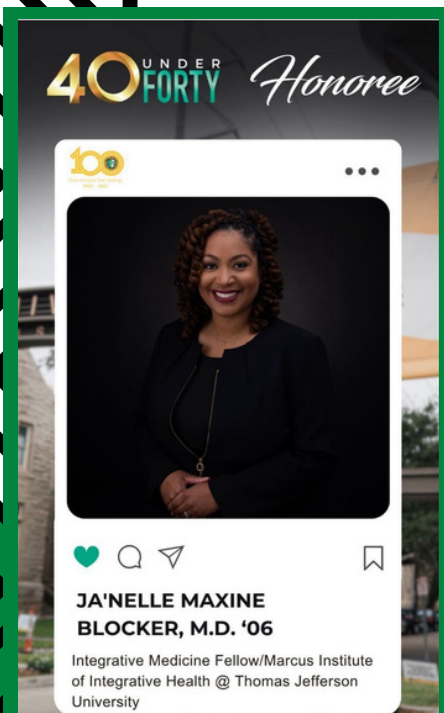
DID YOU KNOW?

BPA received a mention in a September 26, 2023 Everyday Health article entitled *What Is Bipolar Disorder? Symptoms, Diagnosis, Causes, Treatment, and Prevention.*



Congrats!

Congratulations to Dr. Ja'Nelle Blocker, MD for being named an honoree of Xavier University of Louisiana's 40 under 40 award.



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5. Molecular, Translational, and Neuroscience Research
6. Treatment from Psychotherapy and Psychopharmacology to Neural Strategies

THREE MANDATORY **IN-PERSON** EVENTS

**TWO-DAY
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@ ACNP ANNUAL MEETING

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Mental Fortitude and Fisk University Gymnasts' Flight to Fame: An Interview with Coach Corrine Tarver

By Cynthia Turner-Graham, MD and Wilsa Charles-Malveaux, MD

Triumphs of the human spirit continue to move and inspire us. During a time of national, political, and economic upheaval, the 2022 emergence of the first HBCU women's gymnastics team at Fisk University provided a "balm" of hope that overcoming history and overwhelming odds is still possible.

The barriers preventing HBCU participation in intercollegiate gymnastics had finally come down. When attending the 2023 BPA Spring Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, I had the privilege of sitting with Coach Corrinne Tarver to explore the "secret sauce" making this stellar achievement possible. As a 1975 graduate of Fisk University, I am especially excited about the ways this team and their coach have embraced our legacy of excellence with fearlessness and resolve.



Understanding the makings of such success can be instructive for other "firsts" beyond the world of gymnastics. Within nine short months, Fisk University recruited a women's gymnastics coach, created the infrastructure required by the NCAA, and recruited a small but mighty team of young Black female gymnasts. How were they able to meet such a formidable challenge?

Answer: By selecting the right coach who identified and recruited exceptional athletes, convincing them to join a daring "experiment."

The Fisk University Trustees wisely selected Coach Corrinne Tarver, an elite college gymnast who, in 1987, became the first Black member of the University of Georgia Gymdogs. In 1989, she won an NCAA all-around championship, among numerous other athletic distinctions. She has coached many elite gymnasts and served several positions in higher education sports administration, providing the ideal combination of athletic and administrative skills for the task.

When asked about the lessons she learned as an athlete that prepared her for this challenge, Coach Tarver offered several "pithy" caveats. *(cont.)*

Mental Fortitude and Fisk University Gymnasts' Flight to Fame: An Interview with Coach Corrine Tarver, cont.

By Cynthia Turner-Graham, MD and Wilsa Charles-Malveaux, MD

1. Never, ever, never accept excuses from oneself or from anyone else when something needs to be done; equivocation of any kind is unacceptable. In the spirit of Nike, "Just do it". Whatever degree of creativity or ingenuity is required to accomplish the task, "you reach inside and find it."

2. As a counter-balance, she advises, "Be self-observant, and know when there are additional aptitudes or skills you need to accomplish a task. . . I am learning how to be more patient, patient with team members, and patient in dealing with school administrators and trustees. But especially, patient with myself."

3. Learn to put yourself first. When you fail to do so and recognize it, make the necessary corrections immediately. The primacy of self is compromised when much is required of you and you allow and/or invite distractions to "take you off your game."

Coach Tarver offered the following when asked about advice she would offer individuals seeking success in arenas where they are underrepresented:

- "You have to make friends and learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable." This requires a deep faith and unwavering resolve to achieve one's objectives, whether related to athletics or other aspects of life and living.
- Coach Tarver also advised developing the capacity for mutual perspective-taking, listening with that third ear for that which is not always articulated. This works best when listening from a peaceful inner space. One cannot listen with objectivity from an unsettled place of inner turmoil. Take a time out if needed and return to the issue later, better positioned for deep listening if necessary.

In describing her greatest trial during this historic year, Coach Tarver chuckled, and admitted that managing the team's transition from home to dorm life - all 15 at the same time - has occupied much of her time. Because all members are excellent athletes, "My major task is to help them develop sufficient self-discipline in order to exercise the level of focus necessary to excel." Entering young adulthood during a time of international turmoil and domestic unrest added another layer of complexity.

Like other intercollegiate athletes, gymnasts are tasked with balancing the demands of college life, academic obligations, and relationships while engaging in a high-pressure and demanding sport. Whatever was not fully developed before college will impede the developmental steps needed as they search for more adaptive strategies to manage their lives. The intense focus and mental energy (*cont.*)

Mental Fortitude and Fisk University Gymnasts' Flight to Fame: An Interview with Coach Corrine Tarver, cont.

By Cynthia Turner-Graham, MD and Wilsa Charles-Malveaux, MD

expended to perform at a competitive level is exhausting both physically and mentally; thus, energy spent unnecessarily is not available to further refine their craft. Furthermore, working closely with other athletes who previously did not know one another "created its own kind of drama." All brought with them an intense kind of self-possession, challenging the necessary work of team-building as they navigated nuances of coping style and personality,

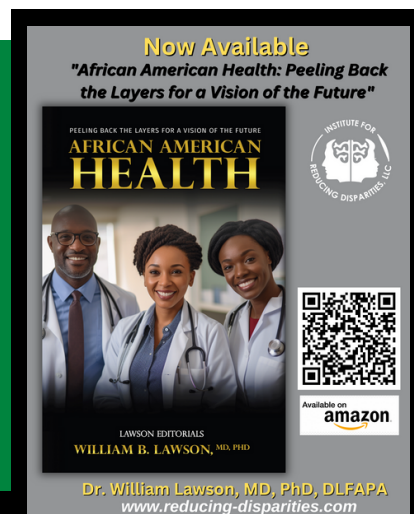
As a gymnastics coach and "life coach," Coach Tarver brings first-hand knowledge of the challenges her team members face. She secured a "mental coach" to help the gymnasts identify and address any mental barriers to achieving optimal performance. (Thus far, no team members have required formal counseling or care from a psychiatrist, but the coaching staff is prepared to make referrals if needed.) Though not initially receptive, most are less resistant as they see the benefits in sustaining peak performance. Despite the formidable challenges, this exceptional group of athletes continues to coalesce and mature while refining their athletic skills. The team's inaugural season produced three All-Americans and two bronze medalists in the national championship competition, quite an achievement for year #1.

What can we expect in the 2023-2024 season? Speaking with Coach Tarver again recently, she expects an even better year than the last. The team has grown from 15 to 23, and she has recruited several very competitive gymnasts who were heavily recruited by larger schools. This growth has filled in some critical team gaps and provides a team buffer when injuries occur. Team as well as individual scores she expects to improve substantially this year.

Black people and Historically Black Colleges and Universities have long specialized in the impossible, achieving the incredible with relatively few material resources. Stay tuned and look for another stellar season for these young athletes!

NEW BOOK AT AMAZON.COM

William B. Lawson, MD, PHD makes available a collection of editorials that were originally published when he was Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the National Medical Association. [Get your copy of African American Health: Peeling Back the Layers for a Vision of the Future today at Amazon.com.](#)



Dr. William Lawson, MD, PhD, DLFAPA
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The Black Psychiatry Directory: A Vital Resource for Black Psychiatrists in America

By Napoleon Higgins, MD

The Black Psychiatry Directory (www.blackpsychiatrydirectory.com) is a vital resource for Black psychiatrists in America. Recently mentioned in a prominent blog, this platform serves as a powerful tool to connect, collaborate, and access information within the mental health field. It provides a comprehensive database of Black mental health professionals, making it easier for individuals to find culturally competent care and enabling fellow psychiatrists to network and cooperate.

One standout feature highlighted in the recent blog is the directory's ability to reveal utilization gaps within the mental health sector. By mapping the locations of mental health services, it sheds light on areas where these services are lacking, particularly in communities that may be underserved. This recognition emphasizes the directory's role in promoting diversity, improving mental healthcare access, and addressing disparities in service availability. For Black psychiatrists, this is a call to action.

Membership in the directory is about strengthening the collective impact of Black psychiatrists in the United States. By signing up and actively using the website, members contribute to breaking down barriers to mental health care access, fostering a more inclusive and equitable mental health landscape. The directory isn't just a tool; it's a movement. It's time for all Black psychiatrists to join and make a difference.



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2023 Transcultural Conference

Dear Esteemed Members and Friends,

Warm greetings. The Board of Trustees for Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc. (BPA) eagerly anticipates the Fall Transcultural Conference, set to take place in the captivating landscape of Ocho Rios, Jamaica from November 9th to 13th, 2023. We extend an earnest request for your generous support as we strive to empower the next generation of psychiatrists by facilitating the attendance of residents and medical students at this transformative event.

Whether or not you plan to attend the conference, contributions of any amount will have a profound impact on aspiring psychiatrists who are hindered by financial constraints. By removing these barriers, you'll enable them to access invaluable insights, diverse perspectives, and cross-cultural interactions that will shape the future of our profession.

This year's conference is poised to be an exceptional gathering, fostering collaborations across cultures and advancing our collective mission. The Moon Palace Resort, our chosen venue, provides the perfect backdrop for engaging discussions and meaningful learning experiences.

We've received numerous requests for financial aid from passionate students who are eager to participate but lack the necessary means. Your generous donations will directly support these students and residents, allowing them to fully engage in the conference and gain insights from mentors and thought leaders.

It's important to note that the Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA) is a registered 501c3 tax-deductible organization. Before making your donation, we encourage you to consult your tax professional to understand the potential benefits and implications.

As a token of appreciation, members who contribute \$100 or more will have the opportunity to be featured in the conference program, highlighting your commitment to fostering the growth and excellence of our profession.

To contribute, please [click here](#) and add your donation using the "Sponsor a Resident or Student" option on the event registration form. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at info@blackpsychs.org. By uniting our efforts, we can empower the next generation of psychiatrists and pave the way for a more inclusive and impactful future.

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2023 Transcultural Conference Schedule

Thursday, November 9th

6:00 PM | **Welcome Reception**

6:50 PM | **Emerging Research 1 - A Qualitative Exploration of The “Dual Pandemics” on the Mental Health of Black College Students in the United States**

Kamesha Spates

7:10 PM | **Emerging Research 2 - Critical Consciousness and Empowerment to reduce substance use and improve sexual health in justice-involved Black and Latinx Youth**

Ikenna Achebe

7:30 PM | **Session 1 - The Late 1960's: The Pivotal Era of Black Psychiatry and Life and Times of a Revolutionary Jamaican Psychiatrist, Dr. Fred W. Hickling**

Napoleon B. Higgins Jr. MD, Cynthia Turner-Graham, MD, DLFAPA, ACPsych, June Jackson Christmas, et. al.

Friday, November 10th

7:30 AM | **Wellness Session (Workout Attire)**

Experience Fitness and Stretching Like Royalty with Personal Trainer, [Tuekeha Huntley](#)

8:30 AM to 9:15 AM | **Session 2 - Combination of Mental Care in US Virgin Island: Impact of acquisition/Colonization and Mental Healthcare in Aotearoa New Zealand 2022: The Phoenix Rises Down Under**

Michael Ingram MD, Linda Fuller, D.O., MPH

9:15 AM to 10:00 AM | **Session 3 - Black Psychedelic Wellness**

Stephanie Michael Stewart MD

10:00 AM to 10:15 AM | **Break**

10:15 AM to 11:00 AM | **Session 4 - Set the Captives Free: Intersection of Faith and Mental Health**

Jonathan Shepherd, M.D.

2023 Transcultural Conference Schedule

Friday, November 10th

11:00 AM to 11:45 AM | **Session 5 - Lifestyle Medicine, Psychiatry, and Obesity Medicine: Connecting the Dots, Closing the gaps and Impacting the health of Black Populations**

Tiffani Bell Washington, MD/MPH/FAPA/DipABOM/DipABLM

11:45 AM to 12:15 PM | **Q&A**

12:30 PM | **BPA General Member Meeting**

Executive Board Meeting to follow immediately after

Saturday, November 11th

7:30 AM | **Wellness Session (Workout Attire)**

Experience Fitness and Stretching Like Royalty with Personal Trainer, [Tuekeha Huntley](#)

8:30 AM to 9:15 AM | **Session 6 - Waiting to Exhale: Navigating Academic Medicine as Black Queer Psychiatrists**

Terence L. Howard, MD MS, Lucy Ogbu-Nwobodo, MD MS MAS, Chase Anderson, MD MS, Chimno Nnadi, MD PhD

9:15 AM to 10:00 AM | **Session 7 - Parenting Black Transgender Children**

Keisha Bell, MD, FAAP, FCCM Sonia Williams-Murphy, Stephen Chukumba

10:00 AM to 10:15 AM | **Break**

10:15 AM to 11:00 AM | **Session 8 - Overlooked and Underserved: Creating Novel & Collaborative Eating Disorder Care Models to Center Underserved Communities**

Erikka Dzirasq, MD, MPH DFAACAP

11:00 AM to 11:45 AM | **Session 9 - Gazing in the Mirror: Navigating White Resistance with Self-Awareness and Relational Theory**

Jessica Isom MD MPH

2023 Transcultural Conference Schedule

Saturday, November 11th

11:45 AM to 12:15 PM | **Q&A**

12:15 PM to 1:00 PM | **Session 10 - Combination of The National Council for Residents: Stemming the Tide of Black Resident Attrition and Post Affirmative Action: Forging New Opportunities to Ensure Success for Future Black Psychiatrists**

Keisha Bell, MD, FAAP, FCCM, Napoleon B. Higgins Jr. MD, Ulrick Vieux MD, Iverson Bell MD

1:00 PM | **Lunch and Q&A**

2:00 PM | **Depart for Dunn's River Catamaran Cruise**

Sunday, November 12th

7:30 AM | **Wellness Session (Workout Attire)**

Experience Fitness and Stretching Like Royalty with Personal Trainer, [Tuekeha Huntley](#)

8:30 AM to 8:50 AM | **Emerging Research 3 - They can't all be related!: The relationship between culture, psychosis and SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection.**

Sameer Yousef, Dr. Nana Cudjoe, Dr. Kenneth Haynes, Aaliyah Joseph

8:50 AM to 9:10 AM | **Emerging Research 4 - SAve Study: A barbershop-based ethnic identity intervention for young adult Black males**

Michael Okoronkwo

9:10 AM to 9:20 AM | **Poster Q&A**

9:20 AM to 9:30 AM | **Break**

9:30 AM to 10:15 AM | **Session 11 - Mental Health and Black Youth: Optimal Coping Strategies to Cultivate Radical Healing**

Pilar Tucker, M.A. Lucy Ogbu-Nwobodo, MD MS, Oluwatosin Adebijoyi, MD

2023 Transcultural Conference Schedule

Sunday, November 12th

10:15 AM to 11:00 AM | **Session 12 - Impact of Trauma exposure as a barrier to successful psychotherapy**

Karen Taylor-Crawford, MD, DABPN, Imia A. Holston, Constance Williams, PhD

11:00 AM to 11:15 AM | **Break**

11:15 AM to 12:30 PM | **Session 13 - Combination of Mental Well-Being of The African Diaspora: How to center the interventions, practice and evidence and Decolonizing Psychiatry: Listening to and learning from case discussions**

Alicia Barnes DO, Melanie Funchess, Dewonna Ferguson MD, Courtney Cosby MD, Katelyn Butler

12:30 PM to 1:00 PM | **Q&A**

2:00 PM | **Depart for Kingston Hospital Tour [Session 14 - Decolonization of the Mind: Experiential Workshop in Psychohistoriographic Cultural Therapy]**

Geoffrey Walcott MBBS, DM Janelle Blocker MD, Elizabeth Arnold MD

8:00 PM | **Banquet [Session 15 - Mental Health Crisis Responses and (In)JusticeEquity: Intrasystem and Intersystem Implications]**

Sarah Vinson, MD, Dejuan White, MD



Transcultural Conference

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