

A Balm in Gilead: Portraits of African American Women Faculty Bearing Witness to  
Striving, Surviving, and Thriving at Predominantly White Institutions in the Deep South

A dissertation submitted  
to the Graduate School of  
Valdosta State University

In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in Leadership

in the Department of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology  
of the Dewar College of Education

December, 2018

Rochelle Bornett Lee

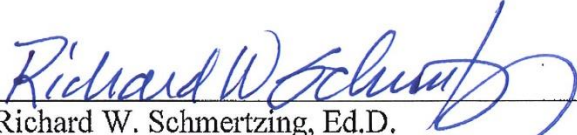
M.B.A., Webster University, 1997  
B.A., Ottawa University, 1980

© Copyright 2018, Rochelle Bornett Lee

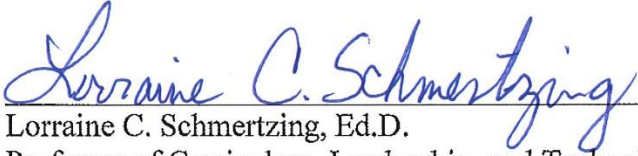
All Rights Reserved

This dissertation, "A Balm in Gilead: Portraits of African American Women Faculty Bearing Witness to Striving, Surviving, and Thriving at Predominantly White Institutions in the Deep South," by Rochelle Bornett Lee, is approved by:

**Dissertation  
Committee Chair**


  
Richard W. Schmertzing, Ed.D.  
Professor of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology

**Researcher**

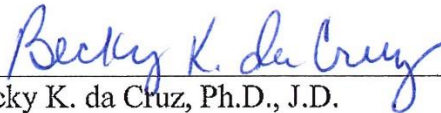
  
Lorraine C. Schmertzing, Ed.D.  
Professor of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology

**Committee  
Members**

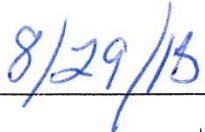
  
Linda P. Jurczak, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Communication Arts

  
Natalie F. Spencer, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Counseling  
North Carolina A & T State University

**Associate Provost  
for Graduate  
Studies and  
Research**

  
Becky K. da Cruz, Ph.D., J.D.  
Professor of Criminal Justice

**Defense Date**

  
8/29/15

## FAIR USE

This Dissertation is protected by Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553 revised in 1976). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgement. Use of the material for financial gain without the author's expressed written permission is not allowed.

## DUPLICATION

I authorize the Head of Interlibrary Loan or the Head of Archives at the Odum Library at Valdosta State University to arrange for duplication of this (dissertation/thesis) for Education or scholarly purposes when so requested by a library user. Duplication shall be at the user's expense.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I refuse permission for this (dissertation/thesis) to be duplicated in whole or in part.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to identify the strategies used by six African American women faculty members and how they bore witness to striving, surviving, and thriving at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in the Deep South while teaching, serving, and performing research. A qualitative research design guided this study. Data were obtained through three sequential audio recorded interviews with each participant in addition to researcher memoing, transcript review, and member checking. Descriptive data from an interview guide were analyzed. The analysis of the data yielded four themes, (a) The participant's reliance on God and the Scriptures to direct their lives, (b) Intersectionality is so complex, participants could not clearly identify interactions as racist or sexist, (c) Credit and job expectations are not the same for everyone, and (d) Establishing a working identity within the academy. Using Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's portraiture method each participant's counter-narrative was filtered through the lenses of critical race theory and womanism. The counter-narrative of each participant was presented in the individual portraits. Results of the cross-case analysis were presented in a family (collective) portrait to excavate the search for goodness which is the objective of portraiture and to identify strategies used by the participants. The findings when compared to the professional and scholarly discourse, suggest that the climates of Deep South PWIs do not differ from those of PWIs throughout the United States. The climates of American PWIs in general require that African American women faculty contend with personal, professional, and institutional racism in many of their encounters with administrators, colleagues, and students. The answers to the research questions are associated with the identified themes and are found in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Preface: Notes to the Reader from my Authentic Self*

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....1

    Personal Stories.....1

        Racial Wound One.....2

        Racial Wound Two.....3

        Racial Wound Three.....4

    A Professional Story.....8

    Background of the Study.....14

    Statement of Problem.....17

    Research Goals.....18

    Research Questions.....21

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL AND SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE.....23

    Statistics on African American Women Faculty.....23

    Campus Climate and Collegiality.....26

    Race, Gender, and Identity.....29

    Teaching.....32

    Scholarship.....34

    Service.....38

    Tenure and Promotion.....40

    Conclusion.....41

CHAPTER III: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....42

    The Birth of a Critical Race Theory-Womanist Scholar.....42

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Critical Race Theory.....                      | 44  |
| Womanism.....                                  | 48  |
| Significance of Study.....                     | 53  |
| Conclusion.....                                | 56  |
| CHAPTER IV: METHODS.....                       | 58  |
| Introduction.....                              | 58  |
| Rationale.....                                 | 64  |
| Review of Research Questions.....              | 66  |
| The Portraiture Method.....                    | 68  |
| The Participants .....                         | 73  |
| Data Collection.....                           | 75  |
| Data Analysis.....                             | 79  |
| Threats to Data Quality.....                   | 87  |
| Subjective I's.....                            | 92  |
| Ethical Issues.....                            | 96  |
| Conclusion.....                                | 97  |
| CHAPTER V: INDIVIDUAL PORTRAITS.....           | 99  |
| Setting for Shiphrah, Historical Portrait..... | 102 |
| Shiphrah.....                                  | 106 |
| Researcher Reflections regarding Shiphrah..... | 143 |
| Setting for Grace, Historical Portrait.....    | 145 |
| Grace.....                                     | 149 |
| Researcher Reflections regarding Grace.....    | 196 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Setting for Sophie, Historical Portrait.....  | 198 |
| Sophie.....   | 201 |
| Researcher Reflections regarding Sophie.....  | 236 |
| Setting for Tabitha, Contemporary Portrait .....  | 238 |
| Tabitha.....  | 244 |
| Researcher Reflections regarding Tabitha.....   | 282 |
| Setting for Faith, Contemporary Portrait.....   | 284 |
| Faith.....  | 284 |
| Researcher Reflections regarding Faith.....   | 327 |
| Setting for Shalom, Contemporary Portrait.....  | 329 |
| Shalom.....   | 331 |
| Researcher Reflections regarding Shalom.....  | 374 |
| CHAPTER VI: FAMILY PORTRAIT.....  | 377 |
| Theme 1 - The Participant’s Reliance on God and the Scriptures to direct their<br>Lives.....                                | 382 |
| Shiphrah’s Testimony.....   | 384 |
| Grace’s Testimony.....  | 384 |
| Sophie’s Testimony .....  | 385 |
| Tabitha’s Testimony .....   | 386 |
| Faith’s Testimony.....  | 386 |
| Shalom’s Testimony.....   | 386 |
| Theme 2 – Intersectionality is so Complex. Participants could not Clearly Identify<br>Interactions as Racist or Sexist..... | 388 |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Shiphrah’s Dog Whistle Moment.....   | 390 |
| Grace’s Dog Whistle Moment.....  | 391 |
| Sophie’s Dog Whistle Moment .....  | 392 |
| Tabitha’s Dog Whistle Moment .....   | 393 |
| Faith’s Dog Whistle Moment .....   | 394 |
| Shalom’s Dog Whistle Moment .....  | 395 |
| Theme 3- Credit and Job Expectations are not the same for everyone .....                                       | 397 |
| Shiphrah’s Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service.....   | 398 |
| Grace’s Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service.....  | 400 |
| Sophie’s Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service .....  | 401 |
| Tabitha’s Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service .....   | 403 |
| Faith’s Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service .....   | 405 |
| Shalom’s Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service .....  | 406 |
| Theme 4-Establishing a Working Identity within the Academy.....  | 407 |
| Shiphrah’s Working Identity: Money, money, money, money, money!.   | 408 |
| Grace’s Working Identity: You Catch More Flies with Sugar than You<br>do with.....                             | 410 |
| Sophie’s Working Identity: Racial Comforting and Partial Strategic<br>Passing .....                            | 412 |
| Tabitha’s Working Identity: Providing Discomfort.....  | 414 |
| Faith’s Working Identity: Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say, and<br>Let the Chips Fall Where They May ..... | 416 |
| Shalom’s Working Identity: The Worker Bee Syndrome .....   | 417 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER VII: THE LAST WORD.....   | 419 |
| Discussion.....   | 419 |
| Findings.....   | 421 |
| Participant Recommendations to African American Women Faculty Currently<br>Employed, Newly Employed, or Contemplating Employment at a<br>PWI.....           | 424 |
| Survival Strategies: The Ten Commandments for African American<br>Women Faculty Teaching Serving, and Performing Research at PWIs in<br>the Deep South..... | 424 |
| Commandment 1: Survey Your Surroundings.....  | 425 |
| Commandment 2: Negotiate, Negotiate, Negotiate.....   | 425 |
| Commandment 3: Be Authentic: Identify and Name<br>Yourself.....   | 426 |
| Commandment 4: Establish Your Voice.....  | 427 |
| Commandment 5: Mentoring, Networking, and Research<br>Support.....  | 427 |
| Commandment 6: Get Involved and be Mindful not to become the<br>Token Black.....  | 428 |
| Commandment 7: Produce Excellence Always.....   | 429 |
| Commandment 8: Self-Promote without Arrogance.....  | 429 |
| Commandment 9: Seek “Aa Girls Outside of the Academy.....   | 430 |
| Commandment 10: Self-care, the Balance within the Selfish<br>Selfless Continuum.....  | 430 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Participant Recommendations to the Administration of PWIs in the Deep |     |
| South.....  | 431 |
| Limitations of the Study.....   | 433 |
| Implications of the Study.....  | 434 |
| Suggestions for Future Research.....                                  | 436 |
| Conclusion.....   | 437 |
| BENEDICTION: THE FINAL BLESSING.....                                  | 439 |
| My Damascene Conversion.....  | 441 |
| Afterthoughts.....  | 445 |
| REFERENCES.....   | 447 |
| APPENDICIES.....  | 470 |
| Appendix A: Definition of Terms.....                                  | 470 |
| Appendix B: IRB Approval Form.....                                    | 476 |
| Appendix C: Conceptual Framework Map.....                             | 478 |
| Appendix D: Invitation Requesting Participation in Study.....         | 480 |
| Appendix E: Interview Guide.....                                      | 483 |
| Appendix F: Participant Interview Record.....                         | 487 |
| Appendix G: Sample Participant Response.....                          | 489 |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, thank you for Your divine inspiration throughout this doctoral process. Thank You also for the unwavering grace and mercy You showed toward me when I initially scoffed at the call to return to school. You have proven Yourself to be faithful over and over again. I am honored to have been chosen for this divine assignment.

To Mr. and Mrs. Dr. (Richard and Lorraine Schmertzing), I am fortunate to have been guided by your knowledge and expertise in all things concerning qualitative research. It has been extremely beneficial for me to sit under your collective tutelage. Thank you for taking me under your individual and communal wings. My life has been richly blessed by your presence. However, what I have been most blessed by is your friendship. I miss you much.

Dr. Jurczak thank you for serving as a member of my dissertation committee and the enthusiasm you displayed regarding my dissertation topic and participants. Your enthusiasm encouraged me and contributed to the confidence required to write about race when I was advised not to do so by colleagues on my campus and at other universities.

Dr. Spencer, thank you for agreeing to continue as a member of my dissertation committee. I appreciate your dedication to this project. Last but not least, congratulations on your recently published book, *Mindful Practices for Helping Troubled Teens*. I recommended it to the youth ministry at my home church in St. Louis, Missouri.

To the Macon Fireballs, Elizabeth, George, Katie, Lawonda, and Lisa I miss each of you immensely. I usually do not gravitate toward groups or organized group activities. I instead enjoy an intimate circle of friends. However, each of you contributed to a wonderful and for me, a rare mix of intellect, caring, sharing, and love. We have since embarked on our own individual journeys, however please know that each of you have left an indelible mark on my life. Be blessed.

To the participants of this study, Shiprah, Grace, Sophie, Tabitha, Faith, and Shalom none of this would have been possible without the courage each of you displayed by sharing your poignant counter-narratives. Thank you is woefully inadequate. I shall forever be indebted to each of you for the bountiful gift of yourselves. I pray that I have captured and honored each of your lives through your individual portraits. Blessings Galore to each of you.

To my colleagues and friends in the Department of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Sciences, thank you for your prayers, support, words of encouragement, and your tolerance. Dr. Masini, thank you for granting me time away to write. Christy, I could not have embarked upon my doctoral journey without your initial gift of software and your knowledge of everything in Word. Katina, I would have been lost without your technical assistance, you are a computer genius. Carol, thank you for introducing me to Dr. Elizabeth Mosley. Both of you have been extremely gracious in your support of me and

my dissertation journey. All of you have played a vital role in my transition from doctoral student to newly minted doctor. I could not have accomplished this fete without your collective and unwavering support.

To my prayer warriors: Cousin Gerry, Mrs. Anna Smith, Mercy Seat Baptist Church, Regina, Wade, Vanessa, Valerie, and Shaunell you prayed for me when I was at my wits end and discouraged. Just as Aaron and Hur aided Moses (Exodus 17:11-13), I thank you for holding up my mental, intellectual, and spiritual arms when I was weary. Because of this faithful act, I am now Dr. Rochelle Bornett Lee.

Liz, you are a jewel! Thank you for checking on me and my writing progress throughout the writing of my dissertation. Thank you for reading my dissertation and making suggestions. I thank God that he used you to encourage (“badger”) me (at each graduation ceremony) to press toward returning to school to acquire a doctorate. You planted the seed, my doctoral instructors watered the seed, but only God gave the increase (1 Corinthians 3:16). I am eternally grateful to you, be blessed always!

To Renee, my beloved sister, thank you for my daily dose of 22 minutes of conversation during my morning drive time. You kept me grounded and connected to the outside world throughout this process. Thank you for embracing your “big sister” role by making frequent inquiries about my writing time and progress. I know our parents would be proud of you for not wavering in this role even in adulthood.

To Charlie, my beloved husband, you deserve combat pay for all that you have endured and for all the duties you have performed in my absence. For loving me, I thank you. For keeping me sane, I thank you. For supporting me throughout this process, I thank you. For asking the hard questions and providing the even harder answers, I thank you. For being the first to utter and place in print the title Dr. Rochelle Bornett Lee, I thank you. For your unwavering faith in me, I thank you. For praying for me, I thank you. For the gift of yourself, I thank you!

## DEDICATION

To my parents,

Johnnie and Retha Mahone Bornett lovingly called “my daddy” and “momma.” Thank you for the time we had together. Thank you for the sacrificial gift of education. Thank you also for giving me Renee, my big sister. Thank you for pouring into us. Your living was not in vain! R. I. P.

To my parents-in-law,

Alfred and Adele Nall Lee affectionately called “dad” and “mom.” Thank you for taking me in and parenting me as an adult. Thank you for your encouraging words as I began this journey. Thank you also for your beautiful son, Reginald Charles Lee Sr. affectionately known as “Charlie.” I miss you much! R. I. P.

*Forethoughts . . .*

“It is a peculiar sensation; this double-consciousness, this peculiar sensation; this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”

(W. E. B. DuBois)

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31: 8-9 (New International Version Bible)

There is another who testifies of me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about me is true.

John 5:32 (King James Bible)

“You [I] have been spoken over by the Divine; therefore, God’s opinion of you [me] makes man’s opinion of you [me] irrelevant.”

Tim Storey as told to Oprah Winfrey

## NOTES TO THE READER FROM MY AUTHENTIC SELF

At first glance, you might think that you are embarking upon a read of a traditional dissertation, one that has been organized into conventional chapters that meet the standards of dissertation writing. However, this is not the case. I approached my dissertation wanting to balance the parts of myself that oftentimes represent opposite poles on a continuum, the creative side of myself, and the scientific side of myself. The method of portraiture as created by Sara Lawrence Lightfoot (1983) granted me the opportunity to do so.

The lengthy process of writing my dissertation commenced as an academic conclusion to the completion of coursework, the successful defense of my proposal, the search for participants, and the collection and analysis of data. I wanted to write this dissertation in a linear and seamless fashion. My motivation was to once again claim the life I had prior to beginning the doctoral program at Valdosta State University.

Retrospectively, I realize journeys of any type are rarely linear or seamless. They are embarked upon with a plan, yet this plan often progresses through a series of unplanned turns, detours, and stops. You meet people along the way who mention sites or events that must be experienced. This process leads to additional twists and turns along the way—so it was with writing my dissertation.

There are some things that I want to share with you prior to commencing our journey through my dissertation. This trek actually began in the spring of 2010. I applied to Valdosta begrudgingly. I was not at all interested in attending school to pursue an advanced degree. I applied to Valdosta from a place of logic. A colleague continued to cajole me regarding returning to school. She would ask, “Who in their right mind would



not take advantage of a virtually free doctoral degree?” This was her question to me when we would see each other at professional events. However, that year I was not successful in my application attempt. I saw this as a sign that I was not meant to earn a doctorate. I settled on this fact and continued to teach and prepare future Nuclear Medicine technologists for their health profession careers.

One early October morning when fall wrapped itself around Savannah like a blanket, I brewed a pot of coffee and entered my “woman cave” cup of coffee in hand for my morning quiet time. After spending time in the Scriptures and talking with and praying to God, I prepared for work. I finished my coffee, placed my cup in the sink and exited my home. This was my daily ritual. I entered my car for the drive to what was Armstrong Atlantic State University.

A voice as clear as the fall day I experienced said to me, “It is time for you to return to school.” The voice was not audible. The voice was a knowing deep in my spirit. I answered this voice verbally with a resounding “NO! I have no desire to return to school.” That was the end of the conversation. I went to work and engaged in my day as always. But the feeling, the knowing would not go away.

In response to this feeling, this knowing that would not go away; I reapplied to Valdosta State University. The first time I applied I was rejected because of lower than required GRE scores. This left me wounded. I had never been denied admission to any university. If truth be told, I was angry. What was Valdosta State University that it would deny me acceptance into its halls? There were definitely some sour grapes that needed to be turned into a drinkable wine. Finally accepted on the second attempt, I began classes in August of 2011.

I answered the call to return to school. The desire to return to school however was not awakened in me. It was 14 years since I earned a degree. With that thought in mind, I made a deal with God, if you have indeed called me to the divine assignment of returning to school, I require a perfect GPA. I was always a good student, yet, I never earned a 4.0 GPA. These were my conditions. I allowed myself this out. I knew that of my own accord and from my academic history that I would not accomplish this requirement without divine intervention. God in His infinite wisdom does not call the qualified person to accomplish His will; however, He always qualifies the call guaranteeing that He will receive the glory.

Coursework for my doctorate commenced in fall 2011 and concluded in fall 2013. God was faithful in my requirement. He was also gracious. The content of each class, the professors who taught the classes, and the people I met as fellow students and comrades working toward a common goal challenged me to be a better version of myself. Many of these individuals are mentioned in the acknowledgements of my dissertation.

Writing my dissertation has been a life-altering journey. The process has challenged me, it has stretched me, and it has most often intimidated me. I have been racked with questions of self-doubt and uncertainty. Can I do this? Do I have what it takes to write a dissertation? Do I have the ability to place on paper the thoughts, the ramblings, or the snippets of thought that are my personal reveries? If so, can I achieve this mission in a clear, coherent, and concise manner? Do I have what it takes? With an unyielding press, these unspoken thoughts plagued me.

I was also haunted by voices and experiences from my past, voices from my childhood, events from my days in high school, and occurrences from my time as an

undergraduate student. These voices contributed to my feelings of inadequacy. Despite my professional and academic successes, these messages solidified my feelings of insufficiency. After all I was attempting to do what no one in my family had done. I was attempting to achieve an advanced degree, a doctoral degree. I must admit to myself and to you, the reader, I believed these messages and voices from my past that stoked my thoughts and feelings of incompetence.

Yet, there were opposing thoughts, contemplations that pushed back and rebutted the notions and feelings of ineptitude. I credit my mother and father for the reflections that allowed me to believe that I could do anything that I put my mind to. My mother would always say, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” Oftentimes I found myself disinterested in these platitudes meant to inspire me. I wanted to give up on and give in to whatever the challenge was at the time. My mother and father have gone home to be with the Lord, yet it is my mother’s voice that still echoes in my head, “Rochelle, never ever quit.”

With competing messages in mind, I was compelled to move forward. Obligated by how I was reared, in that never quit spirit and duty-bound by an overwhelming desire to write my story in my voice. What began as an academic process slowly morphed into a necessary therapy, a therapy required for a lifetime of racial wounding. Just as the title of my dissertation states, this dissertation is my Balm in Gilead, a rare perfume used medicinally in Biblical times. It was known as the universal cure for all ailments.

The writing of this dissertation has pulled me through knotholes stripping away scabs of racial wounds not yet healed. Similar to bruises that appear without memory of an affliction, these racial wounds occurred over a lifetime. Armed with this revelation, I

want to go on record as saying, this research is profoundly personal. Therefore, I wanted you, the reader, to understand my proclivities and propensities for this work as we embark upon my journey.

Many terms specific to the study of race, White Institutional Presence (WIP) is defined and successful navigation of the campus climate of predominantly White institutions (PWIs) are repeatedly referred to throughout this document. For your convenience I have provided the definitions of these terms here and in Appendix A because they are relevant to readers' ability to interpret my dissertation from the perspectives from which it was designed. According to Gusa, (2010), White Institutional Presence (WIP) is defined as

The customary ideologies and practices rooted in the institution's design and the organization of its environment and activities. WIP is founded upon four characteristics: White ascendancy, monoculturalism, White blindness, and White estrangement. In the context of WIP, PWIs are products of human decisions where Whiteness is positioned as normative and its educational practices as neutral. (pp. 466-467).

The Encyclopedia of African American Education defines a Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) as,

A term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Personal Stories

There are many stories that I could share with you concerning my interactions with race and racism, however, three distinct events stand as seminal moments in my life. There are other events that occurred throughout my life, yet the stories that follow shaped me as an African American woman and informed me as a researcher. I am not certain of the exact date or place or time of my overwhelming desire and my unrelenting need to research and write about race and racism. However, what I know for sure is I consciously opted to answer the call.

I was warned by well-intentioned colleagues concerned about my non-tenured position not to stir the race and racism pot. I nodded to acknowledge their concerns. However, I continued my pursuit, hearing a resounding, “Rochelle, never ever quit,” in my mother’s voice. The need to write about race and racism was also stoked by a class I took with Dr. Richard Schmertzling, entitled Race, Culture, and Schooling (RCS). I sat in this class during the summer of 2013 and listened to other students not unlike myself share their stories about race and racism. Our motto in this class was, “What is spoken in RCS stays in RCS.” This motto allowed our truths about a challenging topic to be uttered in a safe and nonjudgmental space.

This is what I know for sure, African American women in the United States and in higher education as its microcosm occupy a presence and space that is characterized by

“internalized racial wounding and the accepted notion of aesthetic inferiority in relation to whiteness” (Harley, 2008, p. 21). The position as described by Harley resonated with me. My initial exposure to “racial wounding and the accepted notion of aesthetic inferiority in relation to whiteness” (Harley, 2008, p. 21) did not occur in my home, it did not occur in my school, or in the neighborhood where I lived. My first experience happened on the streets of the Midwestern city where I was reared.

### *Racial Wound One*

The passage below is a reflective memo accounting my introduction to racism.

*It is a summer evening in 1966; a little girl, her sister and her mother sat in a car waiting for her father to finish his shift at a local meat processing plant. In the humid summer evening the little girl was wondering why the windows of the car were not rolled down completely. As she was preparing to question her mother about this fact, a little White boy and his father walk by, the little boy said to his father, “look, look at those coons, black coons in a black car,” the little boy’s father laughs. Forgetting the summer heat, the little girl questions her mother, “Why did that little boy call us coons?” “What are coons?” The mother’s reply, “He and his father are not nice people and coons, raccoons are small animals.” The little girl states, “We are not little animals, we are people.” Her mother, “I know dear, I know,” as she fights back the tears. I was that little girl who was wondering in the heat. I was the little girl who witnessed another child spewing words of venom in her direction. I was the little girl of the mother who was trying to shield her child from the realities of the world. I was the little girl who was receiving her first lesson in racism.*

I was a 6-year-old when this incident occurred, yet I remember it as if it were yesterday. I watched as my mother tried to compose herself after answering the questions of her curious child. I remember the event well, yet what was most telling was my mother’s reaction to what the little boy said to his father. In that moment, my mother was concerned for her own safety and the safety of her young daughters. My mother’s feelings of concern during this encounter remain with me even now as I write this dissertation.

## *Racial Wound Two*

During the fall semester of my sophomore year of high school I was waiting at the bus stop for the Bi-State bus, which serves the greater St. Louis area to come. After a long day of classes and after-school activities I wanted to relax and regroup as I rode the bus home. I was loaded down with text books, notebooks, and binders that I carried in my arms. I could see the bus in the distance. I knew that the driver would make several stops before the bus would reach the stop where I was standing. Admittedly, I was tired, hungry, and a little testy from the day's schedule. I stood and waited impatiently for the bus. Finally arriving at my stop, I climbed the stairs clumsily carrying books, paid my fair, and looked for a seat. Unfortunately, all of the seats were taken. I made my way to the mid-section of the bus and spotted a seat next to an older White woman. She placed her groceries on the seat next to her. I was grateful; I found a seat and would not have to stand for the 30-minute ride home.

With the courtesy and politeness, I was taught since my childhood, I asked the woman if she would move her groceries so that I might sit down. She scowled at me and replied, "I'm not going to move my groceries so that some little nigger gal can sit down next to me. Go stand at the back where the rest of your people are." I stood in shock and embarrassment. She did not lower her voice when she insulted me, and she did not move her groceries. I remember staring at her in disbelief. Then it happened. I disregarded my mother's and my father's instruction about respecting adults. I sat down on the edge of the seat. I squashed her grocery bags. She protested and abruptly placed her groceries in her lap and on the floor of the bus. I adjusted so that I sat squarely on the seat. She inched closer to the window, and I inched closer to her. These actions went on for several

moments, each time she tried to move away from me, I moved closer to her. This was my moment of protest and activism against her caustic racist words.

My actions did not reflect how I was taught to act. But on that day at that moment something in me rose up in protest to her racist comment. I was angry, and I did not care. She was undeserving of my respect. I reached my stop prior to hers and exited the bus. I was so angry that I cried from the bus stop to my home, some two city blocks away. My tears were scalding. I did not care that people passing on the street saw my tears.

This was my coming of age story; I was 16 years old when this confrontation occurred. I was never called a *nigger* before. Profanity and racial epithets were not allowed in my home. We spoke to each with respect and love. Even when I argued with my sister it required that the tone and volume of our voices did not reveal our wrath or reach our parents' ears. My parents would not stand for it. I arrived home to an empty house after the episode with the White woman on the bus.

My mother arrived shortly thereafter. We engaged in an extensive conversation about my interaction with the woman. I was chided by my mother for my actions toward this older woman. She said, "Rochelle, you cannot control how people speak to you or how they treat you but you can control your response to them." I protested my mother's comment. She continued, "Never stoop to the level of ignorance or stupidity of another person. Remain upright and remember who you belong to and who you represent." My response was, "Yes ma'am."

### *Racial Wound Three*

The year was 1977. It was August. I was not yet 18 years old. I graduated from high school the previous May and was accepted to a predominantly White institution



(PWI) in the Midwest 4 hours from the city in which I lived. My decision to attend a PWI was both personal and practical.

On the personal side, I was reared in a segregated environment. I lived in an African American neighborhood. I attended African American schools including elementary, middle, and high school. I was taught by African American teachers. I worshipped at an African American church. My family socialized with other African Americans. My parents worked with non-African American people; however, we never socialized with them. We were never invited into their homes, and they were never invited into ours. This homogenized environment led to my choice to attend a PWI.

Despite the fact that I was nurtured and loved in such an environment, my 17-year-old self made the conscious decision to change the setting. I desired diversity. I wanted to experience life outside of the homogeneity of my cloistered upbringing. This Midwestern PWI was the answer to my longing for change. However, this Midwestern PWI was less than 1% African American at the time of my enrollment. What my 17-year-old self could not know at that time was that she was ill-equipped for such an abrupt change.

On a practical note, I transferred into this university as a sophomore student. My freshman year was completed at a junior college in my home city as a dual enrollment student while still in high school. Unlike any other university I applied to, this university accepted 32 hours of college course work. This sealed my decision. I accepted my admission and enrolled in classes.

Organic Chemistry, referred to as “O-Chem,” was the next chemistry course in a long line of courses that I needed to take to complete my baccalaureate degree. It was the

next chemistry course required for my minor. I took that course in my first semester. It was my first time away from home. Reflecting on that moment I realized I was homesick, and I was academically immature. I was failing O-Chem. I struggled to maintain the academic success I achieved in high school.

In that never-quit spirit, I went to the professor for assistance with the content and to voice my concern regarding my status in his class. I was 1 of 10 students in the class. I was 1 of 2 females, and I was the only African American student enrolled in O-Chem that semester. I was in the library studying for an upcoming O-Chem exam. As I left the library to return to my dorm room; I noticed the light in the professor's office was on. I assumed he remained on campus. I remember ascending the stairs to his office in the science building. His lone office was located on the middle landing in an alcove.

When I reached his office there he sat with his back to the glass-paned door. I knocked timidly. He turned and gestured for me to come in. He was slightly agitated when he saw me, and I thought it was because I disturbed him. I entered with my text book and notes in hand and announced the nature of my impromptu visit. The following conversation ensued.

"Miss Bornett, what do you want?" "Professor Lewis, I have just come from the library, and I saw your office light on. I was wondering if you could help me with a concept I am having a hard time trying to understand." "What specific concept? You are having a hard time with many of the concepts in organic chemistry. Have you considered dropping the course?" "Professor Lewis, I would like to take the next exam and then decide if I should drop the course. I believe with more study and your tutoring I can be successful." "Miss Bornett, I am not sure if success in organic chemistry is in your future.

Your people usually do not do well in higher math and sciences.” I was stunned. What did he mean by my people, my female people, my people who are struggling with organic chemistry people, or my people as in Black people? He looked at me impassively as he waited for my response. I met his expressionless stare with a frown and consternation. After processing my mental response, my physical response was immediate and visceral.

Prior to his statement concerning “your people,” I began to open my books and sit at the side chair, which sat adjacent to his desk. I knew he meant Black people. I did not know what to do. This was a professor. This was an adult. I did not know what to do. I banged my books closed; I picked up everything I brought to his office. I walked to the door, opened it, and slammed it as I exited. The glass in the door rattled and I spoke a silent prayer to God. Please do not let the glass pane shatter, as I stomped down the stairs. I knew my parents would not be able to pay for the broken glass door. I never told a soul about this exchange. I did not know who to tell. Who would believe me? Who would take the word of a Black student over that of a White professor?

I continued to study for the impending organic chemistry exam. On a subsequent night after my interaction with that professor, I went to study in the library as I usually did. Imagine my surprise to find everyone in my class in a study room in the library being tutored by that professor. I entered the room to everyone’s surprise. I joined the study group. The other female in the class asked me why I was not in attendance during the other study sessions. I had no response. I did not know study sessions were being held. I asked how she knew about the previous study sessions. She replied, “He told all of us on the first day of class that he would hold these study sessions every week in the library. It was during break and I think you left the classroom.” This information was not placed in

the syllabus. I sat stunned, in that moment I realized I was purposely left out of the loop. I remained silent about this professor's treatment of me. I never told a soul, my mother and father included.

I did not pass organic chemistry that semester. The professor withdrew me passing, for that I was grateful. I took the course the following semester. I remained the only African American student in the course. I attended all of the tutorial sessions and passed O-Chem with a grade of "C." That was the only "C" I made in my academic career. The class was taught by Professor Lewis, he was the only chemistry professor on that small Christian campus.

I would never be the same after these events. I went through a very outwardly Afrocentric period, which included an immersion into Black history and culture as well as the impact of race and racism in and on America. I developed a disdain for all things White. I was injured on each of these occasions. I never acknowledged the unhealed injuries that remained from these racist encounters. Like any wound left unattended, these injuries festered and became putrid.

I did not give myself an opportunity to heal nor did I seek assistance from others who might understand through what I had gone. I turned this derision inward, I became an overachiever. I was determined to prove that my oppressors were wrong about my name, my place, and my intellect.

#### A Professional Story

They have been stereotyped as nurturing, scheming, lewd, and unintelligent. In ways parallel to many of the obstacles black men face, they are assigned personally limiting occupational roles—servant, laborer, mammy, prostitute,

church lady, matriarch, etc. Black women who become professionals, entrepreneurs, or even successful entertainers are often viewed as “strong” black women or else are perceived to be emotionally cold, selfish, and aggressive in unwomanly ways. Missing from the traditional occupational roles for black women, to this day, is a wide-scale recognition of their intellectual competence. (Zack, 1998, p. 81)

In summer 2004 I, an African American woman, from the Midwestern United States became a faculty member teaching at a predominantly White institution (PWI) in the Deep South. Prior to this position, I lived 25 years of my professional life first as a Nuclear Medicine Technologist and in the later aspect of my career as a healthcare services manager of nuclear medicine departments, a private physician’s office, and a free-standing imaging center. In the healthcare environment, I was respected for my knowledge, experience, and expertise. Seldom did I have an opportunity to focus on my gender or ethnicity in this environment. The healthcare setting required coordinated care of the patient as central to the process. Caring for the patient in a knowledgeable and efficient manner while reducing or maintaining costs garnered the respect of administrators, physicians, colleagues, patients, and their families. I was well respected in this milieu.

However, when I transitioned to higher education, I was a novice. I had no teaching experience. What I possessed was an extensive knowledge of nuclear medicine technology and decades of success in healthcare. Prior to my hiring, the university was searching for an individual to build and direct a new nuclear medicine technology program. After several failed attempts by the university to hire a director, I interviewed

for the position and was hired. There was nothing in place, no template to follow for how to begin this Herculean task. What became my mantra during this time was a statement that my mother quoted when anyone in our immediate family faced some monumental, seemingly insurmountable challenge or task, “How do you eat an elephant?” We would all chime in, “one bite at a time.” So I went about consuming my elephant bite by bite.

Devouring my elephant meant creating a network of community partnerships with area nuclear medicine departments and their managers to insure that the incoming students would have clinical education sites to attend. Designing the program of study, developing each course according to the professional curriculum standards, advising students interested in becoming members of the inaugural class, and writing a self-study for program accreditation were a few of the priorities early on in my time there. In retrospect, I am sure that I would not have accepted the position if someone had described or shown me the elephant that needed to be consumed to commence this program.

The first students entered the nuclear medicine technology program one year after my hiring. The program was accredited 18 months after its commencement. The site visit was a raving success, and I achieved the maximum number of years of accreditation for a new program; I was riding high on this achievement. My department head and colleagues lauded me, the university celebrated me, and I was enjoying the best time in my career. I loved where I worked, I loved the work I was doing, and I loved the people with whom I was working. This environment was Nirvana for me. Never in my career had all of these components come together for me in such “divine providence.”

During my third year at the university, I saw signs of the honeymoon coming to an end. The department head who was my hiring manager, the one who nurtured and guided me as a neophyte faculty member, the one whom I cherished, died abruptly. Dr. Sarah C. Graham [pseudonym], who I lovingly referred to as Dr. G. was a White woman who spent 28 years as a faculty member at the institution where I taught. She was well-respected by administrators, faculty members across campus, alumni, and by faculty, staff, and students of the Allied Health Department [pseudonym]. The influence she wielded stretched beyond the confines of the campus. She was a power broker within the imaging community of the city of Savannah as well as in the state of Georgia. When she died, I lost my footing in this place. She paved the way for me and shielded me from the campus climate that would have gobbled me up had it not been for her. Now that she was gone, the realities of what it meant to be an African American woman faculty member at a PWI in the Deep South became glaringly clear. The honeymoon was indeed over.

Now unpleasant interactions with colleagues and students across campus seemed to occur frequently. In the past, I would have talked these distasteful exchanges over with my department head, but she was no longer available. In this new climate, I began to question myself. I began to feel paranoid. Did that colleague just mention my race? Did I hear another colleague question my professionalism based on the texture and length of my natural hair? Did that student imply that I was hired because of Affirmative Action? Did that colleague say that I was palatable? All I could say to myself in this current environment was, “Dorothy, we are not in Kansas anymore, this is definitely the Land of Oz, the place where wicked witches and screaming monkeys run rampant!”

Time passed with incredible speed, I busied myself with preparing students for exams, laboratories, and national examinations in nuclear medicine. I was a woman on a mission, the same mission of overachievement and proof from my childhood and my young adult life. I was determined to assuage the perceived doubts from my colleagues regarding my ability to excel as a faculty member in this academic environment.

When I arrived on the campus of the PWI where I taught, I was energized by the potential and opportunity that lay ahead. There was no way for me to know and comprehend on that first day, the impact that the campus climate would eventually have on me. Because I was new to this environment, I searched for opportunities and people who would assist me in adapting to this unfamiliar place. My department head, now deceased, was instrumental during my initial years. Whatever I needed or whenever I needed information or an entrée into a place, if she did not have the answer, she pointed me in the direction of someone who did. This ease of navigation ended upon her death.

When I continued to need a roadmap or guide in this setting, no one was forthcoming or extended a hand when I asked for help. This was a novel experience for me. My healthcare background included apprenticeships and being a member of a healthcare team. In this unfriendly and “chilly” situation, I often ran into brick walls or found myself wandering in a maze of missteps. Like the stated position of Turner and Myers (2000), I was keenly aware of my marginalized position and “outsider” status.

I was reminded on many occasions by colleagues on campus that I was not a “real” academician because I came from a “vocational” background. As stated by a colleague, “If you want respect on this campus, you will need more than your race, gender, and your background as a technician. We do not give points for being Black, we



do not give points for being a girl, and we do not give points for knowing how to push buttons.” I was stunned by these comments, not knowing how to respond, being completely in shock and taken aback, the only thing that rose up in me on this day was my “fight or flight” internal mechanism. I chose flight because the fight in me would have been from a “go for the jugular, take no prisoners, angry Black woman place.” So, I retreated to fight another day. I swallowed the pain and anguish of this encounter. This confrontation left me stunned and questioning my continued desire to be employed by an institution that would have an employee like the one who passed judgement on me. I never shared this encounter with another soul. I was embarrassed because I did not know the appropriate weapons for this battle. I was angry because this colleague did not see my humanity, to him I was not a woman but a girl and on this day he exerted his White male dominion over my “otherness.”

My experiences and those of others (Gusa, 2010; Harley, 2008; Jayakumar, Howard, Allen, & Han, 2009) like me demonstrate that the need remains for increased understanding of the ways that campus climate negatively impacts the lives of African American women faculty. The literature on this subject posits that the campus climate at PWIs is “chilly” or hostile (Gusa, 2010; Harley, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009) toward this population. The hostile environment described in the literature and the hostile environment that I experienced on the campus of the PWI where I was teaching marginalizes, isolates, and alienates African American women faculty and reduces their chances for success. It is my hope that the counter-narratives from the six African American faculty women of my research will provide clarity and increase understanding

of issues involving the campus climate of PWIs, which contributes to the attrition of African American faculty, staff, and students (Stanley, 2006a; Turner & Myers, 2000).

Thirteen years have passed since I moved to Savannah, Georgia. I came to Savannah for a job I did not keep and have remained for a career I am not sure I want. The career is not the issue; however, the campus environment has oftentimes left me wanting a better climate in which to work. Yet I have persisted despite my reservations, and the sound of my mother's voice, like tinnitus representing the constant ringing in my head, "Rochelle, never ever quit." The writing of this dissertation is my catharsis, my Balm in Gilead. The time of my healing is now. Let the purification begin!

#### Background of the Study

Currently the United States of America is under siege from without and within. Our enemies have changed strategies and tactics. No longer are our borders being invaded by enemies flying planes into our monuments of finance, freedom, and power. The threat and the fight have moved to cyberspace. As reported by national news outlets on television and in print, America's enemy combatants have used the Internet to influence U.S. citizens and others to commit acts of terror on homeland soil. Lone wolves have taken up weapons of destruction to kill and maim fellow citizens in an attempt to crush America from within.

A 2016 presidential candidate promoted fear, wall-building, racism, isolationism, sexism, xenophobia, islamophobia, and homophobia. White Supremacy is being openly advocated and has once again taken center stage. The attempt to normalize racialized rhetoric has openly moved into the national dialogue and is no longer cloaked as secret conversations in cloistered spaces.

African Americans are dying in the street at the hands of police officers whose motto is to “Protect and Serve.” The organization of Black Lives Matter has been pitted against police across the country. “Make America Great Again” is coded rhetoric for let us return to a time in America when Whiteness reigned supreme and Black and Brown people understood their place as debased and marginalized. The time referred to by “Make American Great Again” was not great for African Americans and other people of color.

This candidate is now president and under this administration, our national identity and culture as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion are under attack. Members of the far edge of right-wing politics have been elevated to ranks of chief strategist, national security advisor, and attorney general. What does any of this have to do with institutions of higher education you might ask as the reader? This is my response, opinion, and premise, the campuses of American colleges and universities are microcosms of the greater United States. Americans who lean right in their political views argue that American colleges and universities are the home of left leaning faculty and political correctness (Graham, 2017; Gross, 2016). However, what happens in America does not always shape and influence the thoughts of and occurrences by students and their interests on campuses of higher education across the country. According to recent research reported in *Inside Higher Ed* in 2018,

What hasn't been documented (aside from periodic anecdotes) is a claim made by many on the right: that liberal professors indoctrinate or intimidate students to share their beliefs. New research suggests that college is a time when students gain appreciation of multiple perspectives. (Jaschik, 2018, para. 2)

The research finds that, after one year in college, many students view both liberals and conservatives more favorably than when they arrived on campus (and by about the same margins). (Jaschik, 2018, para. 3)

And the researchers suggest that this shows that college—or at least the freshman year—isn't a time when students are indoctrinated, but is actually a time when they meet people with different views and come to respect them (regardless of whether they end up changing their own views). And the researchers believe the reason for their findings isn't about what goes on in the classroom, but is based on interactions with fellow students. (Jaschik, 2018, para. 4)

The research documents that it is not the left-leaning professorate and the environment of American colleges and universities that influence students that attend college. What influences the political thoughts of students attending college is other students who hail from different places and political leanings who meet for the first time in American colleges and universities.

Capturing the counter-narratives (Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of these six African American faculty women taught me how to face and process professional adversity; how to advocate for myself in the academic setting; how to create value-added moments inside and outside of the classroom; as well as, how to establish a professional identity that elevates authenticity, expertise, and a sense of belonging.

It is my hope that sharing these counter-narratives, narratives that demonstrate the perspective of life as narrated by people who are marginalized or whose voice has been minimized or silenced as opposed to the traditional expectation of stories from

individuals in positions of power, will promote other African American faculty and faculty of color to share their stories and experiences. It is my further hope that the sharing of these counter-narratives will encourage the campus community to participate in challenging conversations regarding race and race relations. The time to hold these conversations is long overdue. Therefore, I encourage the readers of my dissertation to take center stage with me and open a dialogue on race.

### Statement of the Problem

At first glance, the literature appears replete with articles, reviews, and books chronicling the experiences of African American women faculty teaching at PWIs. However, upon closer examination, the literature (Gutierrez y Muhs, Niemann, Gonzalez, & Harris, 2012; Stanley, 2006a; Stanley, 2006b; Yenika-Agbaw & Hildago-de-Jesus, 2011) addresses this population as an aggregate of the broader subject faculty of color teaching at PWIs. From my perspective, approaching this research as an amalgam dilutes the culture of African Americans and their impact on and contributions to the academy. Furthermore, as I perceive it, this position assumes that the experiences of faculty of color represent the experiences shared by all faculty members of different ethnicities. No one individual of a group or a group of a specific ethnicity as a whole can represent the experiences of all faculty of color. Additionally, this homogenized approach does not take into consideration the arduous history, lasting effects, and the tenuous relationship that African Americans maintain with the majority culture in the United States.

Moreover, the approach of fusing the voices of all faculty of color essentializes the conversation and posits that “all people perceived to be in a single group think, act,

and believe the same things in the same ways” (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 40). This position silences the myriad of female voices and counter-narratives, introduces misinterpretation of individual experiences and perceptions, and promotes stereotypes. Lastly, essentializing faculty of color perpetuates the infantilized position of women and confirms the extant belief of society, that a woman should be “seen and not heard.” “Therefore, when grouping faculty of color together, there is a danger of overlooking the unique circumstances and needs of specific groups” (Jayakumar et al., 2009, p. 556).

African American women live in a society that devalues both their race and their gender and in the twenty-first century are still searching for validation in America and in academe (Collins, 2009; Harley, 2008; Harris-Perry, 2011; Phillips, 2006). African American women in the United States and in higher education as its microcosm occupy a presence and space that is characterized by “internalized racial wounding and the accepted notion of aesthetic inferiority in relation to whiteness” (Harley, 2008, p. 21). This position as described by Harley resonates with me.

The lives of African American women are inseparable from the history of racist and sexist oppression that left them debased in American culture. Mirroring this position, the academic culture of PWIs marginalized African American faculty women preventing their incorporation into the mainstream of the academy (Turner & Myers, 2000).

### Research Goals

The primary research goals of this study were to investigate, illuminate, and document the experiences of African American women faculty members employed by 4-year PWIs in the Deep South. Many studies have been conducted on faculty of color at 4-year PWIs across the country (Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Hendrix, 2007; Jean-Marie &

Lloyd-Jones, 2011; Turner & Myers, 2000) although I found a few studies in the Deep South, there has not been a concerted effort to conduct studies regarding African American women faculty at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South. The research I located on African American women faculty at these institutions was conducted and concentrated in the states of California (Harris & Gonzalez, 2012), Texas (Stanley, 2006a; Stanley, 2006b), and Arizona (Turner, 2002) in the Southwest; Illinois (Berry & Mizelle, 2006) in the Midwest; Kentucky (Harley, 2008; Wallace, Moore, Wilson, & Hart, 2012), North Carolina (Glenn, 2012), and Mississippi (Kupenda, 2012) in the South, Pennsylvania (Yenika-Agbaw & Hildago-de-Jesus, 2011) and New York (Sue, 2010) in the Northeast. Research on African American women faculty members at PWIs in the Deep South was sparse at best. Therefore, my research contributed to and broadened the scholarly discourse on the topic by including counter-narratives from African American faculty women from this area of the United States.

I wanted to illuminate the stories African American women faculty members tell about who they are, how they became that woman and the contribution of campus climate to their professional, personal, and social identity. After reading Stanley's (2006a) narratives gathered in an auto-ethnographic qualitative research project I realized that faculty of color were often identified by the majority members in academe through the characteristics of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and/or socioeconomic status. Their academic preparedness, intellectual and scholarly contributions, along with their teaching experience were diminished and disregarded by the majority members of the academy (Harley, 2008; Turner, 2002). Faculty of color were noted mainly by the demographic characteristics they exhibited (Harley, 2008;

Stanley, 2006a; Stanley et al., 2003; Turner, 2002). The narratives of these women as recorded by Stanley (2006a), further intimated that they were not given the opportunity to define their own identities in the environment of the academy. This approach to African American women faculty was not sufficient for me and further inspired me to follow my desire to gather the narratives of these special women.

Additionally, a goal of this research was to identify the strategies that African American women faculty used to navigate the campus climate at their respective PWIs. It is important that this information be gathered and disseminated so that other African American women faculty or graduate students desiring to enter the academy might learn from and employ these strategies.

Moreover, the in-depth interviews I conducted with these six African American faculty women employed by or retired from colleges and universities in the Deep South illuminated some similarities and congruencies with the scholarly discourse as well as some discrepant information. The interviews also exposed the unique experiences and narratives of each of these six women. Their unique experiences and perceptions regarding their respective PWIs allow this study to be distinguished from other scholarly works about this population and this subject matter.

Ultimately and seemingly the loftiest of all of the goals of this research was that it be a catalyst for the commencement of an increase in courageous campus dialogues among the members of the campus communities represented by the participants of this study. Additionally, it is my intention to write articles that tell the stories of these six African American women faculty. I hope the publication and dissemination of these articles will ignite campus programming, initiate curriculum expansion to include or



increase discussion on race and race relations, and will encourage the members of campuses of my participants and other campuses to accept difference, embrace diversity, and change campus climate in a positive manner for faculty, staff, and students of color in general and for African-American faculty, staff, and students specifically. To accommodate these goals, I sought to answer four overarching research questions.

### Research Questions

Research questions designed to guide the structure of this qualitative study on African American women faculty at Predominantly White Institutions in the Deep South include:

1. What were the experiences of six African American women faculty at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South as they intersected or not with race and racism?
2. How did six African American women faculty members at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South experience and perceive campus climate in relationship to their teaching, service, and scholarship?
3. What stories did these six African American women faculty members at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South tell about themselves and their experiences with campus climate that affected their professional, personal, and social identities?
4. What was learned from the experiences and perceptions of these six African American women faculty who successfully or unsuccessfully navigated the campus climate at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South?

In response to losing my beloved department head, needing assistance navigating a new professional environment, and experiencing an air of incivility from some of my colleagues on campus, I employed a practice from my previous professional life, I sought

answers from my professional community. I wanted to know what the best practices were. I wanted to grasp information gleaned from other professionals in academe. Guided by the aforementioned research questions and motivated by my quest for survival strategies, I sought information from the professional and scholarly discourse on the subject of African American women faculty employed by PWIs in general and PWIs in the Deep South specifically. What follows in the next chapter is the information provided by the academic professional community.

## Chapter II

### PROFESSIONAL AND SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE

A review of the professional and scholarly discourse on race, gender, and teaching at PWIs provides a synopsis of plentiful themes, which have materialized as African American women faculty attempted to integrate and navigate the halls of academe. Copious quantities of literature (Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Stanley, 2006a; Yenika-Agbaw & Hildago-de-Jesus, 2011) pertaining to faculty of color and their experiences in the academy exist. However, the literature on the experiences of African American women faculty is frequently an aggregated feature of this literature (Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Hendrix, 2007; Jean-Marie & Lloyd-Jones, 2011; Turner & Myers, 2000). Moreover, closer scrutiny of the literature also revealed that the empirical research on their experiences teaching in a predominantly White setting is sparse (Antonio, 2002; McGowan, 2000; Stanley, 2006b; Stanley, Porter, Simpson, & Ouellet, 2003). Review of the professional and scholarly discourse will provide an overview of several issues pertaining to African American women faculty and their experiences adapting to the campus climate of PWIs. The overview addresses statistics on African American women faculty; campus climate and collegiality; race, gender, and identity; teaching; scholarship; service; and tenure and promotion.

#### Statistics on African American Women Faculty

It has been historically recognized that African American faculty had limited participation in mainstream majority institutions of higher education. During the years

prior to the United States Supreme Court decision of 1954 (*Brown v. Board of Education*), educational policies favoring separation of educational environments and opportunities for European American and African American students were guaranteed through the passage of laws. This segregated and dual system of higher education assured that “there were few if any racial minorities on the faculties of predominantly White colleges and universities” (Turner & Myers, 2000, p. 61). Current U.S. statistics on African American women faculty maintain this historical perspective.

The 2015 report from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Educational Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is regarded as one of the premier sources of available data examining current trends in faculty participation in higher education. According to NCES Table 315.20. (2015), records that represent the most currently available statistics, African American (non-Hispanic) women represented only 2.17% (17, 527) of the total 807,032 full-time teaching faculty employed by institutions of higher education in comparison to 32.6% (263,472) for White women and 54.3% (438,789) for White men. What implication do these figures suggest when interpreted against the 7/1/2016 estimated U.S. population of 323,127,513 people? According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2016a), African American women represented 13.0% (42,975,959) of the total U.S. population (Quick Facts). To equal the representation of African American women in the U.S., the number of African American women teaching in higher education would have to be increased approximately four-fold. These comparison data also characterize the underrepresentation of African American women in full-time faculty teaching positions.

Further examination of the data indicated at the academic ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor, African American women represent a miniscule 2.35% (9,219) of the total 387,688 full-time teaching positions at the previously mentioned ranks when compared to White men who hold 56.4% (218,955) and White women at 41.1% (159,514). The 2015 records of the U.S. Department of Education's NCES further revealed at specific academic ranks, African American women still fare no better.

The 2013 report from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Educational Sciences National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) was the last time data was collected on academic rank, tenure status, and race of faculty. At that time, African American women numbered only 1,916 (1.2%) of the total tenured full-time professors (166,415). During the same period, White men accounted for 110,561 (66%) and White women 34,363 (20.6%). When the data for women faculty are disaggregated from the statistics including males, gender inequities could possibly explain why there is significant disparity at the rank of full professor. However, when the statistics for women faculty (both African American and White) are disaggregated at the full professor rank, other factors that contribute to the apparent disparity must be considered.

Several theories evolved to offer a suggestion that explains the disparities that exist in the participation rates of African American women compared to other groups in higher education. The tumultuous legacy of race and gender relations in America is chief among the reasons given for the disparity in numbers (Stanley, 2006b). Opportunities for African American women to work as faculty in higher education are affected by gender as well as race and ethnicity (Stanley, 2006a; Turner & Myers, 2000). African American

women suffer the “double bind” of being both Black and female (Stanley, 2006a). African American women live in a society that devalues both their gender and their race. Higher education is a microcosm of society. As such, higher education often also devalues African American women, which is clear when looking at the literature on campus climate and collegiality.

### Campus Climate and Collegiality

“The culture and climate at many PWIs is one of hostility toward African Americans in general and African American women in particular” (Harley, 2008, p. 30). The campus climate of PWIs is often perceived as “chilly” for many faculty of color and students of color alike (Gusa, 2010; Jayakumar et al., 2009). Campus climate illustrates the manner in which campus life is perceived by the inhabitants of the campus. Campus climate determines the temperature of the campus and assists the inhabitants with identifying the degree to which the climate is deemed hospitable or inhospitable (Aguirre, 2000; Harvey, 1991; Stanley, 2006a; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001; Turner, 2002; Turner, 2003) for African Americans and other faculty of color. When describing campus climate and their experiences at PWIs African American faculty and other faculty of color use terms such as “alienation,” “isolation,” “marginality,” and “invisibility” (Allison, 2008, p. 644; Orelus, 2013, pp. 4-5; Stanley, 2006a, p. 703). Invisibility is the sling that hurls African American women faculty and other faculty of color into perceptions of being marginalized, isolated, and alienated within the walls of academe. Gause (2011) pointed out, “Various researchers point to the ways in which faculty of color are marginalized, erased, silenced, or ignored once hired at predominantly White institutions and how they are simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible, seen and not

heard” (p. 56). Ellison (1995), an African American himself, gave voice to the plight of being visibly invisible.

I am invisible; understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and nothing except me. Nor is my invisibility exactly a matter of biochemical accident to my epidermis. That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality. I am not complaining, nor am I protesting either. It is sometimes advantageous to be unseen, although it is most often rather wearing on the nerves. (p. 3)

I have wondered, how can one be guilty of hostility or segregation toward what cannot be seen? How can indiscernible margins be acknowledged by those occupying the center? It appears to me the position of those who represent the majority culture on the campuses of PWIs is that they cannot be held responsible for that which remains unseen. Moreover, African American women faculty experience life on the campuses of PWIs as living in two worlds (Stanley, 2006a, p. 704). Two worlds represented by the tug-of-war that exists between the culture of the university and the ethnic culture of the individual. Du Bois (1903/1995) explained this duality in the following quote, “One ever feels his twoness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings;

two warring ideals in one dark body, whose strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (p. 3).

For me, the question remains, how do African American women faculty members reconcile this dichotomy? Many have had to develop coping mechanisms or strategies to navigate the dyad of these opposing cultures. One such strategy is “code switching”—“the ability to apply parts of their separate value systems to different situations as appropriate” (Sadao, 2003, p. 410) often demonstrated through changes in speech patterns, adaptations in dress or hair style. . . . The implicit and explicit ethnic bias associated with the campus climate of PWIs, which requires African American women to find and employ such strategies, continues to be a factor in the unsuccessful recruitment, retention, and tenure and promotion of faculty of color (Sadao, 2003; Thompson, 2008; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006). It is imperative that faculty, staff, and students at PWIs concerned with the attrition of African American faculty, staff, and students (because of a chilly or hostile campus climate) begin to realize and understand how ethnic bias, marginality, and discrimination are the results of White mainstream ideology and White privilege (Gusa, 2010).

The consideration of campus climate is not limited to institutional practices; faculty of color must also navigate relationships with their majority colleagues. In Stanley’s (2006a) review of the literature on the topic, she pointed out “collegiality is a nebulous concept in the college and university environment” (Stanley, 2006a, p. 714), and for many faculty of color being perceived as collegial meant that they had to prove their knowledge, ability, and worthiness as a faculty member. Moreover, the rules of being “collegial” are often unwritten, unstated, and implicitly understood requiring



faculty of color to figure it out on their own (Stanley, 2006a). “The culture of academia is based on an unspoken European American male, class-privileged norm against which minorities and women have historically been compared, calibrated, devalued, and prejudged” (Harrison, 2012, p. 19). In an environment where African American women faculty members “have been weighed, measured, and found wanting” (Black, Helgeland, & Van Rellim, 2001), authentic collegiality is a challenge to attain and maintain. The intersection of race and gender and its influence on identity also contribute to the complexity of finding genuine collegiality in the academy.

#### Race, Gender, and Identity

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (Sojourner Truth, (1797-1883): Ain't I A Woman section, para. 2).

In 1851, during her *Ain't I a Woman* address, Sojourner Truth was searching for validation as a Black, formerly enslaved woman. The words of Sojourner Truth ring true today. In the 21st Century, African American women faculty members are still searching for validation in America and in academe. Individually and collectively, “African

American women at PWIs suffer from a form of race fatigue—the syndrome of being over extended, undervalued, and unappreciated” (Harley, 2008, p. 21). Faculty of color describe through narratives how they were identified by the majoritarian members in academe in terms of attributes salient to their gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and socioeconomic status (Stanley, 2006a).

Negotiation of identity is a complex and multilayered phenomenon; however, the identities of African American women faculty and other faculty of color are compartmentalized through demographic characteristics (marbley, Wong, Santos-Hatchet, Pratt, & Jaddo, 2011; Stanley, 2006b). Despite being prepared by academic training and earned degrees, the identities of African American women faculty are often decided upon and defined without their permission or input by the hegemonic and unwelcoming campus climate of PWIs (marbley, et al., 2011).

The images of African American women held by society have also occupied the impressions of African American women faculty within the academy. These perceptions of African American women have been associated with 19th century images of African American women as mammies (Harley, 2008). During the 20th century, images of African American women depicted them as welfare queens, matriarchs, and menacing, angry, “Sapphires,” (Henderson, Hunter, & Hildreth, 2010). The twenty-first century images of African American women were equated with the supposed unintelligent Rachel Jeantels of the world (worthy to be insulted and humiliated on national television networks as a witness for the prosecution in the trial of George Zimmerman, alleged murderer of Travon Martin). Currently there are too few external representations of African American women as intellectuals or persons of character in the public eye (e.g.,

Maya Angelou, Oprah, Michelle Obama, and Melissa Harris-Perry) or in the academy (e.g., Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and Michele Foster). African American women too often remain invisible to American society as do African American women faculty in academe (Henderson, Hunter, & Hildreth, 2010).

The perception held by many African American women faculty of the campus climate at PWIs is that of being “chilly” or hostile (Gusa, 2010; Harley, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009). This perception is the underpinning of the experiences these faculty members have on campus. It is the ideology of White Institutional Presence (WIP) that impacts the everyday existence of African American women faculty on the campuses of PWIs. Under the influence of WIP through the search committee process, the salience of these beliefs influence the number of African American women faculty on campus. WIP is often seen by African American women faculty as an influence that affect their teaching, scholarship, and service as described in the literature to follow.

The tenure and promotion process at many PWIs in the Deep South is rooted in WIP and guides decisions about who is and who is not worthy of tenure and promotion. WIP determines the climate and collegiality experienced by African American faculty, staff, and students at PWIs. Moreover, WIP is cause for many African American women faculty to question their place and identity on the campuses of PWIs as they attempt to penetrate and navigate the halls of the academy. WIP not only influences the campus climate, it often contributes to the chilliness or hostility found in the classrooms where African American women faculty teach.

## Teaching

Empirical research on the teaching experiences of faculty of color in predominantly White colleges and universities is limited (McGowan, 2000; Stanley, et al., 2003). The research that does exist illustrates that both minorities and women are presumed incompetent by many White students when they enter the higher education classroom (Lazos, 2012). “Minorities and women who enter the classroom must contend with the unconscious biases of their students who have role expectations that are anchored in gender and race stereotypes” (Lazos, 2012, p. 173). When addressing their teaching, many faculty of color comment on experiences in as well as outside of the classroom environment. Faculty experiences reported to Stanley (2006b) in her survey of 23 multicultural faculty members included challenges to their authority and the questioning of their expertise, off-putting behaviors and attitudes from students, criticisms of their teaching methods by students, and complaints to senior level faculty and administrators regarding their teaching ability (Stanley, 2006b).

Stanley (2006b) gleaned the above information and insight from the collection of personal narratives written by 23 multicultural faculty members. This collection of personal narratives can be found in her book entitled *Faculty of Color: Teaching in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities*. Through the personal narratives she captured candid discussions regarding their academic appointments and related activities were documented. Included in the book was an overview of the literature on faculty of color teaching at PWIs and a summary chapter that presented themes that were salient in each participant’s personal counter-narrative. Each contributor related his/her story by sharing specific examples of the struggles they faced as faculty of color at their PWI.

In Hendrix's (2007) tome, she collected the narratives of 10 faculty women of color exploring their academic challenges and successes and their views on being employed by PWIs. The findings of her research pointed to intimidation of faculty and classroom incivility. This intimidation, which in some cases can lead to violence, has mainly been associated with the high school environment. Classroom incivility is rarely discussed in higher education. According to Hendrix (2007), "One potential reason for the absence or abstract discussion of postsecondary classroom incivility is our desire as instructors to avoid appearing unable to control our students" (p. 87). Additionally, Hendrix (2007) pointed out that faculty members did not choose to expose the uncivil behaviors of students and share with other faculty members a problem that many believe is confined to K-12 sector.

Aguirre (2000) gathered a large volume of experiential research on the status of women faculty members that is arranged around the central thesis that the academic environment for women and minority faculty is often experienced as a chilling and alienating environment. He and other authors suggested that faculty of color often encounter White students whose perceptions are biased. These biases are associated with White students' belief that the faculty of color is simply an affirmative-action hire (Hendrix, 2012; Sue, 2010; Sue, Rivera, Watkins, Kim, Kim, & Williams, 2011). A convincing case can be made that classroom dynamics between faculty of color and White students represent a reflection of race relations in our society (Sue, 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the racial prejudices and stereotypes found in society at-large may be reenacted in the post-secondary classroom interactions between faculty of color and students (Sue et al., 2011).

There are multiple methods to evaluate teachers, however, many colleges and universities have come to rely on student evaluations to assess teaching ability. Student evaluations become another example of covert and oftentimes overt attempts to undermine faculty of color (Lazos, 2012). Several studies illustrated that many faculty of color believed they were negatively impacted by student evaluations of their teaching (Delgado & Villalpando, 2002; McGowan, 2000; Stanley et al., 2003; Tusmith & Reddy, 2002; Vargas, 2002). The narratives (Harlow, 2003; Sue et al., 2011) found in the professional and scholarly discourse, disclose that faculty of color often enjoy teaching in the face of the challenges described above. For many faculty of color, the love of teaching is one of the stated reasons for their decision to enter the professoriate (Stanley, 2006b). Scholarship, however represents an area that can contribute to African American women faculty deciding to leave the professoriate despite their love of teaching. Some African American scholars research subjects that are considered “risky” by their colleagues (Holmes, 2008; Orelus, 2013; Stanley, 2006a) because it does not focus on topics that are considered conventional.

### Scholarship

. . . For those of us who are African American and African American women scholars and faculty, what has been particularly frustrating for us is editors’ insensitivity to, and lack of awareness and knowledge of different cultural worldviews.

These authors, like many women faculty and faculty of color, have received editorial feedback that lacked knowledge of and respect for other non-male and non-Euro-centric worldviews and frameworks, such as Black, womanist,

feminist, and multicultural pedagogy, ideology, and theory. For example, the lead author once received a rejection letter from a flagship journal with the following comment in bold: “*The author failed to capitalize bell hooks’ name.*” (marbley, Rouson, Li, Huang, & Taylor, 2015, p. 55)

It is well known among the scholars in the fields sensitive to diversity in education that bell hooks has chosen to never capitalize her name, which made the basis of the rejection a bit absurd.

Research and scholarship conducted by African American faculty women at colleges and universities oftentimes reflect the personal, professional, and/or political interests of the faculty performing these activities (Holmes, 2008; Orelus, 2013; Stanley, 2006). African American women faculty members who choose to investigate and write about African American women issues as well as research them hope their work will both benefit and represent communities of color; however, their scholarly pursuits were deemed “risky” within the academy (Holmes, 2008; Orelus, 2013; Stanley, 2006a). Research that is focused on affirmative action, diversity, institutional climate and culture, and ethnicity is not considered by some to be mainstream, or to cover topics A-list journals would be interested in publishing (Antonio, 2002; Baxley, 2012; Stanley et al., 2003). Scholarly literature on pursuits of these subjects reveal that they benefit higher education (Stanley, 2006b) however, they are not often rewarded within the academy as much as mainstream research that is non-ethnic, non-political, and non-social (Davis, Chaney, Edwards, Thompson-Rogers, & Gines, 2011-2012; Stanley, 2006b).

“Black women in academe encounter epistemological racism” (Davis et al., 2011-2012, p. 168). Many hold research interests highlighting matters affecting non-White



people (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001), which is oftentimes outside traditional research conducted by their White colleagues (Davis et al., 2011-2012). In Bradley's (2005) review of African American women faculty, she chronicled their views regarding how their research was perceived. She reported, this often African American centered research conducted by African American women faculty was discredited or viewed as mediocre by their White American colleagues. A few years earlier, Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) as indicated by their secondary analyses of quantitative and qualitative data collected from surveys and interviews at a large state university in the Great Lakes area indicated that African American women faculty believed opportunities for collaboration in research related to African Americans was limited. This view led them to believe they must alter their research agendas to reflect more mainstream ideas to be perceived as legitimate scholars. Yoshinaga-Itano (2006), projected faculty of color whose research agenda focused on the areas of race, gender, and class often challenged the status quo and therefore encountered resistance from their majority peers.

Resistance is exposed as quality judgments regarding the scholarship activity of faculty of color (Cutts, Love, & Davis, 2012; Stanley, 2006b; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006) as well as the questioning of the quality of venues in which the research of faculty of color was published (Stanley, 2006b; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006). Moreover, "the use of research method not accepted by the academic mainstream are common assessments of the work of faculty of color" (Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006, p. 354). "Although academe is viewed as a liberal place where individuals are free to express their thoughts, those individuals [who are free to express their thoughts] are often from similar backgrounds or share similar experiences" (Thompson, 2008, p. 49). Creating a multicultural climate, which is what I



believe is needed for faculty of color to be appreciated and rewarded for their research interests, entails broadening the expectations for what is seen as quality work, appropriate behavior, and effective working styles (Thompson, 2008; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006).

The qualitative research conducted by Cooper (2006) included nine African American women faculty participants. Her goal was to detect the methods these academic women used in their pursuit of tenure at the respective universities where they taught. One theme recognized among all of the participants was represented in the following quote,

African-American women faculty are overworked and serve on a multitude of committees. They do more than their share of mentoring and mothering minority and majority (White) students. Yet there is still the expectation that they will conduct research and publish at the same rate as their White colleagues, both male and female, who don't have the same hyper-visibility due to race and gender. (p. 1)

African American women faculty are expected to conduct and publish research at the same rate as their White colleagues. However, there is no equity in the expectation that their White colleagues should perform equal amounts of service activities. Until the requirements of teaching, scholarship, and service are standardized across all faculty, or until service is held in the same regard as research and publishing, African American women faculty will continue to be seen as deficient in the area of research activities. This deficiency has an adverse effect on tenure and promotion of African American women faculty. However, if service activities were weighted equally with teaching and research,

the service contributed to the university, the college, the community, and the students by African American women faculty would level the playing field.

### Service

Service although mandated as a tenet of higher education, is often viewed as minimally significant. Service can be in the form of service to the institution, service to the college, service to the department, and service to the community. Different institutions place a different significance on each category of teaching, scholarship, and service. Regardless of how each institution orders the importance of these responsibilities, they must all be accomplished by faculty in order to advance through tenure and promotion processes (Cooper, 2006). Evidence in the literature illustrates that faculty of color spend copious amounts of their time and energy on service activities in higher education (Cooper, 2006; Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Harley, 2008; Stanley, 2006a; Turner, 2002).

Service activities include: “mentoring students of color, serving on university and national recruitment and retention committees focusing on diversity, helping local communities in their educational efforts, mentoring faculty of color and educating majority White faculty, administrators, students, and staff about diversity” (Stanley, 2006b, p. 718-719). According to Harley, 2008, “African American women are generally over-extended in committee work and other service requirements” (p. 25). There is a general belief found in the scholarly discourse (Harley, 2008; Stanley, 2006a; Turner & Myers, 2000) that African American faculty members (and other faculty of color) have different demands and expectations placed on their requirements for service as opposed to their White counterparts. Stanley (2006a) referred to this expectation placed on faculty

of color as “cultural taxation,” the expectation that faculty of color will perform service initiatives through mentoring students of color and participating as diversity representatives on committees. The service expectations placed on White faculty members did not appear to be as high in comparison to African American women faculty and faculty of color (Harley, 2008; Stanley, 2006a; Turner & Myers, 2000).

African American faculty members indicated in previous research (Cooper, 2006; Harley, 2008; Stanley, 2006a; Turner, 2002) they are caught between the cultural and community expectation of “giving back” and the response to requests to help diversify the academic community. In those studies, many faculty of color found themselves engaged in service activities that were not always rewarded by the university, as demonstrated in the results of their promotion and tenure attempts. Historical documentation of early African American women faculty overflowed with evidence of service rendered to the academy as well as the community (Stanley, 2006; Turner & Myers, 2000). The service imbalance that exists between African American and White faculty and the diminution of tenure and promotion reward for that service contributes to the reduced number of African American achieving tenure and promotion. However, other factors also contribute to the small number of African American tenured faculty.

Women of color in America have grown up with a symphony of anger, at being silenced, at being unchosen, at knowing that when we survive, it is in spite of a world that takes for granted our lack of humanness, and which hates our very existence outside of its service. (Lorde, 1984, p. 119)

## Tenure and Promotion

“Research and scholarship are two areas, which represent the hallmark of tenure and promotion” (Harley, 2008, p. 25); however, the path toward tenure and promotion is often paved with ambiguity for faculty of color. The literature is replete with issues regarding the hidden or unwritten rules of the tenure and promotion process sought by faculty of color (Harley, 2008; Holmes, 2008; McCray, 2011; Stanley, 2006a). Research and scholarship of faculty of color, which examines, illuminates, and documents issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and class, place faculty of color at a disadvantage in the tenure and promotion process (Griffin, 2012; Herbert, 2012; Stanley, 2006a; Wong, 2011).

Research on diversity issues are oftentimes discounted or devalued in the tenure and promotion process (Harley, 2008; Holmes, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006a; Wong, 2011; Yenika-Agbaw & Hildago-de Jesus, 2011). Additionally, African American faculty members at PWIs are often expected to publish in journals that are widely accepted by the majority mainstream at PWIs (Allison, 2008; Gregory, 2002). There is however, dissonance between the scholarship of faculty of color and the requirements of journals respected by White scholars (Gregory, 2002). The methods used in the research of African American faculty is oftentimes qualitative in nature, whereas, the editors of these “respected” journals find quantitative methods more acceptable (Gregory, 2002).

Documentation of the tenets of teaching, research/scholarship, and service are the areas required for the tenure and promotion process. African American faculty members find themselves overextended in the amount of service that they render to higher education (Cooper, 2006; Guttierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Harley, 2008; Stanley, 2006a;

Turner & Myers, 2000). African American professors often sit on more committees than their European American colleagues for the purpose of bringing diversity to those committees (Allison, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). Moreover, African American women faculty members also serve as mentors and advisors to African American students. This service activity represents a huge hidden work load that is often unrewarded in the tenure and promotion process (Tuitt, Hanna, Martinez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009). The increased work load associated with the inordinate amount of service decreases the time available that can be dedicated to scholarly activities (Allison, 2008).

Many barriers exist in the process of tenure and promotion for faculty of color, such as negative student evaluations regarding teaching, devalued research subject matter and methods, lack of understanding regarding the rules of tenure and promotion, the time constraints required by their copious service activities, and the hidden workload of serving as mentors to students of color who are also attempting to navigate the campus climate at PWIs (Allison, 2008; Stanley, 2006a; Wood, 2008). As evidenced in the literature (Harley, 2008; Holmes, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006b), African American women faculty and other faculty of color suffer from lack of mentoring on the campuses of PWIs. The literature supports the idea that mentoring assists faculty in general and *faculty of color* specifically during the tenure and promotion process (Harley, 2008; Holmes, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006b; Tuitt et al., 2009; Wong, 2011; Yenika-Agbaw & Hildago-de Jesus, 2011).

### Conclusion

Review of the professional and scholarly discourse regarding African American women faculty at PWIs supports the premise of this study. The premise is race and

racism are endemic in U.S. society and on the campuses of PWIs as a microcosm of U.S. society. Much of what African American women face and are subjected to in society is mirrored on the campuses of the PWIs where they teach. Moreover, WIP affects the experiences of African American women faculty as they conduct their professional lives through teaching, scholarship, and service. Appraisal of the professional and scholarly discourse, therefore, substantiates the need for the research I conducted to uncover the effective strategies that African American women faculty used to navigate the climate of the campuses where they were employed.

As emphasized in the literature on this population, the need for increased dialogue among and between the constituents on the campuses of PWIs exists, this study sought to bring the narratives of African American women faculty in the Deep South to the forefront of the conversation so that their experiences might ignite and/or contribute to that discussion. Review of the literature on faculty of color in general and African American women faculty specifically who taught in predominantly White colleges and universities undoubtedly leaves the impression that more research is needed to fully comprehend their experiences in academe (Stanley, 2006a).

What remains salient after a review of the professional and scholarly discourse on African American women faculty employed by predominantly White Institutions is that there is a myriad of challenges that confront the academy in their effort to address the racism, sexism, and bias that remains prominent on their college and university campuses. My research illustrated through the counter-narratives of six African American women faculty the impact of racism as well as the intersection between racism and sexism that these six women and other African American women faculty experience in

traditionally White colleges and universities across America. To situate my research, it is necessary to view it through the conceptual frames of critical race theory (CRT) and womanism. The following chapter introduces to some and recapitulates for others the tenets of CRT and womanism.

## Chapter III

### CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

#### Birth of a Critical Race Theory-Womanist Scholar

Since the inception of my introduction to race and racism, I have been attempting to resolve at least and understand at best why I always see the presence of race and racism in many of my interactions with members of the majority culture in America. From the time of my initial and subsequent racial woundings, I incessantly searched for an answer to this question. I came to understand that I was sensitive to race and racism partly because I was immersed in predominantly White environments, which tended to emphasize my otherness. From the time that my 17-year-old self decided to attend a PWI in the Midwest until now, my academic and professional lives have occurred within predominantly White environments.

I attended a predominantly White nuclear medicine hospital-based program, I enrolled in and graduated from a predominantly White graduate program and university, I practiced nuclear medicine technology at predominantly White healthcare organizations, I am seeking a doctoral degree from a PWI, and I currently teach at a PWI. I have contended with being the only African American or one of a few African Americans in the majority of these environments.

While enrolled in the course entitled Race, Culture, and Schooling, as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, I was introduced to the theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT). CRT spoke to me. I spent years, decades even attempting to understand or



justify the feelings, thoughts, and internal struggle I was experiencing with race and racism in America. The racial woundings highlighted in chapter one, represent three occurrences among many that I faced and continue to face. Yet, I had no answers that mitigated or lay to rest this internal struggle.

During the aforementioned course, I was introduced to the book, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, co-authored by Delgado and Stefancic (2001). In this book, the authors identified the hallmarks of critical race theory. Upon a thorough reading of these tenets, the internal struggle I acknowledged became clear, and I finally understood the experiences as well as what I considered my obsession with race and racism. Although the tenets of CRT have been adapted over time, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) disclosed the following hallmarks of CRT. The foundational tenets were presented in a parallel manner, each topic holding its own, yet supporting the other tenets. The hallmarks of CRT as listed by Delgado and Stefancic 2001 are:

- Racism is ordinary and not aberrational;
- U. S. society is based on a “White-over color-ascendancy” that advances White supremacy and provides a scapegoat (i.e., Communities of Color) for working-class communities;
- Race and racism as a social construction;
- Interest convergence or material determinism;
- Voice or counter-narrative (storytelling) “Urges Black and Brown writers to recount their experiences with racism and apply their own unique perspectives to assess master narratives and
- Intersectionality and anti-essentialism. (pp 7-9)

The tenets of CRT gave me the answer to my question about why I continue to be obsessed with issues of race and racism. After copious hours of reading books about CRT by Derrick Bell, the man considered the “Father of Critical Race Theory” (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 38), after reading many articles on the subject of CRT, and after absorbing information in articles and books using CRT as a framework, I decided to use CRT to frame my dissertation. Ladson-Billings (2013) exclaimed, “writing about race and racial issues does not necessarily make one a critical race theorist. Those who consider themselves CRT scholars subscribe to a number of the tenets that Delgado and Stefancic (2001) identify as hallmarks of CRT” (p. 37). By embracing and subscribing to the foundational tenets of CRT as summarized by Delgado and Stefancic, another CRT theorist was born. In the upcoming section I will review my understanding of CRT and its place in my study.

### Critical Race Theory

The ahistorical and acontextual nature of much law and “science” renders the voices of the dispossessed and marginalized group members mute. . . . Critical race theorists attempt to inject the cultural viewpoints of people of color, derived from common history of oppression, into their efforts to reconstruct a society crumbling under the burden of racial hegemony. (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 265)

During my immersion into CRT, I felt the need to perform an exhaustive study of the overarching themes as well as the individual tenets that comprise CRT. Each tenet was included as a response to a segment of CRT history. For the readers of my dissertation that may need an introduction to CRT or for those who may not have a thorough understanding of CRT, I think a brief walk through its history is appropriate.

CRT has its foundations in legal analysis, “it can be historically viewed as a sub-division of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) scholarship about race that grew out of several seminal events” (Taylor, 2009, p. 2). CRT evolved in response to a perceived stalling of traditional civil rights litigation in the U.S. in areas involving legislative districting, affirmative action, criminal sentencing, and campus speech codes (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). In the late 1970s through the 1980s, a series of legal articles by legal scholars who included Alan Freeman (1978), Charles Lawrence (1987), and Derrick Bell (1980) among others advanced CRT.

These legal scholars were initially associated with critical legal studies (Brown & Jackson, 2013; Delgado, 1989). The 1978 influential article, *Legitimizing Racial Discrimination through Antidiscrimination Law: A Critical Review of Supreme Court Doctrine* by Alan Freeman highlighted that “the view of racism and racial oppression embedded in traditional legal thinking is that of the perpetrators of racial oppression as opposed to its victims” (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 14).

Charles Lawrence extended the critique of the concept of discrimination introduced by Freeman with his seminal article, “*The Id, the Ego, and Equal Protection Clause: Reckoning with Unconscious Racism*” (1987). This article emphasized the “inherent failings of a legal system that views race discrimination as a product of conscious racial decision making” (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 16). Summarizing Lawrence’s statement, Brown and Jackson (2013), indicated “a large part of the behavior that produces racial discrimination is influenced by unconscious racial motivations” (p. 16).

Bell authored many groundbreaking concepts and works. He introduced the idea of “interest convergence” in a retrospective of the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma* (Bell, 1980). In that discussion he contended that “the interest of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interest of Whites” (p. 523). In 1987, Bell introduced the concept of “racial realism” in his book, *And We are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*. The prominence of “racial realism” is evidenced in Bell’s (1992), seminal work, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. Here Bell proclaimed, “Racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society” (p. ix). Bell went on to state:

Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary “peaks of progress,” short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard-to-accept fact that all history verifies. (p. 12)

CLS was limiting in that it did not take into consideration the racist discourse that affected the progress of civil rights legislation and the experiences of people of color in the judicial system. “Thus, CRT became a logical outgrowth of the discontent of legal scholars of color” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 21). CRT has now found a home in educational research as a tool to analyze the salient and endemic racism found in educational settings.

It is because of the meaning and value imputed to whiteness that CRT becomes an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction, and

construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power. (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 19)

The doctrines of CRT have undergone some adaptations; there are, however, four themes that have remained foundational: racism is endemic and not aberrational; U.S. society is based on a *White-over-color ascendancy* that advances White supremacy; race and racism are social constructions; and storytelling urges individuals of color to become writers to recount their experiences with racism and to apply their own unique perspectives to the assessment of master-narratives (Espino, 2012).

Counter-narratives or counter-storytelling (stories from, by, or about individuals or groups of individuals who have been marginalized by the majority culture) debunk the myths of master-narratives and serve as community builders among those at the margins (Delgado, 1989; Espino, 2012; Hobbel & Chapman, 2009). Moreover, counter-narratives humanize and make familiar the faces that represent those at the margins of society and challenge the perceived wisdom of mainstream ideology by providing a context that allows an understanding and transformation of established beliefs held by those at the center (Hobbel & Chapman, 2009).

African American women faculty members are positioned and perceived by the majority culture (those at the center) to occupy spaces at the margins of the PWIs where they teach (Harley, 2007; Harris, 2012; Harrison, 2012; Stanley, 2006b). Their counter-narratives can become a catalyst for conversation and a pathway by which an understanding of their experiences can enter the academy for the purpose of transformation of the campus constituents and by extension, the climate at these

institutions. While CRT is a major framing theory for my work, it does not stand alone. I coupled it equally with womanism.

### Womanism

CRT equipped me with the required insight necessary to understand my internal struggle and my self-identified obsession with issues of race and racism. The tenets of CRT provided the knowledge I needed to name what I witnessed and was subjected to over a lifetime as an African American living, working, and acquiring a formal education in the United States. However, it did not provide the solutions I required to combat those identified places and spaces of racism. I was not looking for a panacea; however, I was searching for a lens or viewpoint that would mitigate the pathology identified through CRT. I found the remedy in womanist theory.

I am a womanist. It is through this womanist lens that I approach and combat the social injustices and the overt and covert racism that remains endemic in America and on the campuses of PWIs as America's microcosm. Despite the *race neutral* (Lawrence, 1987), *colorblind* (Banks, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2010), and *colormute* (Pollock, 2004) rhetoric that the media and mainstream ideology touts, my lived experiences in the United States and on the campus where I teach, serve as constant reminders of the debased and invisible position that has been assigned to me by the members of the majority culture. In order to fully understand the womanist position, a discussion of feminism and its history is a necessary precursor.

The history of feminism has its roots in women's emancipation. It grew out of suffragists and abolitionist movements in the fight for basic rights of women to vote, own and inherit property, and to be considered as citizens (Jain & Turner, 2012). However,

feminism did not reflect or consider the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and gender (hooks, 1981). The term feminism was challenged by its African American members because of its exclusion of women of color.

A new term emerged that took into consideration Black feminist women, womanist (Collins, 2009; Walker, 1983). Womanist is a term created by Alice Walker (1983), the definition of womanist can be found in the opening pages of her book, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose* (pp. xi-xii). According to Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002),

Womanism is a derivation of womanist and used generally to represent the cultural, historical, and political positionality of African American women, a group that has experienced slavery, segregation, sexism, and classism for most of its history in the United States. (p. 72)

The Walker (1983), explanation of womanist is both extensive and exhaustive; therefore Phillips (2006), the editor of *The Womanist Reader*, summarized the tenets of womanism in the following quote,

[Womanism] is a social change perspective rooted in Black women's and other non-European-American women's everyday experiences and everyday methods of problem solving in everyday spaces, extended to the problem of ending all forms of oppression for all people, restoring the balance between people and the environment/nature, and reconciling human life with the spiritual dimension. I take the perspective that womanism is not feminism. . . . Unlike feminism, and despite its name, womanism does not emphasize or privilege gender or sexism; rather it elevates all sites and forms of oppression. (p. xx)

Womanism was created in response to feminism's exclusion of the concerns and culture of women of color (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1981; Lorde, 1984; Walker, 1983).

Womanism allowed African American women to be feminist in ways that incorporated a Black woman's way of knowing.

This way of knowing incorporates a Black woman's understanding that she has been at the bottom of every social hierarchy created by man . . . based on the interactions of race, class, and gender hierarchies and systems of identity. Black women and other women of color have come to understand what it means to live in the margins of multiple communities simultaneously and function, even thrive, in the "in-between," interstitial spaces of other people's structures. Womanism honors African American women. They have developed the ability to think and reason using multiple perspectives simultaneously, moving in and out of different cognitive, ideological, cultural, emotional, social, or spiritual frames with relative ease. . . (Phillips, 2009, xxxix)

Remembering Walker's (1983), definition of womanist, I chose to elevate her inclusion of the analogy of "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (p. xii), it is a deeper shade that included and represented the perspectives and voices of African American and other women of color.

According to Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002), "womanists (especially womanist educators) often demonstrate the following three characteristics: an embrace of the maternal, political clarity, and an ethic of risk" (p. 72) She continued by describing how these three characteristics are evident in exemplary African American women teachers. The embrace of the maternal included and highlighted the familiar and familial mother-



child relationship as a guide for their interactions with students in and outside of the classroom. She further proposed these African American teachers conceived of mothering broadly and viewed the mothering they exhibited toward their students as a communal responsibility. Model African American teachers spoke of the process of nurture during their interviews with Collins (1992). The nurturing of which they spoke was not limited to women, was expressive of relationships within the community, and it was not separate from the exercise of authority (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002).

According to Bernard, Issari, Moriah, Njiwaji, Ogan, and Tolliver (2012), “nurturing of students by African American women teachers is termed other mothering and has its roots in the African traditional worldview” (p. 104). Collins (1992), exclaimed “Other mothers are women who assist blood mothers by sharing mothering responsibilities” (p. 119). Case (1997), described other mothering as a “universalized ethic of care” or a “collective social conscience” (p. 26). Bernard et al. (2012) continued with what they asserted as other mothering in the academy and defined it as:

A sharing of self, an interactive and collective process, and a spiritual connectedness that exemplifies the Afrocentric value of caring, sharing, and accountability. Academic other mothering takes the form of informal advisement that may be academic or personal in nature. (pp. 105-106)

The second characteristic of womanist educators as described by Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) is that of political clarity. The womanist educators interviewed by Collins (1992), appeared to fully understand and recognize that there was a relationship between schools and society. They were fully aware that this established relationship structured the successes and failures of groups of children differentially. “Womanist

teachers see racism and other systemic injustices as simultaneously social and educational problems. . . . consequently, they demonstrate a keen awareness of their power and responsibility as adults to contest the societal stereotypes imposed on children” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 77). Womanist teachers share their political clarity with their students by sharing the reality of society with their students and helping them to see the reality of dominion and the existence of resistance from those who are oppressed (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002).

The final characteristic of womanist educators is that of an ethic of risk. The ethic of risk is constructed of the acknowledgment that “social injustice is deep-rooted and not easily dismantled” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 80). The risk associated with this ethic is the decision to care despite the lack of guaranteed success. Those educators who possess an ethic of risk do so in relation to themselves and to the greater community. From this place, womanist educators understand morality not from abstract principles but in personal and specifically maternal terms.

From the womanist perspective, “womanist educators see teaching as a mission and see themselves as children of God having the spiritual resources to undertake that mission, teaching then becomes a process of manifesting the divinity within you” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 81). As a womanist educator, I see my teaching as a divine assignment, an extension of the divinity within me. Embracing the characteristics of womanism (embrace of the maternal, political clarity, and an ethic of risk) allow me to approach my teaching as a service to the students that I teach and to God. The combined use of CRT and womanism as a framework supports the significance of this research by

serving as the lens through which I examine and interpret the experiences of six African American women faculty on the predominantly White campuses where they taught.

### Significance of the Study

In my dissertation, I used the tenets of CRT to interrogate the issues and instances of race and racism that I witness and am exposed to in both my professional and personal lives. “CRT prioritizes the voices of the participants and respects the multiple roles held by scholars of color when conducting research” (Chapman, 2007, p. 157). The use of womanism supplied me with the tools necessary to dismantle and dislodge the myths surrounding my presumed incompetence (Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012) and the marginalized (Turner & Myers, 2000) position prescribed to me by the majority culture in America and in the academy. In combination, CRT and womanism allowed me to cross-examine race and racism while simultaneously attempting to disassemble and remove the pervading questions about the capability of African American faculty women.

On November 4, 2008, at a little after 10:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, television networks began announcing the big news: Senator Barack Obama had been elected 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, thereby becoming the first person of color to win the office in the nation’s history. Immediately, discussion turned to the historicity of the moment, and with good reason. For a nation built on a foundation of slavery, disenfranchisement, and white domination, the election of a man of color (and a man who, according to the racial taxonomy that has long existed in the United States, is indeed black) to the highest office in the land is of no small import. (Wise, 2009, p. 7)

I interject the aforementioned announcement to illustrate that the nomination and election of Barack Obama as president of the United States appeared to have ushered in an era in America that was labeled post-racial (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). Despite the race neutral (Lawrence, 1987), colorblind (Banks, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2010), and colormute (Pollock, 2004) rhetoric found in the media and in society in general, the literature (Lopez, 2014; Pollock, 2008; Wise, 2009) provides evidence that racism remains an endemic issue in America regardless that a Black man was elected leader of the free world. As a microcosm of society, the same race neutral, colorblind, and color mute rhetoric mentioned earlier in the text also exists in the academy (Gusa, 2010; Harrison, 2012; Stanley, 2006a). However, literature and research (Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Stanley, 2006a; Turner & Myers, 2000; Yenika-Agbaw & Walker, 2011) on the experiences of faculty of color in higher education speak counter to this post-racial position.

One thing that has been omitted from the literature is the experiences of African American women faculty at PWIs in the southern region of the United States in general and in the Deep South specifically. The liberated voices of the participants of this study assisted in illuminating and documenting the need for courageous, crucial, and daring campus conversations that address race, gender, class, and White institutional presence (WIP) within the academy. According to Gusa (2010),

It is essential that predominantly White institutions interested in addressing African American attrition due to chilly or hostile campus climates realize how marginalization and discrimination are the outcomes of White mainstream

ideology (Whiteness) and White privilege. These sources of hostile or chilly campus climates are what I name White institutional presence. (p. 466)

Furthermore, as the voices of African American women faculty in the Deep South are liberated, they will serve as an example and give permission to other marginalized groups that there is power in elevating their muted voices and releasing their own individual and collective counter-narratives.

The results of empirical research found in the scholarly discourse on the teaching experiences of African American faculty has been concentrated on those faculty members who teach in the K-12 setting (Delpit, 2006, 2012; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). A review of the literature that included searches on African American female faculty at PWIs or in higher education, African American women faculty at PWIs or in higher education, female faculty of color in higher education, and women faculty of color in higher education supports the idea that there are few nationally identifiable champions (Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Cooper, 2006; Jain & Turner, 2011 & 2012; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Stanley et al., 2003) addressing the complexities of the experiences of African American women faculty teaching at PWIs in higher education.

Moreover, there is little empirical research on the teaching experiences of faculty of color in predominantly White colleges and universities (McGowan, 2000; Stanley et al., 2003). This statement augments the necessity for empirical research that addresses the experiences of African American women faculty at PWIs in the Deep South.

Furthermore, recommendations drawn from the counter-narratives of African American women faculty to the leadership of PWIs in the Deep South have the potential to shed light on the efforts to recruit and retain African American faculty, staff, and students.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research have the potential to break the silence of African American women faculty on the campuses of PWIs in the Deep South and open dialogue with majority culture faculty and administrators. Additionally, the information these African American faculty women gather from students through their academic other mothering (Bernard et al., 2012) has the potential to offer insight regarding the experience of African American and other students of color at the PWIs where they teach, serve, and perform research.

The campuses of American colleges and universities are located within communities across the United States. Just as these communities experience crimes associated with race, so do the college campuses within them. To illustrate this point disaggregated data on crime statistics listed by type from the *Uniform Crime Report* by the Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the U.S. Department of Justice (2015), reported 5,850 victims of hate crimes in the United States. An analysis of data for victims of single-bias hate crime incidents illustrated that 56.5% (3,310) of these incidents were motivated by race. Of these racially motivated occurrences, 52.7% (1,745) were victims of the offender's anti-Black bias. Considering all of the hate crimes reported during 2015, 8.3% (486) occurred on the campuses of schools and colleges. As issues of diversity remain salient on the campuses of PWIs, it will become imperative that the administration of these institutions address the hostile campus climate that contributes to the attrition of African American administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The research for my dissertation was conducted through a CRT (Bell, 1987; Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Solarzano & Yosso, 2002) and

womanist (Hudson-Weems, 1989; Hudson-Weems, 2000; Ogunyemi, 1985; Walker, 1983) lens. Both CRT and womanism spoke to the parts of me revealed throughout my dissertation. The supplement of womanism (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Jain & Turner, 2011, 2012; Phillips, 2006; Walker, 1983) to CRT was a place of resistance and healing allowing for the explanation of forms of oppression experienced by the participants of this study and illustrated through their counter-narratives. Womanism promotes the health of the community at-large and does not discriminate regarding race, gender, and class (Jain & Turner, 2011& 2012; Phillips, 2006). The tenets of womanism promote “goodness” (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005) and the inclusion of “voice” (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005) of those who have been marginalized or silenced by the majority culture. With the framework of CRT and womanism in mind the next section addresses the methods I used to answer my research questions and build portraits of the participants in the study.

## Chapter IV

### METHODS

My dissertation topic guided my choice of a research approach. I wanted to focus not just on finding African American women faculty members who successfully navigated the campus climates of the PWIs where they taught. I wanted to identify African American women faculty who strived, survived, and thrived on the campuses of PWIs in the Deep South. I wanted to bear witness to their narratives and uncover what could be learned from them during this process. Quantitative research methods did not align well with this goal.

Qualitative research is effective in researching process as opposed to variables, which are associated with quantitative research (Maxwell, 2013). I was interested in documenting the lived experiences of African American women faculty at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South, and as one, I valued the premise of qualitative research that positions the researcher at the forefront and emphasizes the need to identify the personal stance and bias of the researcher (Creswell, 2009). According to Maxwell (2013),

Qualitative research is research that is intended to help you better understand the meanings and perspectives of the people you study—seeing the world from their point of view, rather than simply from your own; how these perspectives are shaped by, and shape, their physical, social, and cultural contexts; and the specific processes that are involved in maintaining or altering these phenomena and relationships. (p. viii)



Among the options offered by qualitative research, I found portraiture (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983) to be an ideal method to use given that I chronicled the experiences of the women faculty in my study. I sought not only to better understand the lived experiences of my participants; I also sought to better understand the strategies they employed to navigate the campus climate of the institutions where they taught. The literature evidences American PWIs as being “chilly” (Gusa, 2010; Harley, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009) or unwelcoming to non-European American faculty, staff, and students. I wanted to document if the participants perceived a *chilly* climate or witnessed a *chilly* climate at their institutions. I was also interested in understanding the actual approaches to the climate that the participants applied in their professional lives and other important practices they embraced. To gain this understanding, I needed to interview and observe these faculty members as they liberated their voices through counter-narratives.

Originally, I wanted to gather documents from each participant regarding the tenure and promotion process employed by their respective institutions; however, I did not collect these documents. Some of the participants were concerned about the proprietary nature of the documents for tenure and promotion at their institution, while others indicated that the process of tenure and promotion at their institution was unclear. What was evident is that each institution employed different criteria for evaluating faculty dossiers for tenure and promotion. Moreover, each discipline represented by the participants used measures that were not congruent across all disciplines making it challenging to compare each process. What were more poignantly significant than the documents that were not collected were the stories the participants shared regarding their tenure and promotion process. Where available I collected results of campus climate

studies performed at the institutions of the participants to gain insight into the campus climate.

However, the question that dominated my mind as I prepared for this research study was, how would I get the participants of this study to trust me and allow me into their world? This concern was soon laid to rest. The participants embraced me with open arms and allowed me to capture their authentic stories in their authentic voices. It was as if they were waiting a lifetime to share their stories, to have their stories heard, and to have their stories told. My concern regarding establishing a relationship with each of the participants that plagued me as I was beginning this research disappeared. They each embraced me and were enthusiastic to share their stories and memories. Clark Moustakas (1995), renowned psychologist and phenomenologist, provided the path for me to follow in getting to know the participants of this research. Moustakas recognized three distinct processes that contribute to the development of relationships: “Being-in,” “Being-for,” and Being-with” (pp. 82-84).

I captured the counter-narratives of the women in my study by taking the advice of Moustakas (1995), I chose to “be-in,” “be-for,” and “be-with” these women in building relationships. Being-in involved immersion into their world. During a series of three interviews, I listened attentively when they spoke as we sat around the kitchen tables in their homes or the conference room tables at their offices. We ate together and drank together as I listened and as they spoke. I considered the sharing of a meal as an intimate act that evidenced the beginning of establishing a relationship with one another.

Oftentimes I sat quietly and observed as they entered and exited private moments of reverie. I was desperate to capture their experiences and perceptions and how their

stories might be understood from their perspective only. Being-in did not involve interpreting or directing the participants as they shared their stories. Being-in allowed me, the participant researcher to enter the participants' world with the intention of understanding their points-of-view. I was not obtrusive as I was being allowed in. I actively chose to be observant and respectful. I was awed by the invitation to be-in a relationship with each of the participants. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), "an essential ingredient of creating a portrait is the process of human interaction" (p. 6). I interacted with each of the participants, always being keenly aware that I was following and not leading the process of interview and observation. I asked the questions during the interview and allowed the participant to interpret the questions as well as answer the questions. When they required clarity, I provided the clarity they needed. The interview process became a verbal dance between researcher and participant. The researcher led with a probing question as the participant followed with often times a compelling response. This back and forth between the researcher and the participant gave way to an exchange that blended into the participants' counter-narratives about their experiences as faculty members of PWIs in the Deep South.

Being-for is actively choosing to place oneself in a position supportive of the other person. It was being on that person's side. It requires standing up for the other person when others would marginalize, alienate, or otherwise isolate "this person's right to be and grow" (Moustakas, 1995, p. 83). I chose to be supportive of the participants of this study by being the conduit through which their right to be and grow might be conducted via the counter-narratives that they shared with me. Releasing these stories to the academy specifically and to the public in general via presentations and published

journal articles is my way of standing up for and being in solidarity with the participants. When others silenced or alienated or had the participants living at the margins of their respective institutions, discharging their counter-narratives into the public sphere represented my standing up for them and their dedication, loyalty, and contributions to academe.

Being-with necessitates being your authentic self in the presence of the other person with whom you are engaged in the relationship. Being-with encourages each person to share and listen, to agree and disagree, and to offer one's own perspectives about the world. Being-with intimates "a sense of joint enterprise—two people fully involved, struggling, exploring, and sharing" (Moustakas, 1995, p. 84).

The relationship that I established with each participant of this study was built over time. It was not my goal to rush into their lives for the sake of "finding the answers" to the research questions guiding this study. I hoped these relationships would have the potential to be long-lasting once the interview process and the research were concluded. This has indeed been the outcome. I continue to communicate with the women of this study.

Finally, I chose to display my authentic self while conducting the interviews for this study. In support of this position, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) asserted, "The voice of the portraitist is omnipresent, everywhere at the same time. The portraitist's voice must be balanced against that of the actors'. Her voice never overshadows the actors' voices (though it sometimes is heard in duet, in harmony and counterpoint). (p. 95)

I took the advice of Moustakas (1995) to heart. I established relationships with the participants of this study; I engaged the participants by “being-in,” “being-for,” and “being-with” them in the relationships we established.

Seidman (2006) also offered excellent advice regarding the necessity for balance in the researcher’s relationship with the participants of the study being conducted. Seidman (2006) warned against establishing a “We” relationship between the interviewer and the participants of the study being conducted. He declared, “the interviewer does not strive for a full ‘We’ relationship, in such a case the interviewer would become an equal participant and the resulting discourse would be a conversation, not an interview” (p. 96). Seidman (2006) continued by advising the interviewer to create a balance when establishing an “appropriate rapport with the participant” (p. 96). He defined an appropriate rapport as “getting along with each other, a harmony with, a conformity to, an affinity for one another . . . the problem is that when carried to an extreme . . . the interviewing relationship can transform into a full ‘We’ relationship” (p. 96). In a full “We” relationship the author of the meaning making and the experience being documented is called into question.

I constantly reminded myself during the interviews to make sure that I asked questions of each participant when the meaning of their counter-narrative was not clear. I asked for clarification about details and people so as not to make assumptions. Oftentimes, I empathized with the participants because there were similarities in their stories that reminded me of my own stories. There were times during the interviews that I remained silent. However, when appropriate, I chose to share my own story, which contributed to the flow of the conversational nature of the interview.

My positionality as an African American woman faculty member employed by a 4-year PWI in the Deep South necessitates my constant awareness of being in balance with each participant and the interview process. I remained close enough to gain access to their stories but remained at a distance so that their stories were told from their perspective and not my own. When I conducted the interviews with the participants of this study, I remained cognizant of the advice given by Moustakas (1995), Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), and Seidman (2006). I was ever mindful of the necessity to balance my voice and the voice of the participants as well as the required balance of my relationship with the participants. I was close enough to gain their trust but remained at a distance that allowed me to be objective.

I began this research out of necessity. I needed information from African American women faculty who had longevity at their PWIs. I wanted to know the strategies they used to navigate the campus climate. My rationale to conduct this research was born out of personal, practical, and intellectual reasons (Maxwell, 2015).

#### Rationale

Maxwell (2013) asked that the researcher justify or provide a rationale for the motivation to conduct the research with which the researcher is involved. He stated, “The goals of your study are an important part of your research design” (p. 23). He enumerated three perspectives on goals of research, “personal, practical, and intellectual” (p. 24). Maxwell further stated that the goals would ultimately “shape the descriptions, interpretations, and theories you create in your research” (p. 23).

According to Maxwell (2013), the goals of your study also identify potential validity threats or sources of bias for the research results, which the researcher needs to

acknowledge and address. Maxwell's request haunted me for several weeks. I approached this study from multiple vantage points. First, I was motivated for personal reasons. I am an African American woman faculty member at a PWI in the Deep South. This position grants me insider knowledge despite the "outsider" status attributed to me by many of my majoritarian colleagues. From this personal view, I was interested in strategies of survival. I wanted to know what approaches were being used by other African American women faculty members at PWIs in the Deep South that might assist me in my pursuit of professional success as I defined it by achieving tenure and promotion.

Practically, I was motivated to pursue this research because I wanted the counter-narratives and voices of the participants to lead to change in the campus climate as it is perceived by African American women faculty and other faculty, staff, and students of color. There are fundamental tasks (teaching and learning, scholarship, and service) that have been assigned to faculty in higher education. If the differences that exist among the constituents of the campuses continue to dominate the discourse, if purposeful and daring conversations do not occur in the publicly sanctioned spaces of PWIs, these fundamental tasks will continue to pale in the darkness of misunderstanding, isolation, marginalization, and misrepresentation. The fare of the day will be business as usual.

The teaching, learning, research, and service that are required of faculty should engage the campus community. This engagement should be the conduit that promotes "courageous conversations" (Singleton & Linton, 2005) that contribute to an understanding of the differences that exist among the campus constituents. Until the campus community can talk through the challenging conversations, the campuses of

PWIs as microcosms of our greater society will continue to focus on the differences that exist within its community.

Moreover, I gained an intellectual understanding of the experiences of African American women faculty members employed by PWIs in the Deep South. I wanted to understand how they made meaning of their lives in the context of the campus climate of the PWIs where they were employed. Finally, listening to, the scribing of, and the sharing of the participants' stories and counter-narratives served as a cathartic and empowering process for each of them and for me.

I chose a qualitative approach to this study because I was interested in process theory. "Process theory tends to see the world in terms of people, situations, events, and the processes that connect these; explanation is based on an analysis of how some situations and events influence others" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 29). To completely understand the nature of this study, grasping the experiences of African American women faculty employed by 4-year PWIs in the Deep South, a review of the research questions is in order.

#### Review of the Research Questions

The following research questions emerged as a result of reviewing Maxwell's (2013) chapter four, *Research Questions: What do you want to understand?* I performed the exercise associated with this chapter. The review of the professional and scholarly discourse also informed the chosen research questions. Maxwell (2013) stated,

. . . Qualitative researchers go into their research with an open mind and seeing what is there to be investigated. . . .Every researcher begins with certain goals and



a substantial base of experience and theoretical knowledge, and these highlight certain problems and or issues and generate questions about these. (p. 73)

Research questions designed to guide the structure of this qualitative study on African American women faculty at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South include:

1. What were the experiences of six African American women faculty at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South as they intersected or not with race and racism?
2. How did six African American women faculty members at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South experience and perceive campus climate in relationship to their teaching, service, and scholarship?
3. What stories did these six African American women faculty members at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South tell about themselves and their experiences with campus climate that affected their professional, personal, and social identities?
4. What was learned from the experiences and perceptions of these six African American women faculty who successfully or unsuccessfully navigated the campus climate at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South?

I initially began with these four research questions and the four continued to guide my study. However, given the emergent nature of qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013), the original research questions were supported by expanded subquestions and were modified to reflect developments that emerged as the study unfolded and morphed.

Intersectionality, the number of participants, and the idea of unsuccessful navigation of the campus climate was not included in the original research questions. To answer these questions I used Lawrence Lightfoot's portraiture (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983), which is explained in the following section.

## The Portraiture Method

*Finally, brothers and sisters whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, and whatever is commendable—If there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise dwell on these things.  
Philippians 4:8 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)*

I fell in love with the method of portraiture (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983) during my advanced qualitative research class with Dr. Richard Schmertzing. During this course many different qualitative research methods were introduced. However, none of the methods captured my attention or spoke to me in the way portraiture did. Portraiture addressed both the scientist and the artist that coexists in me. It did not require a choice of empiricism over aesthetic or vice versa. Portraiture granted me permission to be my authentic self, a blend of practicality, beauty, and morality—all qualities I aspire to that are derived from my deep faith and Christian beliefs. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1997),

Portraiture is a method of qualitative research that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life. Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom. The drawing of the portrait is placed in social and cultural context and shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one negotiating the discourse and shaping the evolving image. The relationship between the two is rich with meaning and resonance and becomes the arena for navigating the empirical, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions of authentic and compelling counter-narrative. (p. xv)

The method that was used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and counter-narratives of these six African American women faculty member employed by 4-year PWIs in the Deep South was portraiture (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). I was inspired to select this method because it promotes the voice of the researcher. As previously stated, I am an African American woman faculty member currently employed by a 4-year PVI in the Deep South. With this fact in mind, I have insider knowledge and experience that informed this study. Portraiture was used to investigate, illuminate, and document the experiences of the African American women faculty who have navigated the halls of academe. My motivation for using portraiture as an approach for framing the integration of these participants into the PWIs where they teach was portraiture's search for "goodness" (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983) while simultaneously acknowledging that imperfections will always coexist with the "goodness" (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983). In the text of *The Good High School*, Lawrence Lightfoot (1983), illuminated her inspiration to move beyond traditional methods of social science research because of its tendency to highlight "pathology and disease rather than health and resilience" (p. 8). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) contended that research that focuses on pathology and documents inadequacies and failures is located without effort, however, finding moments of resistance and negotiation, which ultimately lead to success, is where the challenge lies (pp. 8-9).

Researchers as portraitists, examine the ways in which subjects meet, negotiate, and overcome challenges. The method serves as "a counterpoint to the dominant chorus of social scientists whose focus has largely centered on the identification and

documentation of social problems” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1977, p. xvi). Although Lawrence-Lightfoot did not indicate that portraiture represented people of color, she does highlight that it attempts to elucidate the stories of people who do not have *voice* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). For example, in the forthcoming portrait of Shiphrah, I illuminated the voice of young Shiphrah when she took a stance in protest against her White childhood playmate referring to her mother by her first name instead of addressing Shiphrah’s mother as Mrs. Taylor. To show her disapproval, Shiphrah began to call her peer’s mother by her first name. Another example of elevating the voice of the participant was the exchange between teenage Shalom and the White shoe store owner who made the assumption that she was member of the store’s housekeeping staff because she was African American. These are two examples of places in the portraits where the researcher revealed the participants’ voices of resistance to master-narratives.

The use of portraiture as an approach allowed me to not only highlight the voices and experiences of other African American women faculty teaching at PWIs in the Deep South, it also afforded me an opportunity to find, own and, release my voice. My voice was silenced at the institution where I taught. When my voice was heard and acknowledged, the tone of voice that I used to communicate passion (increased volume and emphasis) was misconstrued as anger, which contributed to and solidified the “Sapphire” (Henderson, Hunter, & Hildreth, 2010) “angry Black woman” image of African American women in the view of the majoritarian population on the campuses of PWIs. The message communicated by my voice was also discounted or diminished by the majority population. “In qualitative research the nature of *voice*, what it represents, who it

represents, and who has the power to assert it remains a topic of rigorous exchange” (Chapman, 2005, p. 27). Portraiture increases the importance of voice, gives the voice place, and allows the voice to authentically represent the life and occurrences of those narrating their experiences. As a counterpoint however, there is a need to distinguish the researcher’s voice from that of the participants’. The issue plagued me throughout the construction of the portraits, there were times when my voice loomed larger than that of the participants and required modification.

Ultimately my goal in conducting this qualitative inquiry was to document and illuminate the narratives of African American women faculty, which run counter to the master-narratives and beliefs held by most members of the majority at their respective institutions. In that process, I chose to “search for goodness” (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983, p. 23). In writing Tabitha’s portrait, I *searched for goodness* by using her counter-narrative regarding her life changing response to James Brown’s song, *Say it Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud*. Tabitha was coming of age during the turbulent 1960s when this song began to play on the radio. For the first time in her young life this song presented blackness as a good thing and countered the master-narrative that being Black in America was not something to be proud of.

Like Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005), I wanted to “paint with words,” (p. 6) “blend aesthetic sensibilities and empirical rigor,” (p. 6) and merge “the practical with the artistic” (p. 6). This is why I chose to share the setting of each participant with you, the reader. I wanted you to experience what I experienced. I wanted you to imagine yourself in Grace’s kitchen as I looked out over the intercoastal waterway and admired the beauty of the vista each time I sat with her during our interview time. I spent time with each

participant, collected data in detail, and asked for clarity when something the participant said required additional information so as to capture the content as well as the context of what the participant was conveying. This process is what Maxwell (2013), said contributed to the collection of “rich data” (p. 126).

As a portraitist, I wanted to listen to a story, and I also wanted to listen for a story. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) explained these two positions,

The distinction between the two stories is this, the former is a more passive, receptive stance in which the listener waits to absorb the information and does little to give it shape and form. The latter is a much more active, engaged position in which the narrator searches for the story, seeks it out, and is central in its creation. (p. 10)

I wanted to understand the meaning that was the foundation of the story being told. At the end of the process, I wanted to maintain the rigor, rituals, methods, criteria, and ethics of good work as I painted with my pen the portraits of the participants in my research; I wanted the reader to see, to hear, and to identify with the women of this study.

Counter-narratives of Critical Race Theory are depictions of people of color as survivors, activists, and emancipators. In portraiture, these elements are identified as “goodness” (Chapman, 2005, p. 31). Continuing with this thought, Chapman (2005) affirmed, “in the subjects of education, law, research and, where the images of pathology reign for people of color, critical race theorists and portraitists concentrate on community strengths instead of community deficits” (p. 31).

Womanism supplements CRT and portraiture by emphasizing an anti-oppressionist perspective and elevating all people within the community. Like portraiture, womanism

becomes a place of resistance, a place where universal truths and resonant stories lie in the specifics and complexity of everyday life, everyday experiences, and everyday methods of problem solving in everyday spaces. No one other than the participants' themselves could have told their stories in a manner that was both compelling and heartfelt. I presented myself as the questioner, the listener, the scribe, and finally as the one that freed their counter-narratives and gave them voice. I wanted to affirm the quote by Zora Neale Hurston (1942), "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you" (p. 176).

### The Participants

I began my search for participants by garnering suggestions from advisers, colleagues, and peers who identified prospective African American women faculty members who might be interested in participating in this study. Additionally, I solicited assistance from the participants of the study (once they were identified) who recommended other participants. My goal was to invite 5 to 10 African American women faculty members to partake in this study. The final number of participants was six. I selected participants from different types of 4-year PWIs (both private and public institutions and research and teaching institutions). The selection of participants from different types of PWIs in the Deep South brought breadth to the study. The counter-narratives of the participants were both similar and dissimilar based on their individual experiences at their respective PWIs. The criteria for final participant selection were:

- On a pre-tenure track or tenured;
- Serving at the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor;
- Employed by a predominantly White institution in the Deep South; and



- Employed by their respective institutions for a minimum of five years.

I did not list being successful as a criterion because I did not know what being successful in the academic environment meant to each participant. I did not want to subject them to my definition of success, which at the time of participant search selection was limited to the acquisition of tenure and promotion. I did not know the participants, which meant that I had to build a relationship of trust with each participant during the initial contact and subsequent interviews. All participants of the study met the aforementioned criteria required for selection.

The pseudonym of each participant was chosen based upon a personality trait that I perceived to be dominant during the interview process. I did not confer with the participants regarding their pseudonyms because I wanted to *paint them with words* as I saw them and not as they saw themselves. During the creation of portraiture as a method, Lawrence Lightfoot (1983) shared in detail her experience as a live model for a portrait being painted of her.

With a sensitive eye, a meticulous brush, and enduring patience the artist panted me “from inside out”; the skeleton sketched in before the bulky frame; body contours drawn before layers of clothing . . . [the woman in the portrait], she was not quite me as I saw myself, but she told me about parts of myself that I never would have noticed or admitted. (p. 3)

All pseudonyms were selected from women or temperaments found in the Bible. I chose this method of selecting participant pseudonyms because each of the participants elevated their Christian beliefs, their reliance on the Scriptures, and the singing of Christian songs as a place of inspiration, comfort, resistance, and goodness.



Once the pseudonym for each participant was chosen, I searched for and assigned a Bible verse that included the pseudonym I chose for each participant. Additionally, I selected an African American spiritual or Christian song to represent each participant. The selection of a Bible verse and a Christian song to introduce each participant's portrait should further establish insight into the participant's life experience. Taking this cue from the writings of Derrick Bell, I used verses from the Scriptures and lyrics from Christian songs to expand the reader's understanding and to give to the reader insight into the participant's counter-narrative.

To ensure the integrity of the research and to protect the anonymity of the participants, the cities where the participants lived, the cities that were the sites of their respective institutions, and the institutions where the participants taught were also given pseudonyms based on a variation of the participant's assigned pseudonym. It was of utmost importance to me that the anonymity of the participants be protected at all costs. Each participant in varying degrees was concerned about confidentiality. They all preferred that given pseudonyms be associated with their narratives instead of their real names. Each of them entrusted me with one of their most prized possessions, the counter-narratives of their time as faculty members at the PWIs in the Deep South where many of them had spent the majority of their professional lives. I was determined to protect the identity of each participant to the best of my ability.

#### Data Collection

Once the purposeful sample of participants was identified, I conducted a series of three interviews with each participant. Employing the Seidman (2006), "three-interview series" (p. 16), I interviewed each participant in the following manner. I used a standard

open-ended interview guide to elicit responses to primary questions involving what it was like to be an African American woman faculty teaching at a PWI in the Deep South (See Appendix E). I allowed deviations from the interview guide to explore questions and other issues raised by the participants. According to Patton (2002),

An interview guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. (p. 343)

All interviews were conducted in the Seidman (2006), “three-interview series” process. However, not all interviews lasted for a 90-minute period which is Seidman’s recommendation. Interview times with the participants ranged from 60 minutes to 160 minutes. The participants and the researcher were plagued with illness, as was one of the participant’s children. During the summer months many of the participants took time away from teaching and went on extended vacations or were away to conduct research or write books. This interruption in time resulted in extended time between interviews with some of participants. All interviews were conducted in a conversational manner whereby the participants mapped the territory of the interview while I guided the frame of the interview using the interview questions. The interview guide that was used can be found in Appendix E of the appendices. Maxwell (2013) stated, “Your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your *interview* questions are what you ask people to gain that understanding” (p. 101).

The purpose of “The first interview established the context of the participant’s experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 17). During the first interview with participants of the

study, the nature of the study and the participant's family background were discussed. During the second interview, the participant's higher education background, employment experiences, and professional employment experiences were examined. "The second interview allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17). Deviating from Seidman's interview process, the third interview continued with the participants' professional employment at their current institution or the institution from which they retired. I sought this information instead of asking the participants "to reflect on the meaning of their experience" (Seidman, 2006, p. 18), which is what Seidman called for in the third interview. As the researcher, I chose to deviate from Seidman's method to capture the participant's current professional counter-narrative. During their interviews each participant shared what it meant to be an African American woman faculty member employed by a PWI in the Deep South.

Once the third interview was conducted and all data was analyzed for themes, I created the portraits. Once the portraits were "painted with my pen," I asked the participants to read my representation of them and their stories while "encouraging the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17), to be sure that they were accurately represented in a way that would not compromise their identity, and to ensure that I captured the essence of their stories. I was open to any feedback from the participants regarding their portraits. Some of the participants corrected discrepant information, and one participant asked that her pseudonym be changed because she felt it closely resembled her name. This same participant also asked to have her father's name changed to further protect her identity. I obliged her request

and incorporated the changes into her counter-narrative. The reading of the portraits and the feedback from the participants was used as a *member check* (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). I considered the responses of the participants; however, maintained complete authority over what information was included in the final portrait.

Member check is systemically soliciting feedback about your data and conclusions from the people you are studying. This is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspectives they have on what is going on as well as being an important way of identifying your biases and misunderstandings of what you observed. However, participants' feedback is not more inherently valid than their interview responses; both should be taken simply as evidence regarding the validity of your account. (Maxwell, pp. 126-127)

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. The transcriptionist was required to sign a statement of confidentiality, which included a clause requiring nondisclosure of each participant's personal information and story. Moreover, the professional transcriber is a medical transcriptionist who had training in confidentiality of medical, personal, private, and sensitive information. Once I received the transcript of each interview, I listened to each interview while I read the transcript to ensure that all pauses, laughs, and other sounds were captured. I also read my field notes and manually added to the transcripts any note I took that enhanced what I heard or read. Additionally, I reviewed the transcribed interview to insure no words other than those of the participants had been added and to ensure that the transcriptionist did not alter the wording. Moreover, during the course of interviewing, I kept a journal to record my

thoughts, feelings, and observations of the participants. These notes were incorporated into the interpretation of data.

### Data Analysis

I am a novice researcher; however, my training as a nuclear medicine technologist prepared me to assess human behavior and to recognize patterns or changes in patterns when visible. Moreover, I needed to use a data analysis process that allowed me to move through and interpret the data in a methodical manner. Just as Maxwell (2013) guided me through an interactive approach to qualitative research design, I used Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) to escort me through an interactive process of qualitative data analysis. These scholars stated, “We see analysis as three concurrent flows of activity, *data condensation*, *data display*, and *conclusion drawing/verification*” (p. 12). *Data condensation* “is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming the data that appear in the full corpus of data collected” (p. 12). *Data display* includes . . . “matrices, graphs, charts, and networks . . . all designed to assemble organized information into an immediately assessable compact form so that analysts can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step of analysis” (p. 13). Finally, *conclusion drawing/verification* is the process whereby the analyst

interprets what things mean by noting patterns, explanations, causal flows, and propositions . . . holding these conclusions lightly, maintaining openness and skepticism . . . conclusions must also be verified by going back to field notes with extensive efforts to replicate a finding in another data set. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 13)

Following the approach of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), who “strongly advised analysis concurrent with data collection” (p. 70), data analysis began immediately once the first interview with the first participant was completed.

Once I concluded an interview the audiotaped recording was sent to the transcriptionist. All interviews with each participant were also recorded via the recorder on my personal cell phone. While the interview was being transcribed I listened to the duplicate audio of the recording and made notes regarding what sounds other than the participant’s voice was being recorded so that I could capture the environment. Once the transcription of an interview was returned, I listened to the audio recording for a second time while reading the transcript for accuracy of transcription, pauses in the participant’s voice and other nuances that I captured from the duplicate recording were included by me if they were left out of the first versions of the transcripts. I referred to the audiotaped interviews and the transcriptions of the interviews so frequently that the pages of printed transcripts became tattered like the pages of a favorite book. The repeated listening to the audiotaped interviews allowed me to capture moments of reverie, mood, inflection, and other seemingly invisible occurrences of the interview.

After all of the raw data (field notes and recordings of participant interviews) were transcribed I followed the advice of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) and used their reflection strategy named *impressionistic record* (p. 188). I identified personal thoughts, captured perceived moods of the participant, identified questions that were generated regarding something heard in the audiotaped interviews, and read from hard copies of the interviews. Where applicable much of my impressionistic record was included throughout the participants’ portraits. My thoughts regarding the participants’

counter-narratives can be found in the text following the participants' blocked quotes and represent my voice.

Data analysis also consisted of coding interview data according to procedures described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). These scholars provided a guide for *students and other novice researchers* and their approach served as guidance for my data analysis activities (p. 15). At the start of data analysis, I engaged in both *first level coding* (Miles et al., 2014, p. 73) by summarizing portions of data and in categorizing or grouping the data based on themes, which are referred to as *pattern coding* or *second cycle method* (Miles et al., 2014, p. 86).

The process of coding can be overwhelming to the novice researcher therefore, Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014, recommended that the researcher participate in memoeing as a way to record interesting, confusing, or enlightening moments (p. 99). This process of memoeing is what Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) called keeping an impressionistic record. Maxwell (2013) also advocated writing memos to enable analytical thinking about the data, which will assist with coding as well (p. 105). Continuing this thought on memoeing, Ravitch and Riggan (2012), quoting Miles and Huberman (1994), stated, "memoeing helps the analyst move easily from empirical data to a conceptual level, refining and expanding codes further, developing key categories and showing their relationships, and building toward a more integrated understanding of events, processes, and interaction" (p. 154).

I wrote memos throughout the data collection and data analysis process to document and illuminate my reflexive process regarding the participants and the data that

were being collected and analyzed. I was determined to analyze the data manually using first *level* coding of the completed three interview sequence of the first participant.

Once the interviews were transcribed I made copies of the original transcriptions and annotated the margins with reflections of the interview as well as descriptions of the participants' facial expression, pauses, and responses to questions while listening to the recorded interviews. The initial coding was begun by marking passages I thought would be potential themes. I used information found in the scholarly discourse to guide this process. I initially searched the transcript for any data associated with campus climate, congeniality, race, gender, identity, teaching, service, scholarship, tenure, and promotion. This process identified these categories because each participant was asked questions about these topics. This process however, did not lead me to the specifics of generating categories and themes from my research.

I needed to modify my search of the transcripts. I sat in quiet contemplation which seemed like a waste of time; however, this exercise produced the most fruit. The following questions plagued me. What had these women revealed about themselves through their counter-narratives? What had I discovered by spending time with each participant? What did these women have in common and how did they differ? I went about searching for the answer to these questions and stumbled upon the following common categories among participants: resistance, a calling or knowing, race, class, gender, modify for acceptance, perseverance, and intestinal fortitude or goodness.

Each participant had her own story to tell. Each participant knew that despite her challenges, her othered position in the academy, and identified obstacles; she was doing what God had called her to do. As expected, the participants' experiences at their



respective PWIs were different. The discordant themes were revealed through the methods each participant employed as survival techniques and how they defined success.

Each subject was highlighted with a different colored marker and labeled. This process of using different colored markers to differentiate subject and potential themes gave me pause to reflect. I identify as a visual learner with tactile tendencies. I am often mocked by my colleagues and family members for color-coding my personal and professional calendars and also for not using an electronic calendar format. This color-coding method has served me well, and I co-opted this practice for data analysis.

Each subsequent transcribed interview series of the remaining participants was treated and coded in the same manner. Once accomplished, I manually cut each participant transcript into identified themes and taped them on the same sheet of paper. I was mindful to correctly label each participant's counter-narrative on pieces cut from the transcripts. This represented the *pattern coding* or *second cycle method* as identified by Miles et al. 2014, (p. 86) earlier in this text. This manual method of coding was beneficial to me. It kept me engaged with the participants after the interview process was concluded. The original transcripts were maintained in their original order and stored safely in a safety deposit box at a local.

Once this process was accomplished, I attempted to use the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to search for themes that might have remained obscure during the initial manual coding. However, NVivo proved to be more of a hindrance than a help. I spent more time attempting to learn how to use the software than actually using the software to assist me in organizing the vast collection of material. In the end I abandoned NVivo and continued to manually code the transcripts.

Seidman (2006) encouraged the researcher to “develop profiles or vignettes of individual participants” (p. 119). He stated, “I have found that crafting a profile or vignette of a participant’s experience is an effective way of sharing interview data and opening up one’s interview analysis and interpretation” (p. 119). I equated Seidman’s (2006) *profiles* or *vignettes* to what Lawrence Lightfoot (1983) and Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) described as *portraits*. They differ in the way they are constructed and the final form indicates this difference. Each of these processes is a method by which the researcher shares and disseminates the interview data and analysis.

I saw the portrait that was created using words of the participant as an effective way to share the product of the research. This venue allowed me to present each participant in context and served as a space to illuminate consciousness, purpose, and meaning as experienced and conveyed by the participants. The portraits also allowed me to advance the voice of each participant. Seidman (2006) stated,

We interview in order to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories . . . We learn from hearing and studying what the participants say. . . The counter-narrative form of a profile allows the interviewer to transform this learning into telling a story. (pp. 119-120)

Telling stories and sharing our experiences is a method, a way that we humans make sense of ourselves and our worlds. Telling stories is also a way to make sense of the copious amounts of data generated by the participant interviews. The portraits that were created and shared through this study represented the participants’ counter-narratives. The researcher served as the portraitist, “it is the participants’ words, but it is crafted by the interviewer from what the participant has said” (Seidman, 2006, p. 120).

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) described the development of emergent themes as the portraitist's initial efforts to interpret the data while continuing to apply analytic scrutiny to the process. The themes that materialize from the analysis of the data give it shape and form. They further voiced the need to find the predominant story in the data; to structure the counter-narrative by sequencing and layering emerging themes; to create a form using examples, stories, and illustrations that lend support, clarify, and bring life to the story.

Each participant received a copy of her portrait and was asked to review it for discrepant information, to provide feedback, and to identify any information that would betray her anonymity. Of the six portraits, one factual correction was offered, one request for a change of pseudonym was requested, and one request for a change of proper names within the portrait was required. There was overarching approval from the participants regarding their portraits. Their comments included the following remarks: "My portrait was beautifully written." "It was strange to see my life through the eyes of another person. The view of my life from your eyes was illuminating. I loved it." "I hardly recognized myself; I have accomplished so much over the course of my life. When you are living your life, your accomplishments, survival, and overcoming blur. I let my husband and my sons read it also. They loved it like I did." "I read and reread the portrait. Because I am a private person, I was concerned about having my life on display. You captured my life, and I was humbled by your commentary." "I have come a long way from the small town I was born in. Your story showed me the miles I walked. I thank God, and I thank you." "Thank you, thank you, and thank you."

The participants' comments gave me pause. I was overwhelmed by their comments and compliments. An issue I grappled with while creating the portraits of each participant was the elevation of what I perceive to be imperfections in the participants' counter-narratives. This was a point of tension for me as the portraitist. Who was I to make a judgement regarding how the participant chose to deal with a situation. Was Shiphrah's decision to restrain her perceived tokenism and elevate instead her ability to bring national notoriety and revenue to her university in the form of grants appropriate? Was Grace displaying an imperfection when she declined to advocate for herself as the administration stripped her of the courses she was scheduled to teach without notice and forcing her retirement? Was imperfection at play when Sophie convinced the president of her university not to replace the special role she played when she retired? Was Tabitha's decision to dress in a less afrocentric manner an imperfection? Was Shalom's "worker bee" moniker given to her by her colleagues an imperfection that she wore like a badge of honor? And finally, did Faith expose an imperfection in her guarded nature and perceived non-collegial attitude? I do not know if these examples from the participants' portraits were imperfections or methods they employed as survival strategies in an environment that was oftentimes *chilly*. What I knew for sure was that I had to ask myself, "how might I be wrong" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 121)?

I gave them their portraits to read as an exercise in member checking. However, I must admit that releasing my portraits to them was also an exercise in scrutiny. What if they did not like what I wrote? I was taken back to the beginning of my journey toward dissertation, once again I was questioning my ability to accomplish the goal of writing,

defending, and becoming a newly minted doctor. In the end, the comments from the participants encouraged me to forge ahead.

When I created the collective portrait, often referred to as a “cross-case analysis” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 101), I asked the question that was asked by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), “What is good here” (p. 9)? I again returned to my colored marker system. I highlighted in identical color the text of the individual portraits that represented a pattern or a single thread of *goodness* that converged from multiple sources. Some of these threads were apparent. Others were difficult to trace because they occurred during turmoil or strife of one or a minority of the participants. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997),

Even when there are references to people’s experiences, backgrounds, or perspectives that do not seem to fit the dominant conception, we recognize that the contrasting image does not detract from the conception, but actually underscores its centrality and power. (p. 248)

The search for goodness in my life and the life of the participants allowed me to recognize that goodness can and often does coexist with what is malevolent. Survival techniques, refresher practices, and acts of self-care emerged from the participants’ portraits, which led to a list of recommendations I created entitled, The Ten Commandments for African American Women Faculty Teaching, Serving, and Researching at PWIs in the Deep South (See chapter 7).

#### Threats to Data Quality

The concept of validity that I adopted for this study is the definition as stated in Maxwell (2013), “*Validity* refers to the correctness or credibility of a description,

conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account” (p. 122). In consideration of this statement, a validity threat required that the portraitist ask the question, “How might I be wrong” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 121)? I asked this question repeatedly throughout the data analysis process. Validity threats are posited as alternative interpretations or explanations of the data. The obligation of the researcher is to consider these threats and to identify the strategies that will be used to expose their probability (Maxwell, 2013). I was ever mindful of positioning myself as the interpreter of the participant’s voice. I often asked for clarity if the participant made a statement that I did not understand. I wanted to make sure I had not misinterpreted or misrepresented what was stated by a participant.

“Qualitative researchers must try to address most validity threats after the research has begun, using evidence collected during the research itself to make these ‘alternative hypotheses’ implausible” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 123). Maxwell (2013) documented two significant threats to validity that researchers should recognize and examine, namely, *bias* and *reactivity* (p. 124). Bias calls into question the subjectivity of the researcher and how he or she approaches data collection and analysis based on his or her preconceived thoughts and concepts regarding what the data should reflect (Maxwell, 2013). At the beginning of the data collection process I acknowledged my bias and therefore found it necessary to inform the reader of my dissertation that I was a member of the group I was researching. As a researcher I am fully aware of my bias and I spoke about this bias when I defended my proposal to conduct this research.

Reactivity according to Maxwell 2013, speaks to the influence that the researcher has on the setting or participants that are the focus of the research. The goal of the

researcher is to understand and acknowledge his or her influence and create a way it might impact her work rather than attempt to eliminate it (Maxwell, 2013). In response to researcher bias and reactivity I quote Peshkin (1991) who stated, “I hold the view that subjectivity operates during the entire research process . . . one’s subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed” (p. 286). Peshkin (1991) further highlighted the need for the researcher to recognize and respond to her “subjective I’s” (p. 287), by monitoring self to determine when subjectivity is active.

To prevent what Maxwell (2013) recognized as an issue in proposal writing, “the mistake of talking about validity only in general, theoretical terms” (p. 123), I used aspects of the validity checklist that he designed, for both proposal and dissertation writing. The checklist included *intensive, long-term involvement, rich data, respondent validation, searching for discrepant evidence, and negative cases* and *triangulation* (pp. 125-129).

To address intensive, long-term involvement I employed Seidman’s (2006), “three-interview series” (p. 16). Data on each of the participants was collected over three interviews, which averaged 100 minutes per interview. According to Maxwell (2013), “both long-term involvement and intensive interviews enable you to collect rich data that are detailed and varied enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is going on” (p. 126).

Respondent validation was accomplished by allowing the participants to review the portraits that I wrote. I requested that each of the participant’s interviews along with my interpretations and conclusions be checked for accuracy of what was going on and identification of any bias that may have been displayed. I permitted the participants to

clarify any incorrect information. For example, in Tabitha's portrait I credited her with speaking in Israel when she travelled there, however, she did not have a speaking engagement on her trip there. I shared with each participant that I would make the final decision regarding what information was included. This feedback from the participants as stated by Maxwell (2013) and mentioned earlier, "is no more inherently valid than their interview responses; both should be taken simply as evidence regarding the validity of the researcher's account" (p. 127).

Once I received feedback from the participants, I used the feedback to search for discrepant evidence and negative cases. "A rigorous examination of both supporting and discrepant data (as identified by the participants) was performed to assess whether it was more plausible to retain or modify the conclusions" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 127) drawn. If the feedback data from the participants identified areas of misrepresentation or lack of clarity or meaning, the conclusions drawn from the information was modified to reflect the participant's correction of the data. However, if the data and the interpretation were correct and there was no errant information present, the data was retained and the researcher exercised the right to maintain the original conclusion. There were times during this process that the participant required an explanation of what was concluded, however, there was no negotiation to alter the outcome.

To insure data triangulation, as described by Maxwell (2013), I collected "information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods" (p. 128). I selected and interviewed participants from varied disciplines as well as participants in varying terms of their careers (pre-tenure or tenured) and participants who were at different ranks of the professoriate (assistant, associate, or full). I also used varied



methods of data collection that included participant interviews and archival data presented by the participants in their annual review portfolios. These methods provided the ability to “collect information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 128). As mentioned earlier, documents regarding the tenure and promotion process were not collected due to the incongruence of the tenure and promotion process across disciplines and institutions.

To address researcher bias and reactivity; I wrote memos and journaled throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Samples of my journaling about my bias and reactivity are documented at the end of this section and are denoted by the lyrics to a song that continuously played in my head during the search for participants and during their interviews and the other single-spaced entries that follow. My journal entries called attention to my “*subjective I’s*” (Peshkin, 1991, p. 287), those places throughout the research process where my bias might be on display. The identification of my subjective I’s involved recording my thoughts and feelings throughout the entirety of the research process from proposal writing and defense through dissertation writing and defense. The identification and analysis of my subjective I’s (found on the pages following this section) illuminated the ways in which my own subjectivity regarding the research influenced the outcomes of this research. As mentioned earlier, I am an African American woman faculty member teaching at a predominantly White institution in the Deep South. I was ever mindful of my thoughts and actions, bias, and subjectivity throughout the research process. I have well defined opinions, thoughts (both shared and unshared), and experiences that I reflected upon and memoed about while interviewing the participants and analyzing and interpreting the data.

Documenting these opinions, thoughts, and experiences highlighted by my subjective I's conveyed what affect they had on the outcomes of this study. Aforementioned in the beginning of this dissertation, the goals of my research are, "personal, practical, and intellectual" (Maxwell 2013, p. 24). Maxwell further stated that the goals would ultimately "shape the descriptions, interpretations, and theories you create in your research" (p. 23). These goals also identify potential validity threats or sources of bias for the research results that the researcher will need to acknowledge and address (Maxwell, 2013). Because my *subjective I's* and I cannot be separated, (Peshkin, 1991) and to insure avoidance of the threats to validity that Maxwell (2013) warned against namely, "the subjectivity of the researcher and the preconceived thoughts and concepts about what the data should reflect" (p. 53). I acknowledged, named, and shared my subjective I's with the reader in the examples below. These examples sounded the alarm and announced that researcher bias and reactivity entered the research. The owning and documentation of my subjective I's satisfied Maxwell's cautioning to recognize and examine my bias and reactivity. Below is a sample of one of my subjective I's. The subjective I's that I shared below plagued me throughout the process of designing, implementing, and writing this dissertation. They made me keenly aware of my need to name, own, and share my bias and reactivity. Additionally, I needed to determine whether my bias and reactivity had a negative impact on my research and if so how I adjusted to reduce the impact. The following are excerpts from my researcher journals.

*Subjective I's*

Sister Sledge Subjective "I"- "We are Family"  
(lyrics by Edwards & Rodgers, 1979)

We are family  
I got all my sisters with me  
We are family  
Get up everybody and sing

Everyone can see we're together  
As we walk on by  
(FLY!) and we fly just like birds of a feather  
I won't tell no lie  
(ALL!) all of the people around us they say  
Can they be that close  
Just let me state for the record  
We're giving love in a family dose

[Chorus:Repeat x2]

Living life is fun and we've just begun  
To get our share of the world's delights  
(HIGH!) high hopes we have for our future  
And our goal is in sight  
(WE!) no we don't get depressed  
Here's what we call our golden rule  
Have faith in you and the things you do  
You won't go wrong  
This is our family Jewel

[Chorus:Repeat x3]

I start with the lyrics to this Sister Sledge song because I have been hearing this song in my head since I have been writing and writing and rewriting my proposal and dissertation. So today, I stopped to explore my positionality. They say, (I do not know who they are) that every hero needs a theme song I guess this saying goes for heroines too. **There is so much to unpack!**

Suit Case #1: “We are Family.” I am family-oriented by nature. I believe that family is who you love and who loves you in return. It does not matter if there is a genetic connection. So I enter this proposal and research not knowing some of the women that will be participants yet I already feel connected to these women, connected through our life experiences. Really, connected through our life experiences? **In reality**, our connectedness is biological and experiential. We all are African-American women teaching at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South. This is where our connectedness begins and ends. **More reality**, according to the American Anthropological Association, there is more intra-race difference than there is inter-race difference. I have to keep this in the forefront of my mind as I interview these other African-American women teaching at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South. I cannot allow this “connectedness” to alter or distort in any way the

stories that each of these women will share with me. After all they each have a story and I have a story, and somewhere in those stories similarities may exist. However, I need to let them speak for themselves. I need to remain open to other stories that may be discordant to my story. I need to adopt a Joe Friday of Dragnet attitude, “Just the facts, ma’am, all we want are the facts!”

Suit Case #2: The heroine complex-in my mind’s eye, I am not wearing a Wonder Woman outfit and cape. I am adorned in mud cloth and cowrie shells. My hair is natural and my superpower is the ability to orate. I am speaking to an audience whose attention is turned toward me; they are hanging on every word that I say. I am not talking about myself; I am addressing the conditions of racism, sexism, and classism faced by African-American women. I am the voice of silenced ones, African-American women teaching at 4-year PWIs in the Deep South. I alone will speak for them! **And yet more reality**, I know very few African-American women who are incapable of speaking about and standing up for what they believe in. They may not garner the audiences or the ears, but they are speaking for themselves. I too must learn to listen to other African-American women. Two ears one mouth, what an excellent design!

Suit Case #3: The pernicious history of the Deep South. My father was born in rural Mississippi in 1917 where he remained until he was in his early twenties. Much of my bias regarding the Deep South is directly related to the stories that I heard my father and his brother, Uncle Nib recount from their childhood. I should have been playing outside or helping my mother in the kitchen, however, I found that eavesdropping on the conversations between the “menfolk” was more to my liking. My father never shared his childhood stories with me, which made them all the more interesting. His stories were reserved for his brother and other male members of our family. These stories were most often tales about some injustice or injury that occurred toward a Black man at the hand of a White man. These were private stories that never made their way into the public and social spaces of our home or my life. Some of these stories were riddled with violence that frightened me while I listened. Others gave me nightmares. Stories about the Deep South that exited my father’s mouth explained why he never finished school, why he could not read until my mother taught him, and why he never shared these stories with me. I hated what growing up in rural Mississippi did to my father. His childhood stories also allowed me to understand why he valued and insisted on my continued education and learning. I vowed to become an excellent student and person that my father could be proud of and to never like or step foot in the Deep South. Yet, here I am teaching at PWI and attending school at a PWI in the Deep South. Talk about a reality check.

**Last, but not least, I need to remember to check my suitcases at the door!!**

Generalization as defined by Maxwell (2013) refers to extending research results, conclusions, or other accounts that are based on a study of particular individuals, settings,

times, or institutions to other individuals, settings, times, or institutions than those directly studied (p. 136). Specifically, Maxwell identified two types of generalization, internal generalizability and external generalizability. The former looks *within* the case, setting, or groups studied while the latter refers to generalizability *beyond* that case, setting, or group (Maxwell, p. 137). I will address generalization in the method of portraiture. Portraiture is a form of qualitative inquiry involving case studies. Portraits were created on each participant of the study. I also wrote a collective portrait. It was during the analysis of the portraits that I paid particular attention to internal generalizability. According to Merriam and Associates (2002) maximizing variation in the purposely selected sample is a strategy to insure generalizability or external validity (p. 29). Merriam and Associates (2002) further stated that

The logic behind this strategy is that if there is some diversity in the nature of the sites selected . . . or participants interviewed, or times and places of field visits, results can be applied to a greater range of situations by readers or consumers of the research. (p. 29)

By building in a degree of maximizing variation (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 29) through the selection of participants based on tenure status, rank of the professoriate, places of field visits, and conditions of employment (active or retired), I increased the generalizability or external validity of the study.

All research should be conducted in an ethical manner. Guidelines must be in place to protect participant anonymity and safety. Ultimately, conducting research in an ethical manner is the responsibility of the researcher. The following section illustrates the processes I put in place to insure my study was conducted in an ethical manner.

### *Ethical Issues*

Peshkin (1991) and Merriam and Associates (2002) reminded the researcher to be continuously aware of researcher subjectivity throughout the research process.

“Examining the assumptions, one carries into the research process – assumptions about the context, participants, data, and the dissemination of knowledge gained through the study – is at least a starting point for conducting an ethical study” (Merriam and Associates 2002, p. 30). The bias, which required continuous awareness, was my membership in the population that I researched namely African American women faculty at PWIs in the Deep South.

To insure acknowledgment of my bias, I relied on memoeing and the use of a researcher journal to address *bias* that I brought into the study. Through self-reflection and journaling, I recognized and documented my “subjective I’s” (Peshkin, 1991, p. 287). In addition to the procedures that I employed throughout my research design, implementation, and results’ dissemination, I also followed the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board regarding informed consent and making participants fully aware of the conditions and requirements of the study as well as presenting the participants with an opportunity to ask questions and to withdraw from the study if they chose to do so.

Although qualitative researchers can turn to guidelines, others’ experiences, and government regulations for dealing with some of the ethical concerns likely to arise, the burden of producing a study that has been conducted and disseminated in an ethical manner lies with the individual investigator. (Merriam and Associates 2002, p. 30)

With Merriam's words in mind, I went about constructing the portrait of each participant. As stated earlier in my dissertation, three of the participants of my study were unknown to me before this. Of the other three participants I had some knowledge of them from a distance. I met two participants at different professional events and the last participant was a colleague and friend of a friend. I needed to know who these women were therefore I created the interview guide in a manner that allowed me to know them first as children, as young adults, and then as professional women.

Each portrait was *painted* with my pen in a chronological order. I wanted the reader of my dissertation to experience the journey I took in getting to know each participant. They were asked essentially the same questions per the interview guide, however, the direction and the paths that the interview guide provided were as varied as the participants themselves.

The women who sat before me during their interviews represented a snap shot, a point-in-time and there was no way to capture the depth and breadth of these women without stepping back in time. I wanted to understand where they started, the paths they traveled, the stops they made, the people they met, the events that impacted them, and the decisions they made, which led them to become African America faculty women teaching at PWIs in the Deep South.

### Conclusion

In combination, CRT, womanism, and portraiture allowed me to *invoke the personal* through the telling of my story and the stories of those who talked to me but were previously silenced. I further *evoked the professional* through the documentation and dissemination of these stories and *exercised the political* to illuminate the issues of

race, class, and gender in educational research. “The combination of CRT and portraiture is unique in that portraiture uses events and social contexts to build a composite of an individual and group, whereas, CRT uses the individual or group to highlight broader issues of society” (Chapman, 2007, p. 157).

The convergence of CRT, womanism, and portraiture was a perfect blend to accomplish my study. With the emphasis on counter-narratives as places of resistance, the desire for the elevation of voice for those who would otherwise be silenced, and the importance of all members of the community, CRT, womanism, and portraiture was a seamless *mélange*. I used this combination to investigate, illuminate, and document the strategies of the six African American women faculty members of this study and how they each managed to strive, survive, and thrive at their PWIs in the Deep South.

My research sought to bring the counter-narratives of the six African American women faculty of this study to the forefront in order that their muted voices might gain volume and be heard. The effect that their voices will have on the institutions where they teach, serve, and perform research had not yet been birthed. In this post-election period when race, racism, isolationism, xenophobia, sexism, misogyny, cultural understanding and intelligence and understanding, or lack thereof has taken center stage, I wait with bated breath for the response of academe as a microcosm of the world. Will academe reflect what is going on in the United States or will it serve as Johari’s window, revealing our blind spots or what it is that we do not know about ourselves and others? The upcoming chapter sets forth the participant’s stories in the form of portraits.



## Chapter V

### INDIVIDUAL PORTRAITS

This chapter will feature the portraits of six African American women faculty members employed by predominantly White institutions in the Deep South: Shiphrah, Grace, Sophie, Tabitha, Faith, and Shalom. I spent the majority of 2015 searching for the participants of this study. I was witness to more noes than yeses as I combed the state of Georgia looking for participants. I heard over and over and over again the reply of no and the concern regarding anonymity. Despite my best efforts to do so, I could not give many of the female faculty members who I approached the confidence that their identities would be protected at all costs. Their reasons for giving me an emphatic, “No,” did not stem from a story-less history at their institutions. Their noes were birthed from fear and concern for my professional safety as well as their anonymity. They did not have the conviction that there was safety in numbers because frankly, the numbers of African American women faculty teaching at predominantly White institutions in Georgia are not large enough to assure the preservation of their anonymity. According to U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (2016) Fast Facts report on race/ethnicity of college faculty members; there were 53% full-time faculty members at degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Of this 53%, Black females represented 3% of full time faculty members. The statistics did not take into consideration the percentage of Black female faculty teaching as part-time faculty members. The numbers were so miniscule that attempting to hide among the

individuals represented by this number would surely give way to their identities being compromised. The negative responses led me to expand the search for participants to include the states that are commonly thought of as the Deep South.

All of the participants of this study were either retired from or currently teaching at predominantly White institutions in the Deep South when interviewed by me.

Renowned for its pernicious history involving African Americans, I wanted to know if the campus climate of these institutions would reflect any remnants of the character of the Deep South as portrayed in Morris and Monroe (2009). Additionally, I wanted to know if the counter-narratives of these six African American faculty women would expose those remnants. Mindful not to allow my curiosity regarding my assumptions that were previously stated to get the better of me, I stowed my curiosity and continued with the tasks of soliciting participants for my dissertation. Each of the individual portraits is preceded by a description of the setting to assist the reader by providing a context for the participant's story.

The portraits of the participants are divided into two sections. The historical portraits are represented by the counter-narratives of Shiphrah, Grace, and Sophie. The historical portraits represent the participants who were retired from the PWIs where they taught at the time of the interviews. These participants entered the academy during the 1970s and were among the first to integrate the professorate of predominantly White institutions in the Deep South. These three women blazed trails, created pathways, provided roadmaps, and left signposts for those of us who would follow in their wake. These women built bridges where none previously existed; they navigated and charted waters that were not previously explored. Shiphrah, Grace, and Sophie were pioneer

women, who withstood hardships, endured obstacles, persevered though draught with a confidence that was not manufactured by man. These women, strong of mind and spirit, forged ahead when everything in their path indicated that they should halt, give up, give in, and buckle under the pressure of being the first fruits among others that were yet to come.

The contemporary portraits are represented by Tabitha, Faith, and Shalom. These three women stepped into the shoes and walked the paths first forged by Shiphrah, Grace, and Sophie. They continue to honor their professional legacies through their teaching, service, and scholarship. Each of the participants represented by the contemporary portraits like their historical counterparts, continue to be firsts fruits. They represent the only African American women faculty in their respective departments and/or colleges. Collectively, the counter-narratives of the participants represent a longitudinal view of predominantly White institutions in the Deep South. Their combined years of service beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the present day, permitted me to take a farsighted view of the academy.

I was honored to sit at their tables, be in their company, and bear witness to their stories. Each of them encouraged me to plow on, to unearth, and harvest the wealth of knowledge and the nuggets of gold that each participant's portrait represented. I thirsted for the counter-narratives of these three women like a deer panting after water. Collectively, Shiphrah, Grace, and Sophie spent 99 years in service to their respective predominantly White institutions in the Deep South prior to retirement. This fact along with what they witnessed and experienced in these settings should have granted and garnered for each of them a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

*Setting for Shiphrah, Historical Portrait*

I heard of Shiphrah from a shared colleague. The colleague worked with Shiphrah prior to her retirement, and I was currently working with this colleague at a different predominantly White institution. This colleague volunteered to serve as a bridge to connect me with Shiphrah. She was adamant that I needed to speak with and interview Shiphrah; she was sure Shiphrah had a story to tell. She mentioned that Shiphrah was among the first African Americans to be hired to teach at the predominantly White institution that previously employed each of them. This mutual colleague provided Shiphrah's home telephone number and insisted that I give her a call. I was desperate for participants and therefore threw caution, decorum, and what I considered a proper introduction to the proverbial wind.

I gave Shiphrah a call. I introduced myself and informed her regarding the nature of my call. I also shared with her that our mutual colleague gave me her contact information. She was warm and receptive over the telephone. She said, yes, to my request immediately. There was no hesitation; no pause to contemplate the events occurring in her life that might indicate that she would be inconvenienced by contributing to the research. She said, "Yes, I would love to participate in your study." I released my bated breath, not realizing that I was holding it, waiting for what I thought would be the usual no to my invitation. On the contrary, there was no silence that represented reservation and no pregnant pause to contemplate it. Prior to presenting my request to Shiphrah, I heard no so frequently from other African American women faculty members that her immediate, "Yes," shocked me. We continued the conversation and set a date for the initial interview. I informed her that the commitment involved three 90-minute

interviews. She registered her agreement, and we set-up the date for the first of three interviews. She gave me her address, I thanked her, and we ended our conversation.

One week passed between our initial telephone conversation and the first interview. I arrived at her home, rang the doorbell, and was met with a warm smile and a hug. I immediately felt comfortable in her presence. She invited me in, and we walked directly up the stairs to her kitchen where the interview would take place. We chatted for a while, which gave me an opportunity to observe my surroundings.

I was sure the walls of this split-level home had stories of its own to tell. This house was lived in. It was clean and neat, yet showed signs of wear. Not the wear of neglect, but the wear of use. It was by no means given the status of a museum where the contents were viewed but never touched. This was a working home, a place where children were reared, guests and family were welcomed, and life was lived. I perceived that this house served Shiphrah and her family well and allowed Shiphrah to make it a home. On this day I met one of her young grandsons and realized that this home was serving yet another generation of Shiphrah's family.

I entered Shiphrah's home on one level, which opened to a family room setting; I then walked up several stairs to the kitchen and formal living area. I noticed yet another set of stairs that led to what I imagined were the private spaces of her home. The cooking area of the kitchen was separated from the eating area by a bricked-in counter. The entire room was lined with brick. This represented for me a flash back to my childhood and fond memories of visits to my aunt's home. It made me feel warm with sweet remembrance of times gone by.

A round table and four leather chairs along with a fire place occupied the majority of the eating area. The kitchen table was occupied with papers and other things. Although Shiphrah was retired from years of employment at the PWI where she worked, she was by no means retired from life and serving others. Shiphrah offered me something to drink, which I instantly accepted. She passed me a glass of water, and the interview commenced. I started the recording device and reiterated my purpose for being in her home. What launched was what I perceived as a conversation between friends instead of an interview between researcher and participant.

Shiphrah did not greet me as a person whom she was just meeting. She greeted me with an enveloping embrace and immediately offered me something to drink. The interview questions were asked and answered as they should have been during an interview by a researcher with a participant. However, the formality and stiffness of the moment that I expected did not occur. I felt warmth and a sense of familiarity at Shiphrah's kitchen table. I asked questions, she provided answers, and we had a conversation about her life as a child, which followed the prepared interview guide.

During the second interview, I was once again welcomed into Shiphrah's home as I was during the initial interview. On this morning she mentioned that she dropped her husband off at work and decided to stop and pick up breakfast for each of us. It was early in the morning and I admitted to Shiphrah that I rushed from my home without consuming anything. The breakfast of chicken minis from Chick-fil-A satisfied my rumbling stomach, and her kind gesture warmed my heart. We sat down once again at her kitchen table, however on this day she mentioned that she needed to attend Vacation Bible School at her church and needed to leave once the interview concluded. I

acknowledged her request and began the second interview. While conducting this interview on this day, I felt melancholic. I was convinced that had Shiphrah and I been given the opportunity to work together we would have been friends and maybe, just maybe I would have found the mentor for whom I longed since the inception of my career at a PWI in the Deep South. On that day at that time I mourned what never was.

The grief I felt on this day in no way negates the relationship I had with the department head who hired me. She was my mentor and assisted me in my new role as faculty member. Dr. G. as I lovingly called her served as a friend, a resource, and a beacon. However, we did not enter conversations regarding race. This was a challenging space for us to negotiate. Dr. G. was concerned about my transition from the clinical environment to the academe setting. Without her efforts my transition would have been difficult. What I longed for from Shiphrah were her words of wisdom on how to negotiate the space of race on the campus of a PWI as an African American faculty woman.

The day of the third and final interview presented more of the same, I arrived at her home, and Shiphrah was in full “super woman” mode. She was waiting for a service repairman to come for a repair that was needed in her home. In the meanwhile she was preparing for me what would be a lunch of low country boil, a staple in the southeast coastal region. Again, my heart warmed and expanded for the gracious hostess she was on each occasion that I was invited into her home. Once again, I longed for what could have been.

Upon conclusion of the third and final interview, I wished Shiphrah a heartfelt goodbye. During this interview she gave me documents from a course that she created. She would use these documents to teach a class in her community. She requested that I

return the documents to her once I concluded reviewing them. I promised to return them in a timely fashion. She also gifted me a copy of the book she wrote while she was still teaching. On that day at that time I was grateful that I had the opportunity to be in the presence of Shiphrah. I backed out of her driveway and drove toward my home in Savannah. As an aside, we never got the opportunity to partake of the low-country boil. We got heavily involved in the interview. A meal that was meant to be shared became a take-home-sack for me.

*Shiphrah*

*She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
She can laugh at the days to come.*

*She speaks with wisdom,  
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*

*She watches over the affairs of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

*Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:*

*Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all.*

*Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

*Honor her for all that her hands have done,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.  
Proverbs 31: 25-31 (New International Version of the Bible)*

*I'd Be Willing Lord To Run All The Way  
(Lyrics by Kevin Spencer)*

*Verse 1*

*Use me Lord in thy service  
Draw me nearer every day  
For there's mountains in my  
life so hard to climb  
But I promised I'd  
keep climbing*



*If you'd only let me stay  
I'd be willing Lord  
to run all the way.*

*Chorus  
All the way, all the way  
I'd be willing Lord  
to run all the way  
If I falter while I'm trying  
Don't be angry, let me stay  
I'd be willing Lord  
to run all the way.*

*Verse 2  
Many loved ones  
gone before me  
Whose dear face we often miss  
Oh the parting at the river I recall  
Where I promised broken hearted  
I'd be faithful till the end  
I'd be willing Lord  
to run all the way.*

*Chorus Twice*

*Tag  
All the way, all the way*

The Biblical story of Shiphrah can be found in Exodus 1:15-20. Shiphrah was a midwife who assisted the Hebrew women with the delivery of their children. I selected the name Shiphrah as a pseudonym for this participant because one of her most lauded professional accomplishments was her creation of the “Bridge” program at the institution from which she retired. The Bridge program formally prepared paraprofessionals to become K-12 classroom teachers thus assisting them with the “birth” of their new professional careers. During one of the interviews, Shiphrah mentioned that the scholars of the Bridge program lovingly referred to her as “Momma Shiphrah.” I perceived this pseudonym as appropriate, in view of the fact that she gave birth to the program that created their new profession and took care of their needs while in the Bridge program.

Her actions displayed the characteristics of a midwife, assisting with the birth of their new careers, and instructing them on how to prepare for the new life they were to experience. The pseudonym “Shiphrah” was appropriate.

Additionally, I chose the Scripture of Proverbs 31:25-31 as a description of the woman, who I interviewed on three separate occasions. Shiphrah displayed “wisdom” and gave me “faithful instruction” regarding the writing of my dissertation as well as professional survival tips. During one of the interviews, she was literally “watching over the affairs of her household” as she gave information to a service repairman. Moreover, in all the times I was in her home, she was never idle. She was always multitasking. Yet, I never thought she had not given me her undivided attention. It reminded me of a quote by Maya Angelou (n. d. b), “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel” (p. 27). I was always hopeful in her presence; I believed I could accomplish anything from surviving my predominantly White institution to completing my dissertation. I was also surprised that as an adult woman, I needed the encouragement and wisdom that she offered. Shiphrah was the epitome of the woman described so eloquently in Proverbs 31.

Moreover, what struck me the most during my interviews with Shiphrah was her persistent gratitude and service to the Lord. From the time of her childhood when she was attending church with her mother and father, Shiphrah remained a faithful believer and follower of Jesus Christ. This was evidenced throughout her life. As I mulled this pseudonym around in my head, I wanted to identify and define Shiphrah as more than a mother. I wanted to convey to the reader her dedication to her faith. The lyrics of the hymn, “I’d be Willing Lord to Run All the Way” (Spencer, 1971) from my childhood

came to mind, and it was a befitting testimony to the life and work of Shiphrah.

Everything that Shiphrah accomplished in her life, she attributed to the hand and grace of God, no other pseudonym I considered seemed to suit her more.

I commenced the interview querying Shiphrah about her childhood. The story she revealed was unexpected. When I was a child, the majority of the African American people in my family and in my community migrated away from the Deep South. Shiphrah was one of the few African American women with whom I was acquainted who did not have this history. Shiphrah was born in Shiphrahdale, Pennsylvania. She described her hometown in the following passage.

I was born in Shiphrahdale, Pennsylvania. It is a small town in the southeastern corner of Pennsylvania about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia in what's called mushroom country. It's the mushroom capital of the world. We lived in the country up on a hill, and we had mushroom houses in our yard. My father was a mushroom grower. He was originally from Tennessee. My father went to maybe the 11th grade in school.

Shiphrah did not elaborate on the house in which she lived or the town in which she grew up. Her childhood was consumed with mushroom growing. Considering the limited education of Mr. Aaron Tailor [pseudonym], Shiphrah's father, he made great strides as a mushroom entrepreneur. An example of his success included selling his mushrooms to a famous soup company. She reminisced about her childhood.

The fertilizer for mushrooms is cow manure. They got the manure from the stables and mixed it with straw. My father would put these long boots on me, his boots, they were way up here [She motions to the joint that connects her leg and

her hip], and he would lift me up and put me on top of the manure pile. He would give me a hose, and he would turn the manure and mix it with the straw as I watered the manure. When manure is piled high, it will catch on fire. If it is not the right combination you know it could catch on fire. My job was to water the manure [as if she was seeing herself on the manure pile]; that always keeps me humble.

I am a city girl and my family purchased mushrooms from the supermarket. Even as Shiphrah shared this story with me I had no idea, no sphere of reference regarding what she told me. I decided in that moment that I needed an education on mushroom growing. I vowed to research this process once I arrived home. Shiphrah continued her story,

That was my first job. There were nine children in our family. My father, as I said before, had his own business. He was a mushroom grower. He owned mushroom houses in three different locations. They were in the yard of our home, there was one on the outskirts of Shiphrahdale about 5 miles from our house, and there was a mushroom house in Autumnhill, Pennsylvania, 15 miles away.

My father worked hard. He worked into the middle of the night. They had to turn the manure at night so it could aerate and to make sure it didn't dry out during the day. In the morning they would take it to the different mushroom houses that my father owned. He groomed all of his sons to work in the mushroom houses. Everybody had a job. He was very well respected, and I was known as Aaron Tailor's daughter. I didn't have a name. I was Aaron Tailor's daughter.

There was no bitterness in her voice as she stated this fact about the lack of a personal identity while growing up in Shiphrahdale. It was a simple statement; she was indeed Aaron Taylor's daughter. Many of us who grew up in African American communities were known as the children of our parents or by our parents' reputations. Maybe this occurs in all communities, I am not sure. What I am sure of is that African American children were and remain identified by the reputations of our fathers and our mothers for better or for worse. It served us well if our parents were viewed as upstanding citizens in our communities. Shiphrah continued,

My parents were avid church goers, and they took us to church every Sunday. We lived about 5 miles from the city so that's how far we had to go in order to go to our church. My mother sang in the choir, and my father was a trustee chair. He was in charge of the money for the church. He was very well respected and people in the community would call him if they were in trouble, and he would help get them out of trouble. He would help get them out of jail if they got in jail or any other kind of trouble they were found in.

With no segue; Shiphrah continued speaking about her childhood. Her home life, church life, and community life were so intertwined that there was no demarcation from one part of her story to another. She was sharing the story of her childhood and all of the events that were important parts of her growing up.

Out of all of my brothers and sisters, I was the second youngest. I was the youngest girl. All of my older brothers and sisters were 10, 12, and 15 years older than I was. The closest brother in age to me was 6 years older than me. My

younger brother was 10 years younger than me. So I was in the younger set of the family. They had to take care of me. They didn't like taking care of me.

I identified with Shiphrah as she told this story. In the midst of her interview I reminisced about my childhood. I too was the younger of two girls. I didn't have a large family, but I was familiar with what it was like to be the youngest child. My sister complained about having to watch over me all the time. She also was not fond of having to drive me around as a condition of using the family car. Shiphrah's stories concerning her childhood with her siblings were all too familiar. I was grateful that I recorded the interview. I returned from my daydream and continued listening to Shiphrah's story.

I don't think I was spoiled. They didn't let me be spoiled because they had to take care of me. They really pushed me to do whatever they wanted me to do. My brothers used to take my dolls [She stated wistfully.] "I had a lot of dolls". They would take my dolls and break them up in front of me. They would tear off their arms and their heads. It would torment me. I was the subject of a lot of teasing because I was younger and everybody else was older. They did not want to take care of me. They used to do things and dare me to tell. [I interjected and asked Shiphrah if she ever told on her older brothers and sisters. She responded], Yes, I would tell whenever I could. If I needed to get something from them, I would say, "Okay, if you don't do that I'm going to tell. I'm going to tell mommy." So I knew how to manipulate them.

During one time in my childhood we had 15 people in our house at one time [really, I exclaimed in disbelief]. Shiphrah continued, yeah, it was a big house. It had an attic, and it even had a potato cellar. It was a big, big house

[Shiphrah stated with wonder]. What can I say about my brothers and sisters?

They all married, had children, and eventually when they were able to get on their feet they moved away. We had conflicts and all, but it was just how it was.

It was a happy life that we had. We didn't have everything we wanted, but we had everything we needed. We lived in a house that had 15 rooms in it. I used to walk around the ledge of the house. It had a ledge on the third floor. I was like a tomboy. As a child, I was definitely involved in church activities, definitely involved in the community; I was a Girl Scout and a Girl Scout leader. I sold Girl Scout cookies. I got all of the badges you got for Girl Scouts. I went to camp as a child. My father wasn't really wealthy; he definitely wasn't wealthy, but we had the things we needed. We had animals. We grew a garden. It was a happy life. It was a good life.

Shiphrah spoke openly about her father, her siblings, and the life she shared with them while growing up in Shiprahdale, Pennsylvania. She had not mentioned her mother therefore I questioned Shiphrah for details regarding her mother. She was obliging as she spoke of her mother.

My mother was very independent. She had nine children so she worked in the mushroom house, and she was a domestic. She worked at several places. She worked for years for certain people. She was ambidextrous so she could use her left hand and her right hand. She was very strong willed. She had her own mind as to how she wanted us to be raised. My father was more calm and very religious and easy going unless you got him upset. My mother was very resourceful. She sewed our clothes. She made things, and all the girls learned how to sew. We all

learned to cook. She really pushed us to do the things we were supposed to do. My mother was very independent and very fiery at times.

My Mother was from Pennsylvania. She had no formal education beyond the third or fourth grade. She was adopted. She was always concerned about her adoption and that her mother gave her away. My mother gave birth to nine children, and she never gave any of her children away. She was very concerned about that. She only reunited with her mother as an adult. Her mother wouldn't let her know who her father was. She did not find out who her father was until he died. The day of his funeral somebody told her, "that's your father." She always had an issue with mothers and fathers taking care of your children and that kind of thing.

I understood the reticence that Shiphrah's mother displayed regarding her origin. I understood how the questions of identity plagued her, as evidenced by Shiphrah's comments. When all the pieces are in place, identity remains a complex, multi-layered, and multi-faceted construct. Concluding the counter-narrative about her mother, Shiphrah's story once again turned to the mushrooms that loomed large throughout her childhood. We shifted the interview to her childhood education and the mushrooms remained a part of the story. Shiphrah recounted,

My father used to give me mushrooms to take to my teachers and my teachers were so glad to get those mushrooms. I didn't have any idea that they loved them so. They were very happy about receiving those mushrooms from my father.

It was during the late 1940s and early 1950s, my elementary school was unique. In the first through the fourth grades we were all sent to school together;



Black and White kids went to school together, rode the same bus. We rode approximately 5 miles to the other town to attend school. When we got to school the White and Black kids would go in to different classrooms. The separation of the kids was based on race. So the Black kids went to one room and the White kids went to another room. We played together at recess. We ate in our own classrooms, but we were together to play. We were together to ride the bus home, but when it came to education we would go into separate rooms.

Whether separate schools or separate classrooms or separate types and depths of instruction, the public educational systems of the Northern United States as well as those in the South and Deep South regions of the country, separated Black children from White children when it came to their education. This “separate but equal” (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896) position was entered into law under United States Constitutional Law. From the annals of history, evidence supported the claim or use of the words, “separate but equal,” but it indeed did not exist. The public facilities that Blacks were permitted to enter and use were separate but by no means equal.

When I went to the fifth grade White kids and Black kids were in the same classrooms. This was the first time for true integration. We were Black and White in Ms. Skillen’s class. I think it was a smooth transition. We were aware that it was something unique. It was unique indeed in the country because no other schools allowed Blacks and Whites in the same classroom in school. But we had to do it because of the buses. Everybody lived in the country so the only way they could get to school was on the bus. It was cheaper for all of us to get on the one bus and go.

My first serious thought about the separation was at home. We had neighbors, who were Quakers, and my first thought about it was when my mother was hanging up clothes on the clothesline and I was playing with the two little White girls who were neighbors. As a matter of fact, my mother worked for them. They used to call her by her first name. I said to them, "Don't call my mother by her first name, her name is Mrs. Taylor."

Little Shiphrah interpreted her playmates calling her mother by her first name as disrespectful. When their behavior did not change after her verbal correction, Shiphrah took action. She stated, "So I began calling their mother by her first name because I was a little belligerent." Shiphrah continued talking about her childhood in Shiphrahdale, Pennsylvania.

We were playing outside, and we were playing that we were going to be movie stars, and I said to my mom, "Who can I be?" They would say that they were going to be Marilyn Monroe or Greta Garbo or whoever or whatever was popular. I asked my mother again, "Who can I be?" She replied, "You can be Lena Horne. She is an absolutely beautiful Negro movie star, and she is wonderful." I replied to my mother, "Why do I have to be her? I want to be somebody like they know." I had never heard of Lena Horne. So that was the first time I thought about race and separation.

I continued the interview by asking Shiphrah if there were other stories from her childhood that impacted her. There were two that she chose to share.

Everyone in my family tells this story. My father told me to wash the meat we were going to have for dinner. It was a pheasant that we were going to roast. I

didn't know what to do so I used Ajax to wash the meat. So that's my thing. Everybody said, "Oh no, she used Ajax to wash the meat." We used Ajax to get our knees clean. I was always playing on my knees and I had to get them clean. It seemed logical to me to use Ajax. I was named after my father's sister, so everyone called me "little Shiphrah." So "little Shiphrah" and the meat, that's my story. My father cleaned up the meat real good, and we ate it. He wasn't going to throw meat away.

I laughed as she told this story. We take things so literally when we are children. I totally understood little Shiphrah's point of view. If Ajax was good enough to get the dirt out of the skin on her knees, surely it was appropriate to use to clean the pheasant. I chuckled at the simplistic thoughts of a child picturing little Shiphrah using Ajax to wash the meat. We all have similar funny stories from our childhood, stories that reveal our initial critical thinking skills. I was lost in my private reverie thinking about my childhood story when Shiphrah continued with her next story. Shiphrah's childhood stories always transported me to my own childhood memories.

I was a leader as a kid. I was a natural leader. I was the first president of the Girl Scouts in the town where I lived. I did well in school and everybody knew my father so I got a lot of breaks that other people didn't get. I had a teacher named Ms. Harmon; she was a teacher that taught every student in the school. If you earned 100 points on your spelling test, she would allow you to take the ruler and hit the hands of the people who missed spelling words. I always got 100 on my tests. I was smart, always had a 100, and I didn't get hit either. Then she would give us this ruler, and we would hit the hands of the people who missed words.

However many words they missed, we had to hit them that many times. Of course the kids would say, “You better not hit me hard.” They didn’t like me because I was always getting 100 on my spelling test. I had a fear of being hit because my brothers and sisters used to beat me all the time.

So that was something that really stayed with me because we had some kids who were really bad kids. Not bad but they got in trouble all the time. I was set apart from those kids in that I received good grades. If you got good grades, you got in good with the teachers and everybody else. Of course all of my brothers and sister ahead of me already set a reputation, good or bad depending on which ones they were. So I lived up or down to their reputation. The community had expectations for me because of who my father was.

I was Aaron Taylor’s daughter and that meant that I was going to go to college; that I was going to do great things in life. When I was a kid in church, one time I remember a visiting evangelist said to my mother, “She is going to grow up to do some very special things. God has His hands on her, and she is going to do something very special.” I remember that. My mother said, “Oh really;” and she was crying. I was a teenager when she said that. She said, “I just see it.” I was scared at the time, not knowing what it would be. But thinking back, I have done some really special things, I really have, and God does have His hands on me.

Shiphrah made these statements as wistful affirmations. During the nanosecond that it took Shiphrah to awaken from her reverie and return to our interview, I recalled a poem by Marianne Williamson,

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, [and] fabulous? Actually, who are you *not* to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. (Williamson, 2009, p. 53)

Many women spend a lifetime coming into their own as they attempt to find strength in their own voices and acceptance of who they are. I cannot speak for all women. I cannot speak for all African American women. However, what I have known to be true is that African American women have a history of being subjected to others' ideas of who they are or who they should be. From submissive mammies (Harley, 2008) to smiling Aunt Jemimas, from angry "Sapphires" (Henderson, Hunter, & Hildreth, 2010) to welfare queens (a term coined by the media and introduced into public conversation about poverty by candidate Ronald Reagan during a 1976 campaign rally). Reagan purported, "She used 80 names, 30 addresses, 15 telephone numbers to collect food stamps, Social Security, veterans' benefits for four nonexistent deceased veteran husbands, as well as welfare. Her tax-free cash income alone has been running \$150,000 a year." African American women are visualized as hyper-sexed, large breasted, big hipped baby-making machines of racialized femininity, beauty, and sexuality. African

American women have wrestled with their greatness, their beauty, and their identity from slavery until the present age. Marianne Williamson's poem has served as a constant reminder that our greatness is not predicated on any external or manmade idea, our greatness is a gift from Almighty God. When Shiphrah continued as she spoke of the life lessons she learned in childhood. Life lessons acquired from both of her parents as well as the people in her community. She declared,

I learned don't embarrass your family and don't embarrass me [her mother or father]. People would say, "Oh, you are so pretty." My mother would say, "You're not pretty at all if you don't act pretty, if you don't act right, and if you don't treat people right. That has nothing to do with pretty. You got to have something inside you that is more important than pretty."

I learned to go to church. I learned to love the Lord. I learned to serve the Lord, and I still serve Him. I think those are my main life lessons and to be self-sufficient. As a Girl Scout, I learned to be self-sufficient. We learned to cook. We went to camp. We could set up the tent. We knew we could cook on a little can. We made a little Bunsen burner. Hey, I was very self-sufficient.

There was a certain pride in Shiphrah's voice as she mentioned her childhood accomplishments. During the early 1940s when Shiphrah was a small girl of 2 or 3 years old, life for African Americans was not easy. The laws of the land privileged Whites and assured Blacks that life in the United States, especially in the Deep South was and would continue to require Sisyphean efforts to survive. I felt proud of the accomplishments that Mr. Aaron Taylor achieved and by extension, what "little Shiphrah." Shiphrah turned her

attention to her high school years and told story upon story about the events that impacted her life during this time.

In high school, I was the only Black student in my section. The students were grouped according to academic ability, and for many years throughout high school I was the only Black person in my section. That was good in some respects in that everybody knew when I was there and when I was not there. Everybody knew when I was finished with my work and when I didn't finish my work. It was also interesting in that it was a little close knit group, that first section [the section that Shiphrah was in]. They used to have parties, and they used to do things on the weekend together, and I was never a part of that. I didn't even know they did that. Sometimes they would forget and say something in front of me and then someone would say, "Oh shut up, shut up." I was part of the first section but not a part of it. I was in it but not of it. I was really good in school. I got good grades in school but my high school guidance counselor told me that I really should rethink going to college because I'd never get anything higher than a "C." He told all of the Black students that. There were 83 people in my high school class; I was the eighth smartest person in my class. I was number eight, but I am sure I was higher than number eight. I was number eight because I was Black. They were not going to give me the credit I deserved because I was Black. I knew that.

So when I went to college, I went to a predominantly White college, not because it was predominantly White but because the major I wanted was there. I wanted to be an English teacher, so I started out at a PWI in Pennsylvania. There were only six Black people on the whole campus. I did well in college. I would

send my report card home to my high school counselor or I would tell somebody to let him know what I did. He died before I got my Ph.D. I was so unhappy that man died because what he said about rethinking going to college really had an impact on me. “You won’t ever get anything higher than a ‘C’.”

Shiphrah’s years in college were equally challenging. Race was always a part of the equation when it came to her scholastic achievements. Shiphrah recounted an interaction with one of her college professors.

My minor in college was Spanish. We were taught Spanish in the laboratory school. Dr. Keylock [pseudonym] was really hard on me. This was my first Spanish class; however it seemed natural to me. It turned out that she thought I was Spanish, and she was hard on me because she thought Spanish was my native language and that I wasn’t doing well in my native language. She thought I was lazy. I didn’t get a chance to tell her that I was a Negro until I graduated. I did get a chance to call her, and she remembered me. She said, “Oh, I didn’t know that.”

Also, I used to work in the Registrar’s office when I was in college. I was given access to the folders of every student there. I looked at all of the folders of the Black students. I knew that I should not do it but I looked at their folders. There were six Black students at the college. The registrar wrote down all of the answers on their interview sheet that contained all the questions that you would be asked and had to answer. Every Black student’s folder had a big “N” with a circle around it on their first sheet when you opened the folder. It was a visual. It identified us immediately. It identified us as Negro. I looked at mine, and it said



that, “She wants to help her race.” That’s what I had said in my interview. That was near the bottom so everybody knew I was a Negro.

I also remember, they had a place called the “Rat Race,” which was the place everybody went to eat and have fun, so when I first went there I remember the guy behind the soda fountain bar, he said, “Can I ask you a question?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “Are you Italian?” That was the first time ever in my life I thought I was anything but Black. You know what I mean? That really bothered me, but I didn’t look Italian because I was much fairer, and I had long hair, and it was straight. If I had said “Yes,” my life on campus would have been very different. He shocked me. So when he said that, I was like . . . I was like “No!” I was like, “How could you even think that I am that?”

During the time of Shiphrah’s entry into young adulthood, society had an incessant need to identify, name, and classify African American women. American society was obsessed with categorizing an individual by race and ethnicity. Shiphrah’s experience in college was no different. As a bright and intelligent young woman, surely Shiphrah belonged to any race other than African American. She had been identified as pretty. She had been identified as Spanish. She had been identified as everything but African American. The implication of being misidentified was, surely God would not have wasted Shiphrah’s beauty and intelligence on an African American young woman.

The lessons Shiphrah learned very early in her childhood, had taught her to see and accept herself as more than just a pretty face. Her parents and her community had invested in Shiphrah’s future. They had instilled in her a desire to serve in her church and in her community. Shiphrah’s time atop the dung hill had taught her humility, the Girl

Scouts allowed her to display leadership qualities and self-reliance, and her family had implanted ethnic pride. After all she was Aaron Taylor's daughter. The interview with Shiphrah continued, I asked her about her early employment opportunities. Shiphrah intimated,

When I was 14-years-old, my first job was cleaning a White lady's house. I used to go and sweep the breakfast room, wash the dishes, and I made \$5.00 a week. With \$5.00, I could go to the movie theater and pay only 50¢ to watch the movie. I did not have to sit up in the balcony area reserved for African Americans because with the money I made as a maid, I could afford to sit downstairs. That's unique too. I could give them a 5 dollar bill and get change. That was a big thing for me. That was my first employment, working for Mrs. Swain. That was the lady my mother worked for many years. My sister worked for her too.

I had other employment; I used to take care of two children who had cerebral palsy. Both children in the family had cerebral palsy, and they were severely affected with it. They couldn't do anything for themselves so I would go and change them and sing to them and read to them. That was my second job. That was when I was in high school. I always had a job, and of course my father's mushroom house.

Once Shiphrah shared with me the jobs she had as a young girl and while in high school, Shiphrah turned her attention to her professional life. Shiphrah's professional employment was unique. She was employed by both a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) as well as a predominantly White university. She gave me

descriptions regarding her professional life in each of these types of institutions of higher education.

When I moved to “Shiphrahville from Shiphrahdale” where I grew up, I told my husband here are the things I’ve got to have. I have to have a house and a job. So, he got me a job at Shiphrahville HBCU working with the Veteran’s Affairs Program. I was a reading teacher. I taught reading to the veterans at Shiphrahville HBCU at night.

I got another job at Shiphrahville HBCU in the Reading Institute. I worked under a woman who was infamous in her treatment of people and professors. There had been six professors in that position before I got there. She really made my life miserable for the year I was there. I taught reading. At this time in my career, I had a M.Ed. with an emphasis in reading. I was considered a reading specialist. I taught teachers how to teach reading to students. It was a good experience. However, the woman I worked under made my life absolutely miserable.

The last month I was there, I ended up taking medication to help me relax. She would do ugly, mean things and lie on me. She would give assignments to the students and say I made up the assignment. She would intercept my mail that I received from the college. She would not inform me about faculty meetings. Other colleagues would ask, “Why aren’t you going to faculty meetings?” I said, “I didn’t know when they were.” I finally did go to the president and tell him some of the things she had done. He said, “Just hang in there for a little while longer, and things will be alright.” I said, “That’s what you’re thinking.”

My husband said, “You are going to leave that place.” I had no job to go to but I left there because they didn’t support me, and they hadn’t supported the other faculty members under her. She was horrible, mean, and hateful. She lied and did horrible things. They finally did fire her. That was well after I left. That was a really bad experience that I had at Shiphrahville HBCU. I liked working with Black teachers. I enjoyed that, but she made my life absolutely miserable.

While Shiphrah relayed this story, I was interested in knowing if the woman who had made her life miserable while she was employed at Shiphrahville HBCU was an African American. Shiphrah confirmed that she was. I was struck by this information. I was also disappointed in the behavior of this woman toward another African American women faculty member. It plagued me to think that African American women faculty could also be marginalized and alienated at an HBCU by another African American woman.

The subject of African American female faculty employed by Historically Black Colleges and Universities represents an area of research that necessitates investigation because of the lack of information on this subject in the scholarly discourse but it is beyond the purview of this work. As an African American woman, I have always been sensitive to the relationships between African American women. I have never wanted to be cast as evidence of the vision that society has of African American women. We are much more than what can be viewed on the evening news or on reality television.

Shiphrah continued her discussion regarding her professional life by recounting the route that led to employment at Shiphrahville predominantly White university. She affirmed,

My husband had worked with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). A prominent member of the local Shiphrahville NAACP told my husband that there was a job opening at Shiphrahville PWI, and that I might think about applying for it. So I went to Shiphrahville PWI, and I talked with the chairman of the English Department, and he said, “Well my dear, the Black people we would have in this department have to have a doctorate. We don’t have any Black people in this department, and you have to get a doctorate if you want to teach here.” I did not have a doctorate at this time. This was not the position that had been mentioned to my husband.

The position that had been mentioned to my husband was in remedial education that was open so I went and applied to that and when I applied to Shiphrahville PWI for a second time, the President of the university said to me, “Well young lady we are going to hire you, but I don’t want to see you downtown marching in any protests. I don’t want to see you out there in that civil rights stuff. I don’t want to see you out there in any of that.” This was in 1972. That’s the condition that he gave me.

Of course my husband worked with the NAACP, his job was to bring Black doctors to Shiphrahville. He worked with the health committee. He was definitely into civil rights, and I was really into civil rights. I was militant. When I came to Shiphrahville I had a “fro” this big [Shiphrah stretches out her hands on either side of her head to indicate how large her afro was]. When I went to Shiphrahville PWI, I straightened it out. I said, “I will change it for the time

being.” I got the job and then I changed it back. I didn’t have the gigantic afro, but I started wearing it again.

When Shiphrah conveyed the conversation that she had had with the President of Shiphrahville PWI, I was angered by her need to change her physical appearance to “fit in.” I was not angered by Shiphrah or her decision. What angered me was that she knew her afrocentric hairstyle would be unwelcomed and would identify her in a way that was derogatory. I was further appalled by the university president’s need to dictate her participation or lack thereof in the political activities she chose to pursue. However, Shiphrah displayed no bitterness toward either of these conditions of employment that had been both self-imposed and imposed upon her. She stated, “My goal was to be employed. I would satisfy the conditions of employment to satisfy my need to be employed.”

Her need to be employed reigned supreme. She temporarily altered her appearance and continued to be active in the civil rights movement. Shiphrah’s actions and reactions toward the conditions that had been exacted upon her reminded me of a saying from my mother. She would state, “I can show you better than I can tell you.” The implication of this statement was that our actions speak louder than our words. Shiphrah never compromised her convictions, but outwardly conformed in order to better position herself to address those convictions.

The way African Americans wear their hair and the way they choose to dress make statements to others about who they are. These statements may be born from racial stereotypes and often prove to be inaccurate. Regardless, the impression born of these stereotypes would have been made whether true or false.

I started at Shiphrahville PWI as an instructor. I taught remedial reading to college students who placed lower in reading. I taught there for 5, 6, or 7 years. I was promoted to assistant professor while I was working on my degree. Then they drafted me to become department head after I got my degree. I headed the Department of Developmental Studies and then a position came open in early childhood education. Meanwhile, I taught some early childhood education courses. I got a sabbatical from Shiphrahville PWI to go to the University of South Carolina to get my doctorate.

I used to get up early in the morning, get my kids lunch, send them off to school, get in my car, and drive to a university in South Carolina. I would drive 3 hrs. 30 min. to go to the university and study. The library had special cubicles for doctoral candidates. I would study in the library until 4:00 p. m. in the afternoon. I would go to my 4:00 p. m. class. That would finish at 6:45 p. m. I would then go to my 7:00 p. m. class and that would be over at 10:00 p. m. I would get in my car and drive back to Shiphrahville, another 3 hrs. 30 min. I did that for 4 years. Then I moved on campus because I had to do residency and a language. I did my residency in Spanish and lived in the city where the university was located.

My daughter moved with me and the boys stayed in Shiphrahville with my husband. That time lasted about a year. I had a year's worth of work to do to finish. My daughter and I moved back to Shiphrahville and that was the year I wrote my dissertation. It took me a year to do the dissertation. I would write and send drafts to my professor. I would put the drafts on a Greyhound bus. I had a friend that lived in the city where the university was located. That friend would

meet the bus for me; give the draft of my dissertation to my major professor. He would read it, my friend would go back to pick it up, and then he would put it on the bus to send it back to me. So I would meet the bus, do whatever changes I needed to make, and send it right back. I did that for a year until I finally got my degree.

As Shiphrah recalled all that she had done to obtain her doctoral degree, I compared my story to Shiphrah's story. Yes, I worked full-time, and yes, I attended school full-time however; I was not responsible for tending to children or having to drive 3 hrs. 30 mins. to attend classes multiple times per week. I was not separated from my family nor did my residency require that I live on campus in a different city and state apart from my family. My time with Shiphrah on the day she told me this story caused me to self-reprimand. The sacrifices I made paled in comparison to what Shiphrah and her family sacrificed and endured.

I sat in my car once the interview concluded and realized how blessed I was. Shiphrah had indeed blazed a trail for those who would follow in her wake. She set the standard. She served as evidence for what appeared to be impossible. She served as proof that goals are achievable if approached with great determination and perseverance. After Shiphrah recounted the requirements to achieve her goal of acquiring a doctoral degree, she resumed her account of life at Shiphrahville PWI. She affirmed,

The department I taught in was a large department; it expanded during this time because Shiphrahville PWI had open enrollment. Anyone who attended college had to take courses in our department to prepare them for upper level college courses in reading, math, and language. I was the anchor for reading. My



undergraduate degree was in elementary education and my Masters was in reading and language arts. We had people from five or six departments teaching remedial courses. There were 30 people working under me and with me in connection with those other departments. During this time, I also developed a course to prepare students to take the Regents' exam. Then after that a position opened in early childhood education, and I started in early childhood education. I did not teach in this department long.

Never one to rest on her laurels, Shiphrah continued to pursue professional opportunities. While Shiphrah shared with me the path of her professional journey, I had a moment to reflect upon a story she shared early on during her interview. I recollected what the registrar of her undergraduate university recorded from Shiphrah's interview, "She wants to help her race." These words that represented Shiphrah's young adult thoughts and desires came to fruition. In the following paragraphs she details the events of what became the crowning glory of her professional career.

I met some people in Atlanta. First, I actually prayed. I wanted to write a grant. I was doing a lot of travel during this time, but I wanted to write a grant. I asked the Lord to give me something that would increase the number of Black teachers because we had very few Black teachers. Kids would go from first to twelfth grade and never have a Black teacher in the county. He answered my prayer; He gave me an opportunity. A group from the Southern Education Foundation gave us an invitation to write a grant. They told Shiphrahville PWI officials that they wanted me to head that grant. I took maybe a year or so to write the grant.

I interviewed paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, bus drivers, and I said, “If we got you into college and got you through college what would you need?” They told me, “We would need tutors, we need somebody to babysit, and we would need money to go to school because we would have to stop our jobs.” Everything they said they needed I put it into the grant. So we got a grant from Dewitt Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund. It was almost a million dollars. They gave us a check upfront. The upfront money was unique. It was not really that structured. We could use the money as we wanted.

Shiphrahville PWI invested the money because they gave us the money upfront. We really weren’t supposed to do that but we did. White people will do anything they want to do at the university. So he [the president of the university] invested the money and expanded the money. We had to write the proposal and say how we were going to use it. They renewed the grant; we got more and more money. The grant [funding] continued for 14 years, which is unprecedented.

This marked the beginning of the Bridge [pseudonym] program. A program designed to create the pathway by which Black paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and bus drivers would attend college in pursuit of becoming K-12 teachers. The fruition of Shiphrah’s vision assisted with filling the gap that was apparent across the country by providing more Black teachers in K-12 classrooms.

So what we did was we developed a board, and we interviewed people. We interviewed over 1,000 people; we took the cream of the crop. We only brought in approximately 130 people. We then provided them with their full tuition. We provided them with tutors. We provided them with babysitters. We paid their

bills. If they could not pay their bill, they would give us the bill, and we would write a check to the electric company or whatever. We helped them keep their house. We paid house notes. We did whatever they needed to have done. I brought in people who would teach the courses.

The Bridge scholars were required to maintain a certain GPA. We would put them out of the program if their GPA fell below the requirement. Over the course of the program we put out 25 to 30 people. All of the chosen program participants signed a contract. If we put them out of the program, they were obliged to pay back the money that they were given. A lot of them would then improve because they didn't have the money to pay us back.

I considered what Shiphrah stated. My initial reaction was one of annoyance. I was annoyed because I initially felt Shiphrah's position was cruel. However, I came to understand the gravity of wasting program monies as well as wasting an opportunity from which someone else could have benefitted. I realized Shiphrah was correct in stating up front what the penalty of failure would be. Every student needs an incentive to do well in any program or course. The "incentive package" offered by the Bridge program proved to be successful. All of the participants of the program received monetary allocations that met all of their needs. Through a simple request to the program officials, mortgages, utilities, tuition, books, and other needs of the Bridge students were met. In retrospect, I recanted my initial annoyance. Shiphrah went to talk about additional grants she pursued to strengthen the Bridge program.

We applied for and won an award from Harvard University. I forgot how much it was, maybe over \$100,000 dollars. We went to D.C. and presented to the National

Press Club, and we won their top award. We won the top award out of 1,121 applicants. So we got national coverage with Peter Jennings and ABC news. Because we were well known, we were on National Public Radio. We got national coverage and that allowed us to write even more grants. The national coverage of the Bridge program brought attention to Shiphrahville PWI. The more attention that we brought the college, the more chances we would get [to prove our value]. The more chances we got, the better the faculty of Shiphrahville PWI regarded our students.

The pattern continued. The more notoriety we garnered, the more funding we received. The more funding we received, the more Shiphrahville PWI was featured on a national level, and the greater the acceptance of our scholars at Shiphrahville PWI. Harvard gave us money. So we wrote federal grants. We got more and more money; hundreds of thousands of dollars. This allowed us to perpetuate the program. The [Bridge] program went on for 14 years. We certified over 125 [Black] K-12 teachers.

The teachers were amazing. We had a 95% retention rate. The problem with teachers was that we were losing them within the first so many years of their career. We had a 95% retention rate and that got a lot of publicity. I traveled with my scholars all over the country. There were several organizations that wanted to replicate our program. I wrote proposals to present at conferences and my scholars, the ones with the highest GPA would travel with me, and the grant would pay for that.

Other organizations, other surrounding counties around Shiphrahville would invite us there. They would replicate our program because there were many paraprofessionals in those counties also. This allowed us to receive more money from the federal government. We kept getting more money. We continued to travel. We continued to replicate the program.

Now our scholars are amazing. One of our scholars is Director of Human Resources. Another one is Director of Curriculum and Instruction. We have about six or seven principals. We have assistant principals. Fifteen percent have earned their doctorates. Sixty percent have earned Master's degrees. We have a 95% retention rate and our scholars are just phenomenal. They have done well. They are leaders in the public schools. Every scholar has a story to tell. Every one of them has had fantastic experiences. They call me "Mama Shiphrah."

Now that they're teachers, here is the thing. Now their children are benefitting from what their parents achieved. Their children are excelling because they were role models for their children. Their children are in college and they are doing extremely well. "So it is a real blessing," Shiphrah stated.

Shiphrah beamed as she shared with me some of the outcomes of the Bridge program as well as some of the scholars' professional achievements. She was proud of what was accomplished through the program. I perceived her pride not as self-aggrandizing but the pride of having met a goal, the pride of having a hand in changing someone's life, the pride of being chosen and used by God as an instrument, and once again the statement recorded by the registrar at her undergraduate college came to mind, "She wants to help her race." She had indeed helped her race.

Although Shiphrah was retired from her last faculty position for nearly 10 years, she maintained contact with many of the Bridge scholars. During an interview she spoke of a concern that she had for one of the scholars.

The Bridge scholars serve as really good examples. One was floundering. She lost her job. She used to go with me more than anybody else. She had the highest GPA. She just has not found her way. She is an assistant principal. I worry about her. She is not even teaching anymore. She is the only Bridge scholar I'm really concerned about. She is the one closest to me. She was like my daughter. I think her major concern is that she doesn't have a good relationship with the Lord. I think that is her major concern. She worked with the state department. She is searching. I need to write her a recommendation. She asked me, and I haven't written those recommendations yet.

Shiphrah furrowed her brow and a look of concern was etched on her face. I knew she was thinking of this Bridge scholar. She returned from her daydream and the interview for this day was concluded. We continued to talk about other things; however, I perceived that Shiphrah continued to think of this Bridge scholar.

During the third and final interview with Shiphrah, I queried her regarding her professional relationships with the faculty and students of Shiphrahville PWI. Shiphrah was the only African American in her department. I was interested in knowing how she perceived her relationships with faculty and students on campus. She responded,

Well, I was on a lot of different levels you see. When I was in development studies it was good. My department head used to spy on people. My understanding is I got good evaluations, but my initial evaluations contained a lot

of derogatory words, but I never saw them. He would take them out before I saw them. I had good relationships with my colleagues. I just didn't deal with those people who I knew didn't like me or were racist or something. I tried not to deal with those kinds of people.

As the Bridge scholars went through the different programs, I would advise them to the right faculty. We didn't deal with bad faculty members. Then I received the top awards from the students, the faculty, and the community. I got an award from the university system. Once you get national attention you have more opportunities. I got an award from the Board of Regents then I got the state's Professor of the Year Award. Once I started getting those awards people stopped bothering me and began to respect me. This occurred because I was dealing on a level they hadn't even gotten to yet. The main question was "will you be getting an Ed.D. or a Ph.D.?" I got a Ph.D., which was more preferred at the university level than was an Ed.D. When they found out I was getting a Ph.D., I was okay.

During this time I knew that male faculty members were in dominant positions. They were all department heads. There were a few women who were department heads. The advantage of my being a department head was that I had two positives; I was Black and female. So it behooved the university to promote more Blacks and women or Hispanics and women. That was an advantage, and they did it because it was to their advantage, not because they wanted to do it. I became known as an African American. She stated, "That's Shiprah, oh yeah, she's the Black faculty member over there." That was my major identity.

I was the only one, the only Black department head and the only Black professor in education. Because I was the only one they needed to make sure people knew that I was Black. I served on committees because they needed a Black person on the committee. I advised a larger number of students than other faculty did. I had my regularly assigned students plus I had Black students who came to me because I was Black, and they needed to talk to somebody Black because they had a Black issue. They weren't necessarily my students or my advisees. [Shiphrah then asked rhetorically,] "What is it like being the only one? It means that you have to do more than everybody else because you are the only one."

As Shiphrah shared her perceptions of her relationships with colleagues, it brought to my mind a concept introduced by Derrick Bell. Bell (1987) noted, "The interest of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interest of Whites" (p. 523). Until Shiphrah brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars into the coffers of the PWI where she taught, she was just a Black female instructor. Her teaching, service, and scholarship excellence remained undetected. After all, she was doing what she was hired and paid to do.

Pending national exposure via interviews with Peter Jennings, program success, and program replication, Shiphrah remained obscure, filling the status of being the "only one." However, once her achievements began to loom large, she became notable to the administrators of Shiphrahville PWI, proving the interest convergence principle of Derrick Bell which stated, "Blacks only make substantial progress against racial



oppression when their interests align with those of White elites” (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 14).

I turned my attention to Shiphrah’s relationships with the students she taught and advised. It was difficult to remain impartial; as some of my interactions with students have challenged me, and a few of their course evaluations have angered me. Because of this position, I was mindful to remain unbiased once Shiphrah began to speak. I checked my “subjective I’s” (Peshkin, 1991, p. 287), a sample of my subjective I’s can be found in chapter three of my dissertation. I listened intently as Shiphrah continued.

Prior to becoming Director of the Bridge program when I taught in developmental studies and education, I had good relationships with my students. My students liked me. They talked about me and said I was mean. I got really good evaluations from most of my students. I always received really good evaluations, because I had real strict standards. I was mean but fair. They knew when they came to my class not to play with me. I wasn’t friendly. I was a friend if I needed to be a friend, but I always maintained a psychological distance between my students and me. I was always very careful about my interactions with them.

One of them said to me, “I have always gotten *As*” I replied, “That’s good but you are not going to get an *A*. This is a different level. Here is your record. I didn’t give you anything. This is what you earned. Here they are.” Another student burst into my office and went belligerent. I called the campus police on her. She came into my office screaming and hollering at me. I said, “Leave my office.” She replied, “I am not leaving your office. You gave me a grade, and I didn’t deserve that grade.” I said, “I gave you the grade you earned.” She

answered, "I'm going to get my friend, and we are going to do this or that." I stated, "I am going to call the campus police if you do not leave right now." The campus police came and asked me, "What can I do, Dr. Shiphrah, what do you need?" They know me. White people see you there long enough they know you.

Shiphrah recounted the adverse versions of her interactions with students.

However, she beamed when she spoke of the success of the Bridge program and the fulfilling relationships she had with the Bridge scholars. The few negative interactions did not thwart her enthusiasm. I found myself wondering if this was based upon Shiphrah's choice to focus on the positive instead of the negative. After all, Shiphrah began her tenure at this Deep South PWI in the 1970s. According to all of the history books that I have read and the History.com Staff (2010),

The 1970s were a tumultuous time. In some ways, the decade was a continuation of the 1960s. Women, African Americans, Native Americans, gays and lesbians and other marginalized people continued their fight for equality, and many Americans joined the protest against the ongoing war in Vietnam. (History.com Staff, The 1970s section, para. 1)

My childhood flashed to my memory, and I recalled the two most popular television shows *Good Times* and *All in the Family* illustrated the extremes of Black life and White life in America. I remembered that neither of those extremes represented me or my family. Yet they remained popular during the 1970s.

All in the Family, was about the Bunkers TV's first dysfunctional family, a blue-collar bigot, Archie who hates Black people and opposes equal rights for women, his long-suffering but loving wife Edith, Archie's "little goil" Gloria, and her

liberal husband "Meathead" Mike." (Classic TV Database, 2008, All in the Family section, para. 1). The other popular television series was Good Times, about the Evans, a two-parent household of lower middle-class blacks living with their three children in a high-rise ghetto on the south side of Chicago. (Classic TV Database, 2006, Good Times section, para. 1).

I continued the interview. I knew Shiphrah faced challenges in and out of the classroom on the campus of the PWI from which she retired. I envied her ability to focus on the positive. This was evidence that she chose to "search for goodness" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983). I turned my attention to Shiphrah's scholarly activities and inquired about how or if her PWI influenced the subject matter of her scholarship. Shiphrah continued to be forthcoming,

Shiphrahville PWI really had a significant influence on my research because in order to move to a higher rank you needed to exhibit a record of research. That's what I wanted to do. It encouraged me to develop two courses on cross cultural communications. One was in conjunction with another PWI that was in close proximity to Shiphrahville PWI and the graduate school of Shiphrahville PWI. First it started as a graduate seminar on cross-cultural communications and that resulted in my book and my research at the university where I went to get my doctoral degree. From there that became a regular course. Then it started as a seminar offered at the joint graduate schools of Shiphrahville PWI and Shiphrahville HBCU. Then we separated and that became a graduate course in cross-cultural communications that I offered twice a year at Shiphrahville PWI. It became a required course for educators at the graduate level.

After the 1960s and 1970s, the country became interested in communicating across cultural differences and this ushered in interest in teaching cultural diversity. That became a graduate course. Then there was initial push for undergraduate teachers to know more about cross-cultural communication so I wrote an undergraduate course. I got on a committee that was addressing the issue of culture for teachers. They used the undergraduate course that I wrote as a prototype for the course that was developed and used for the whole university system. Now it's a required course. That course is now offered regularly. It is a required course for all undergraduate teacher education majors. I have been asked to speak for that class, and they use my book. Reminiscently Shiphrah stated, "To what extent has my research been used at the university, to a great extent because those are the courses that were adopted by the university system. Every college in the university system now teaches that course."

After I finished my dissertation, my real issue, the issue I focused on was Black language. I was really more interested in Black culture and Black language. My dissertation was in reading. I researched the reading strategies of effective elementary school principals in South Carolina schools. After I finished that, then I went to what I really wanted to do and that was write the book on Black language and culture because I was studying that. Language and culture were outside cognates. We took inside cognate and an outside cognate. My outside cognate was linguistics, the study of language. I continued to focus on Black language and culture.

My serious interest has dominated my research for the last 2 years. I just did a 3-day course for all the principals in the Shiphrahville school district, all 53 principals in the Shiphrahville school district. The interest in Black language and culture has dominated my thinking and my work.

Shiphrah concluded the third and final interview not with additional reflections regarding her career or her time at the Deep South PWI from which she retired. She ended the final interview with words of wisdom for me, and once again my heart warmed with the graciousness that Shiphrah continued to display.

See what you've got to do during this time is pad your resume with experiences. If somebody says, "Oh you did a really good job." Ask them if they would mind writing you a letter about that. Document all of it. A padded resume speaks to all of your experiences. People saying how wonderful it is to work with you and how wonderful you were to work with, that's what impresses the academic arena. So if you write a book or if you write an article they applaud that. Write grants and proposals. Never stop being productive. God is laying things in place for you. He is making it happen. Getting that degree has got to be your first step, don't try to make it perfect. Just get it done!

*Researcher Reflections regarding Shiphrah*

Shiphrah and I exited her driveway simultaneously on the third and final day of my interviews with her. We headed in opposite directions. I drove toward my home in Savannah while Shiphrah headed toward her church to participate in Vacation Bible School and to continue donating service unto the Lord. During the three interviews, she

openly and honestly walked me through the events and experiences in her life that created the woman who sat before me during the three interviews.

The trepidation that I initially felt melted away once she welcomed me into her home. Our unconventional introduction had no bearing on the hospitality Shiphrah extended toward me each time I was in her home. I must now admit that our mutual colleague was correct, Shiphrah had a story that I needed to hear, a story that she needed to tell. Shiphrah's story was a story that burst forth with humility and conviction.

From the time she spent on the dung hill in Shiphrahdale, Pennsylvania as Aaron Taylor's daughter until the time of the Ph.D. that was conferred upon her; Shiphrah learned some valuable lessons that continued to inform her. From her mother she learned to be kind and to accept and appreciate others. Her father taught her the meaning and value of hard work, perseverance, and being well respected. Her church community instilled in her how to be of service to the community and to the Lord. The Girl Scouts instructed her in the practice of self-reliance and leadership. The heights of her professional career where she received accolades and national exposure served as proof that the hand of God was with Shiphrah. She maintained the same humble spirit that was created atop the dung hill as she sought to "help her race."

As I drove away from Shiphrah's home, I was once again reminded of the pangs I felt during an earlier interview. I found myself wondering about what could have been. Had Shiphrah and I been given the opportunity to work together would I have found in her the mentor I longed for in a space that oftentimes has left me blind and in the dark? I castigated myself for having these selfish thoughts of adding yet another act of service to Shiphrah's platter that overflowed with service, teaching, and scholarship.

I was impressed by this woman during our initial telephone conversation. I was impressed by her intellect, impressed by her ability to navigate the academic space that I have found labyrinth-like, and impressed by her unfathomable capacity to serve and fulfill the needs of others. With Shiphrah's home in my rearview mirror I drove away nursing the aches of what could have been. I was proud to have spent time in the presence of and listening to the story of this unpretentiously knowledgeable and quietly powerful woman.

*Setting for Grace, Historical Portrait*

It was during an interview with Shiphrah that I became familiar with Grace. On that occasion, Shiphrah asked if I had heard of Grace from any of the other participants. When I indicated that I had not, Shiphrah suggested that I contact her. Shiphrah did not have her contact information however; she suggested that I search the Internet for the contact information on Grace. I indicated to Shiphrah that I would follow up with this information as she suggested.

Prior to sleuthing out Grace's contact information and whereabouts, I returned to Shiphrah's home for a second interview. As fate would have it, Shiphrah announced that she had serendipitously run into Grace while out and about in Shiphrahville. She mentioned to Grace my need for additional participants and briefly revealed the subject of my research. Shiphrah recorded Grace's contact information and ultimately relayed that information to me. I thanked Shiphrah for advocating on my behalf with Grace.

I contacted Grace via the telephone and gave her additional details about the research I was performing. Grace met all the requirements to participate in the study; therefore I invited her to contribute her story. She answered with a resounding, "Yes."

Grace's assent represented the conclusion of my pursuit for participants. She gave me her address and asked that I Google the directions. She further indicated that the route to her home was convoluted. Grace consulted her calendar and arranged an initial interview date. I thanked her once again, concluded the conversation, and immediately Googled her address. I laughed once the directions to Grace's home were in my possession, there was no way that Grace could have known how directionally challenged I was. Her instruction to me to Google her address was born out of politeness.

I shared with my husband that I needed to drive to "Grace's" Island, South Carolina. He suggested that we take a practice drive so that I would not be nervous about the driving directions on the day of the initial interview with Grace. Although slightly affronted by his suggestion, I concurred. After all, my husband knew how directionally challenged I was. With directions in hand, he drove while I noted landmarks along the route. We arrived at the area where Grace's home was located, yet could not identify her exact address. Grace lived on a small cul-de-sac and the addresses of the homes on her street were not evident along the cul-de-sac. Nonetheless, we travelled to Grace's home and I vowed to find her home on the day of the interview. With mirth my husband approved of my plan, and we returned to our home in Savannah.

On the day of the interview with directions in hand, I drove to Grace's Island, South Carolina. The drive presented no challenge until I arrived at the turn that led me onto the island. All of the landmarks I noted during the test drive with my husband evaporated into oblivion. One street turned into another without any demarcated left or right turns. It was one long and winding road to Grace's home. I remembered her warning me that the route to her home was not straightforward once on the island,



however, I may have discounted this advice because of the ill-placed confidence I had in the Google directions and the practice drive to her home. I eventually found my way to Grace's street and to Grace's home. I was 25 minutes early so I parked under a shade tree at the entrance to her street and called my sister to pass the time.

My sister joined me in laughing at my being directionally challenged. She sardonically reminded me of my ineptness in learning how to drive as only a sibling could. I feigned bewilderment at her teasing. I hinted that I got lost because I was anxious about the interview or maybe my challenged sense of direction was acute on this morning because I lacked adequate sleep. She continued to needle me good-naturedly and requested that I contact her once the interview concluded, she wanted to make sure I could find my off the island as well as I had found my way onto the island. She volunteered to notify the South Carolinian authorities of a lost adult if I did not call. We ended our conversation with howling laughter, and I promised to call so she would not have to alert the authorities.

I drove down the street, entered Grace's driveway, and parked my car. I immediately noticed that her home backed to the intercoastal waterway. The vista that could be viewed as I walked the short distance to her doorway was breathtaking. It was an exceptionally clear, sunny, and not-to-hot June day along the coast of South Carolina. A gentleman was working in her yard; she later identified him as one of her sons who was down from Atlanta to cut the grass and groom the yard.

The outside of Grace's brick home was painted a pastel green. There was an elaborate black wrought-iron gate that stood guard at the front entrance of her home. To the left of the driveway, a similar black wrought-iron fence separated her property from

that of her neighbor's. There was a carport at the back of the driveway that was occupied by two cars. A large swimming pool dominated much of the back yard and could be seen from the driveway. Grace indicated on the day that I contacted her to confirm the interview that I should enter her home through the side door. The side entry was shielded by a screen door. I rang the doorbell and was greeted by Grace; she welcomed me into her home with a warm embrace and eyes that sparkled.

Once inside of her home, Grace introduced me to her husband who stood when we were introduced. I smiled at this chivalrous act; he was quite the gentleman. A female cousin sat on the sofa and acknowledged my presence. I presented her with a smile and a handshake, and she returned the kind gesture. This cousin travelled with Grace's son from Atlanta to visit. Her family continued to watch television as Grace and I stepped further into the family room.

The room was dark, which limited what could be seen as Grace and I passed through it. Natural sunlight coming through the windows of the room provided the only light. A dark green carpet covered the floor from wall-to-wall. There were two sofas in the room that sat at a 90 degree angle. These were the same sofas that Grace's husband and cousin occupied. A bar-type counter, which housed several books and papers stood opposite the door. Grace ushered me through a doorway and up one stair where we turned immediately right to climb the stairs that led to the kitchen. We entered the working area of the kitchen that housed all of the appliances and the sink. The kitchen table could be viewed beyond a wall that was created by upper cabinets and lower cabinets that were connected by a counter with a pass-through. We walked past this structure and sat at the kitchen table to commence the interview.

Grace and I sat opposite at the long sides of the rectangular table. The place where I sat allowed me to once again take advantage of the vista that could be seen from the driveway. However, this time the view was more panoramic. It appeared to stretch beyond the horizon. I imagined myself partaking of morning coffee while sitting in this space. Grace awakened me from a daydream by offering a drink of water. I accepted, and we commenced what was a fascinating account of her childhood.

After the interview on this day and every subsequent day of an interview I meandered off of Grace's Island just as I had meandered onto the island. I turned right when I should have turned left and went straight when I should have turned. It was not until I reached the bridge of palm trees that I was assured of driving in the correct direction. I found it wonderfully cathartic to be able to laugh at my directionally challenged shortcoming. Many of the things that have challenged me have also strengthened me. However, they have also reminded me of my frailty and to not take myself too seriously. As I finally left Grace's Island for more familiar territory I considered having been lost as an adventure. I called my sister and informed her that there was no need to alert the authorities, the "prodigal" daughter had indeed found her way home.

Grace

*But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me. So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, catastrophes, persecutions, and in pressures, because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*  
*2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)*

*Amazing Grace*  
*(Lyrics by John Newton)*  
*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,*  
*That saved a wretch like me.*

*I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind, but now, I see.*

*T'was Grace that taught  
my heart to fear.  
And Grace, my fears relieved.  
How precious did that Grace appear  
the hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils and snares  
we have already come.  
T'was Grace that brought us safe thus far  
and Grace will lead us home.*

*The Lord has promised good to me.  
His word my hope secures.  
He will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.*

*When we've been here ten thousand years  
bright shining as the sun.  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
then when we've first begun.*

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind, but now, I see.*

The name of Grace seemed an appropriate pseudonym for this participant. She presented with such poise. She was soft spoken and exuded gentleness as she conversed with me during our initial interview. In a world where the volume of noise seems to escalate daily, I considered the presence of Grace's quiet fortitude a welcomed gift. She exuded strength and self-possession, I am sure it was battle tested by her experiences.

The Scripture in Second Corinthians and the Christian hymn *Amazing Grace* epitomized Grace's strength. Throughout the interview she continued to give credit to God for all of the goodness that occurred in her life. She glorified God for bringing her through a lifetime of tests and adversities. Grace experienced challenges in her childhood

as well as in her adult life; however, she recognized God as the One who carried her through the trails of her life.

The interview with Grace began by querying her about her childhood. I was awed by many of the stories she shared with me. I sat motionlessly at her kitchen table as she commenced answering the questions. I watched with fascination as she reminisced about her childhood days in Tennessee. She shared her childhood stories with such poignancy, each tale pulling me into her remembrances. There were times during the interview where Grace transcended space and time. It was as if I could see the details of her memories dancing about her head.

In Tennessee I lived in a little community, and it was, I guess you could say it was in the country. Maybe now we would think about it in terms of a suburb. But if you would go to our house you would be going to the country. So when you would go, you would take your own water because we had well water, and our water was something. It tasted like sulfur, and in order to get to town or wherever you were going you walked 2 miles to the bus stop. Whenever you wanted to go into town that's what you had to do.

My dad had a night job so he had to walk the 2 miles to the bus stop and when he got off from work he still had to walk 2 miles back, and so I guess you would call our conditions there poverty, but you don't know it because everybody else was in the same situation.

Grace's counter-narrative morphed seamlessly into the story of her mother and father. Her conversation twisted and turned with many details. I was captivated by the information that she revealed. Grace shared that her father and mother met and married in

3 weeks. I was awed by this account. I took into consideration that the meeting of her parents took place in a different time. Neither her mother nor her father could revel in fanciful romantic thoughts of the other. Marriage between African Americans during this time was about survival and practicality. Marriage was an expectation held by family. This is not to say there was no love between Grace's parents. Romantic love would be born out of the mutual respect they held for one another. Grace continued.

He graduated from Fisk University with a degree in business but then the economy went into a type of depression and the company that he worked for that enabled him to buy this land out in the country, which consisted of 28 acres, to buy a car, and to have a standard of living to attract my mother in 3 weeks and marry her. My mother was marrying my father because she was marrying a businessman, this guy who was working for this company, who had his own car and everything.

So the economy went into like a depression and the company vanished you know, couldn't survive, and life for him became different. He did not have his job and he did not have his car. But how did he lose his car?

Asking and answering her question simultaneously, a smile occupied Grace's face and she shook her head in disbelief as she reminisced about the loss of her father's car. Her response made me smile because she did not have to reach far for this story. I knew in that moment sitting at her kitchen table that this was a story that was told many times over the course of her life. This was a story that grew metaphysical legs and passed through generations. I sat in anticipation as I waited for its telling.

Well his brother from the country comes into town and he borrows his car and leaves it on the railroad track. It runs out of gas, and he leaves it on the track. Oh the names that my dad called his brother because he took the only means of transportation that he owned. So that meant that we were isolated out in the country.

I shared the incredulity of this story. I asked Grace why her uncle did not push the car off of the railroad tracks. I wanted to know more. Was there a train coming? I asked Grace. I know cars were made out of steel during this era. I knew it would be physically taxing to move the car off of the railroad tracks. But to leave the car there did not seem like a viable option as I considered the time, the prestige, and the hardship of an African American owning a car. Grace had no answers for me. She shook her head and continued answering my questions displaying her disbelief. She recollected,

The only job my dad could get was a job at night working at the “Y” [YMCA] as a house serviceman. By being in that position he couldn’t go to church or take his family to church. In order to go to church we had to catch a Greyhound bus that would take us all the way into the town where the church was located. I always grew up with the fact that my daddy left the Lord and the Lord left him. He stayed in that position until one of my mother’s sisters who taught at a Christian Institute in Tennessee left her job to go to New York. So she told my dad, “Hey, you can take my job.”

So he took her job at the Christian Institute. He could teach and since he had a business background, he could handle the finances and so forth. This was kind of a traditional high school, but it also had an element to prepare young men

who wanted to go into ministry. It had boarding facilities also so you had people in small towns and so forth sending their boys to this school to prepare them for the ministry or to get them away from home because of the conditions in their locale. Then he started preaching.

Grace's father never gave up or gave in. He continued to adapt to the ever-changing conditions that were his reality. Having gone from the high hopes of being a successful business man to serving the community through preaching the word of God, Grace's father persevered through difficult times. Grace continued the story of her father.

My father started preaching and then he got a congregation to work with and he worked there for 13 years. After he left there he worked with another congregation, and he retired. Remember he didn't get started until late so he retired from the school and retired from the ministry. He was going to do farming, but he had a stroke but the Lord was with him. He had three strokes. He lived for 17 years in a somewhat crippled state.

Grace concluded the stories of her father. Without hesitation I asked her about her mother. I must admit I was intrigued by the fact that her mother met and married her father in 3 weeks. This fact continued to baffle me. I wanted to know more about this woman. Grace was forthcoming in the report of her mother.

My mother was easygoing. She believed in education and apparently, she got a good education. When I went off to college, I found out she went as far as high school, but she had good structured education, and I guess people would look at her as a sweet person. But at the same time if something didn't really go her way



she tended to fuss. She was a fusser. She could go on and on and on. She was more like that.

She was a good manager. She could look ahead. The 28 acres that my daddy bought was on the road. This was the best property. My dad got this offer from this White man. This White man said hey, "I want to buy 2 acres up there on the front." He gave my dad \$7,000. My mom said, "No don't you sell the land, don't sell it." But \$7,000 was a lot of money. So he sold the land for \$7,000.

White people know ahead of time what's going to happen, that the road is going to be widened. The road came through, the double lane highway and the guy sold it for \$100,000. By this time my dad spent the \$7,000. It was gone. He used to tell us all of the time, "The money is gone. Y'all got to get out there and work."

The story conveyed to me by Grace angered me. I restrained this anger so that Grace could continue to speak. How Grace's father was taken advantage of by this White patron was in my opinion despicable. In my opinion, the White power of this patron allowed him to possess the knowledge that the road would eventually be widened and anyone who owned the land required for this expansion would be richly rewarded. The White privilege of this man allowed him to hold the land until it would be needed for the expansion of the road. The immediate financial needs of Grace's family superseded her mother's disagreement with her father to sell the property.

Life in the 1930s and 1940s when this land deal took place was a difficult time for all Americans; however, African Americans in the Deep South were particularly disadvantaged. Slavery had ended, however remnants of slavery remained. This was the

era of the Great Depression. Survival was paramount. Needs took precedence over wants and aspirations.

The Great Depression brought mass suffering to all regions of the country. National income dropped by 50% and unemployment rose to an estimated 25% of the total labor force. At the same time, 20 million Americans turned to public and private relief agencies for assistance. As the "Last Hired and the First Fired," African Americans entered the Depression long before the stock market crash in 1929, and they stayed there longer than other Americans. By 1933, African Americans found it all but impossible to find jobs of any kind in agriculture or industry. Cotton prices dropped from 18 cents per pound on the eve of the Depression to less than 6 cents per pound in 1933, some 12,000 black sharecroppers lost their precarious footing in southern agriculture. (Trotter, 2004, p. 1)

Grace continued the story about her mother. When the health of Grace's father left him physically disabled, Grace's mother continued to forge ahead. She took on duties and responsibilities that originally belonged to her husband.

By this time my dad is sick with two strokes and so forth. She takes and sells the back property. But this time it's worth a lot of money. She sells the back property. Tore down our house and she builds a brand new house and in addition she has money from the sale of the property, which enables her to provide for the family with a good income.

My mother was resourceful. She had her own little business at the time. She didn't work, but her little business was she would make butter from the cows

and she would take her butter and her eggs from the chickens, and she would sell them. She had customers she sold to and that became her income. I think her resourcefulness made life better for her.

Grace spoke these words about her mother in a wistful manner. It was as if she was seeing her mother in a different light, the light of one adult woman assessing the life of another adult woman. I saw the air of understanding captured on Grace's face as she considered her mother through the lens of a woman. In that moment, Grace fully comprehended the strength and resourcefulness of her mother. Turning the inquiry toward the other members of her family, I asked Grace about her siblings.

There were eight of us in all, five girls and three boys. I am the second oldest child. The rest of the older ones included my sister and the third girl. My older sister, the sister under me, and the first boy, they were born at home, by a midwife. But I, I was premature and because of that I went to a hospital.

They had to put me in the hospital. Now they put me in a prominent White hospital in Tennessee, and I never knew why they put me in that hospital. There was a hospital where Afro-Americans usually went. Maybe it was proximity or maybe they had a person that didn't see race, I don't know, but I ended up working at the prominent White hospital.

As a student with a part time job, I worked at this prominent hospital. When you worked there you could get things done for free and so I had a breast mass while working there. During the [patient] interview they asked, "What hospital were you born at?" I answered, "This one." Their response was, "This hospital! No, you weren't born at this hospital." I said, "Yeah, I was born

premature and was born here.” They checked the records and sure enough I was born there. “It would be interesting to find out how that happened.” [Grace mused.]

Grace remembered story after story about her life. She would pull the string on one recollection that immediately led to the next. The tapestry of her life that was so tightly woven during a lifetime of living unraveled like loose threads on a garment. The stories burst from her mouth with urgency. It was as if she had been holding on to them under pressure. However, once the dam was breached, they flowed freely, which oftentimes caused me to chase the ending of one story while I captured the beginning of another. I enjoyed sitting at her kitchen table as she recounted her life story after story. I asked Grace to share with me the stories her family would tell about little Grace.

That’s kind of hard. If they were going to describe me, I guess they would describe me as a person that liked to read. I read a lot. I think another thing they would say is that I was lazy. One sister liked to have everything cleaned. She would clean the bathrooms. The other sister worked with the farm. We had to milk the cows so that was her job, milking the cows. After she milked the cows, I would separate them but I would do things like this. If it was my time to wash the dishes, I would take all of the plates and wipe them out and then I would wash one plate and stack it on top of all the other dirty plates that had not been washed.

If they described me at school, they would say I was the quiet child, very quiet. I took a lot in the sense you had kids who were abusive. I took a lot from them because in my mind I knew that down the road their lives would be bad because of their behavior. I can remember sitting in the seat and one just pinching

me. She would be pinching me. I was scared to tell the teacher, scared to tell my parents and so forth. So it was more or less a sense of endurance. This allowed me to deal with challenges further down the road of my life.

Grace did not mention the teachers that taught her during her elementary school years. What loomed large were her interactions with the students in her class. Grace chose to focus on what she was learning and dismissed what was an abusive existence in her grade school classroom. Grace's attention turned to her time in high school.

When I got to the ninth grade then I attended the Christian Institute. In high school they taught you the traditional curriculum; 4 years of math; 4 years you did history; 4 years you did science, and that was really good preparation in addition to foreign languages. They were up against public education. They didn't have the frills. No bands and so forth. It did have a basketball team, but no football.

Christian Institute was basically Afro-American. The students were all Afro-American. But the teaching faculty was kind of mixed in the sense that a well-known professor from another college and others on their faculty came out to teach us. Yes, all of our regular faculty members were college professors. [Grace responded to what could have only been incredulity on my face.]

So they in a sense took things to a little bit higher level. Their expectations were very high. One of them taught public speaking and that was primarily for those ministerial students. Every year they would have this oratorical program where people just came to hear them [ministerial students] speak.

They had chapel every day. You were also expected to do work within the community. You were expected to go out into the sick. So we went to homes and

visited the sick. This was a part of my high school experience. In addition to visiting the sick, we went to something we called the “poor house.” These were people who were struggling financially. I can’t compare it to today’s shelters for the homeless and so forth. It wasn’t that. It was just a big building that housed the people, but the strange thing about that is that all of the people being sheltered here were White. I think during this time all Black people were probably in a situation that if you didn’t have a homeless shelter to go to, you would go and stay with a family member. Back then, Black people had a tendency to take care of and help their own. We had more of a sense of community. You had somebody to stay with. It is not like now where you see us homeless.

This statement by Grace made me remember my childhood. If one of my father’s relatives came up to St. Louis, Missouri from Starkville, Mississippi, they would stay with my family. I understood as a child that they were not visiting. They knew and we knew that they would live with us until they got on their feet. What I did not understand as a child was what it meant for them to “get on their feet.” They came to us standing. This statement plagued me as a child until my older sister in her limited understanding explained to me what the statement meant. I shared this memory with Grace, and we both laughed at the innocence of childhood. The conversation moved from Grace’s high school years to her time in college.

My oldest sister and I started college at the same time. My father sold two of his best cows to pay for our first year. He said, “I sold two of my best cows to pay for your first year, now you got to work.” So we had to pay for the rest of college. My oldest sister got married in her second year of college. She married a service

guy. We begged her, “Don’t get married, don’t get married,” because we were losing our sister. She said, “Well you’re going to come to my big house, and you are going to wear my clothes and everything,” which never happened. So she dropped out of college and it left me there alone.

I had another sister that came along to college. We were going to Hillman University because that was my dad’s school. He was determined that all of us were going to Hillman [pseudonym]. When it came to the first boy, he sort of broke the pattern. He started at a rival of Hillman University; he didn’t finish. The next girl went to this same rival university because she wanted to do nursing and then the next baby boy started at Hillman for 2 years and then he transferred to the rival university. I went to Hillman for 4 years and I majored in foreign languages.

These facts amazed me. Grace’s parents instilled in their children the necessity of earning a college education. Grace began college in the late 1940s to early 1950s. She was 16 years old when she began college. Times were challenging for African American people when Grace and her older sister went to college. The fact that Grace was a second-generation college student impressed me. I was immediately proud of her and her accomplishments. She indeed blazed a trail for me. I had no choice but to make her proud of me in return, I felt I owed her that much. The attention of the conversation with Grace turned to her employment. I began by asking her what her first job was. She responded without hesitation.

We had a farm to maintain ourselves. We also had to get income. The money that my dad got from selling the cows was the family income. He also had hogs and so forth. He sold the hogs and that became income along with this night job at the

“Y” [YMCA]. One thing I remember and this makes you stronger. We had girls before we got a boy, so they would drop off this 100-pound bag of feed. The girls had to bring that feed up to the barn so I always said that all of my illnesses came from bringing that feed to the barn.

My sister’s job was to milk the cows. So after we took the milk and brought it down, we had what we called a separator and the separator would separate the milk from the cream. So you had the cream coming out one side and you had milk coming out of the other side. My job was to clean the separator.

Another chore that we had was to get the firewood. At the end of the day you go out and get the firewood that you are going to put on the wood burning stove so that my mother could do the breakfast in the morning. If you didn’t bring any firewood in you were going to get it [get punished]. You were really going to get it, plus she [my mother] is going to send you out there to get firewood in the morning. Those were the chores around the farm.

My first job off the farm was taking care of this family. I thought my job was to take care of the children, but I found out that my job was to take care of the children, to wash, to iron, and to cook, because at the time I think I was 16 at the end of my freshman year in college. Now I’m in the work world. Then I find out I have to do all of this. The lady tells me, “Well you know our maid came to us when she was 16-years-old, and she died last year.” I said, “No wonder she died with all of this work she had to do.” This could have never worked out. The kids ran wild. She lay up in the bed all the time. I’m washing and ironing. So at the end of Thursday she said, “We’re moving Friday to a new house.”



She takes me over there, and she shows me this new house and I said, “Golly, this is going to be nice. This is going to be easy to clean up and it’s going to be easy to do the kids.” I thought I might be able to do this. When she is moving on Friday and I’m helping with the move, but I see this African American lady there, and she has on a black uniform with a white apron, and I said to myself, “How does this lady fit in?” At the end of the day, she tells me, “We won’t need you.” She pays me for the week and so my first job only lasted only one week.

I got a second job and this job is at a hotel, a pretty big hotel. At the hotel they said you are to make the beds. Well the only way I knew to make beds was very rudimentary. I didn’t know how to professionally make beds. So at the end of the day they let me go.

I get another job and this job is to work at night cleaning offices. What happened was we were to meet this guy and he had this truck, and he would put the crew in the truck, and he would take us from building to building to building cleaning up. Since it was night, it meant that I’m getting off very, very late. My father would have to pick me up at the bus stop, which was 2 miles from my house. I said, “Hey, this is not going to work.” So I had that job one night.

A lot of college students were hired part-time at a large teaching hospital so I go to there, and I applied for the job, and I get the job part-time. You worked for 33 cent per hour, and you worked for 3 hours. But I could work on Saturdays and Sundays in order to make a little more money. The interesting thing was I found out from working full-time on Saturdays and Sundays when I’m working

with White ladies that they were being paid 50 cent an hour. All the way through the place [Morgan Hospital, pseudonym] if they had Blacks working in the morning then they made 33 cent an hour and the Whites made 50 cent an hour. I kept that part-time job and used the money to pay my college tuition and everything all the way through college.

Grace was able to continue her work at the large teaching hospital, which allowed her to pay for school. Before I could ask Grace what professional jobs she was hired for with a degree in foreign languages, she began the conversation without being prompted.

Now what can you do with modern foreign languages? Now-a-days I know what I could do, but then I just liked languages out of all the other subjects. So my daddy said, "OK, you can teach." Well the public schools were such that they might have French or something like that but that would be it. But trying to get a job just coming out of college in the public school was very difficult. They would prefer people who had taught in the rural areas or such. So it was a while before I got a job because it was competitive. You got all of these people vying for only so many jobs because that was one of the things you could work at during the day, you could teach. So teaching in public school is out. Maybe the colleges had teaching positions but that's tight too. Foreign language majors and teachers at Afro-American colleges would get those positions, and they would stay there.

So a friend I had in college she said, "Go to the post office, they have a bulletin board with scholarships to Hotland University [pseudonym] in Library Science." I said to myself, I have always liked libraries. I stayed in libraries. I was fascinated with the card catalog. I wanted to know what the information on the

card meant. I would sit in different sections of the library because I could learn from the different books in each section. If I go to another section I could learn something different in that section. I had this underlying appreciation for the library.

The librarian at an HBCU in Tennessee at time was a well-known writer. He wrote various children's books. As a writer he needed to have a job in the day too. So I talked to him and said, "What you do is you go ahead and apply. In your cover letter you mention the fact that I had recommended you." Just that mere fact alone; he didn't know me at all but he recommended me so I got a scholarship to a Library School of a major university in Georgia.

The young Grace who opted to apply to library school and to study library science would be forever changed by this decision. The young Grace who made this choice could not have known at the time that this would be the best professional judgement of her life. This decision would impact her career until the day of retirement. Grace continued her story about her time in library school.

The university in Georgia that accepted me served as the graduate school for other HBCUs in the state of Georgia. It was an interesting setup because you had all these individual colleges and you had this one at the top of it. Basically, the university told the other colleges, "You concentrate on undergraduates, and we will do the graduates." During this time Blacks could go to a Caucasian graduate school but this would mean that the graduate school that served these HBCUs couldn't exist by itself. It kind of needed an undergraduate school leading up to graduate school level.

The library component didn't have good administrators. Since they had been in existence, things had been moving along and they figured they were going to continue to survive. But in order to survive they needed to prepare school library media specialists. But the graduate school didn't go the route of preparing school library media specialists for the state. So what that meant is that you have school librarianships but in order for the student to be certified they would need the classes for library media specialists also. The school administrators were not looking ahead. The state was telling them you need to train media specialists; you need to do that. But they chose not to and became stuck in the way things had always been done. The way the administrators behaved reminded me of the book, *Who Moved My Cheese*.

I paused as I recalled the story of Sniff and Scurry as well as Hem and Haw. I read the book in graduate school. What I knew for sure in that moment was that the administrators of the graduate school had not taken the time to grasp the concept that change happens. Change is the only constant. If we fail to change, life continues to move forward, and we are oftentimes left behind. Grace understood this lesson. She continued to morph as her life required.

I had to do my first year there. They required 44 hours of courses in the program of study. You could finish the program by coming two summers or you could finish up the program by coming an additional semester. So here I am, I have completed one year of the program, and I have elected to, instead of doing the semester, to do two summers. The reason I did two summers was because of my dear husband who was my fiancé at the time. He said he was going to come to

summer school so I said hmm, if he is going to come to summer school and we can be together and you know how you are when you are getting madly in love. So I came back to go to school and had to find a job for the summer. I had a part-time job at a university near my home in Tennessee if I came home, but I turned down the part-time job to come back to summer school because he was going to be there, but he didn't come back. He got a part-time job in another state.

Grace remained married to the man who once caused her to stay in Hotland over the summer despite him not being there. She smiled as she told me the story. I agreed with Grace, love makes us lose our minds. Grace made the decision to return to Georgia to pursue her graduate degree as well as her love interest. She thought she could "kill two birds with one stone." However, one of the birds flew the coop before summer school commenced.

I met my now husband in Georgia. He was getting his Masters in biology and I was in library science. Well the way we met was that all of the graduate students had a university dormitory and between the boys' dormitory and the girls' dormitory there was a dining hall. There was a little living room area there where you could talk. I was sitting at what I called the "misfit" table. The reason I called it the "misfit" table was because it was a table of students who were mixed majors. We had other majors like modern foreign language, history, and so forth.

So there was this guy I started noticing. He would always come in late. He would just make it because they would close the door. I would say it's almost time to close the door, I hope he makes it. He came in, just barely made it in. He

was too late to sit at the biology table. He had to sit at my table, the “misfit” table. That’s how he ended up at my table.

There was a guy, and this guy was in chemistry. This guy would say, “Do you want your bacon?” I said, “No.” He said, “Give me your bacon.” So I would give this guy my bacon. Then he started with “Do you want your muffin or whatever it was or pancakes?” If he wanted it, I would give it to him. So that’s when the guy who would become my husband said, “No, you stop taking food off of her plate.” He became sort of protective and that’s how the relationship started.

I did not get the opportunity to interview or speak with Grace’s husband beyond our initial greeting. When he spoke to me he was well mannered and quite the gentleman. He stood as we were introduced and did not take his seat again until I was exiting the room. He reminded me of Grace, and I wondered if the similarity was because they had been married for such a long time or if they both entered the relationship with the kindness and refinement that had been demonstrated while in their home. Grace continued.

So there I am in Georgia with no job. I had no job at all. All the jobs are gone. I’m here at summer school. He is not here. He got a job. So here I am and no job or anything to go to in September. So I got to get some money. I needed money to buy things with or whatever. So I looked on the bulletin board and that’s one thing about universities, they put the jobs on bulletin boards and that’s how you got your jobs. I looked there and there was a job for a teacher/librarian in a city in Tennessee so I applied and got the job. So I move back home. My dad takes me to the city where I will be working. They get me a place to stay. I am staying with a

lady who is very ancient. There are stories about her. Stories about how she killed off her husband because she had had so many husbands. You know how stories get around.

The real story is that she was a teacher in the past. So she gets up in the morning she shakes out her legs and everything and she cooks my breakfast. Now breakfast is not a traditional breakfast. I can't even remember what it was that she prepared. Whatever it was, it was enough to sustain you. I would then eat lunch at school. The principal's wife worked in the cafeteria and after eating down there one time I decided that I would just have to go hungry. It wasn't good, so I waited until I got back home, and the lady I was rooming with would have something very simple but filling. She would have something like turnip greens, a boiled egg, and cornbread. So it was just the two of us.

Grace's story made me laugh. The lodging worked out for her. The job worked out for her. However, the food that she would eat for lunch left something to be desired. The summer had not turned out as she expected. She was not in Georgia, she was not in summer school, and she was not with her love interest. Nevertheless, her needs were being met and she was gaining professional experience. Oftentimes we are obliged to look for the silver lining when our plans get thwarted.

Once the evening meal was finished and everything [washing the dishes and cleaning up the kitchen] we listened to the radio. Particularly we listened to the news because that's how you are going to know what's happening in the world. During this time even the news was segregated; there was White news and there was Afro-American news. They didn't put the news together.

Grace's statement regarding the news intrigued me. I was accustomed to hearing about sitting around the radio and listening to the news, music, or sporting events. My father was a staunch radio listener. He grew up listening to the radio prior to the invention and distribution of television into private homes. However, I never heard of the news being segregated. Admittedly I grew up in a different era and in a different part of the country. I continued with Grace's interview, although I knew I would continue to think about this information in my private reverie. The separation of news by race was an enigma, hmm.

The town where I worked was an interesting town. So I went to school to teach and I found myself in a terrible situation. I cried the whole way to school. I wanted to go to the principal's office and say, "I can't take it." It was a totally different environment. I was dealing with the rural kids coming from rural areas. Areas back in the woods and in the hollow. They were in poverty but they had values. I was also dealing with kids from the city. They had things a little bit better, but they were bad. They were really bad. I had one that would walk around the library with this dagger. I was really afraid. I didn't know whether to go to the principal's office or not. The mere fact that they allowed him to bring his dagger and carry his dagger meant that they couldn't do anything with him. So I didn't bother him. I allowed him to continue walking around with his dagger. There was another student that I was afraid of but he was on medication, which controlled him.



I began using books as a kind of behavior modification. Whatever they seemed to have a problem with I would introduce a book to them that dealt with the same issue. They would say, “Hey, that’s me.” I found that really worked.

Another thing that I found out is that they needed to know about their own bodies and so forth. Although they had some of the books like that in the library, the kids would hide them. So I bought more books that would give them some sense of their own body. I put them on display so that they wouldn’t have to look at them in secret.

The school where I taught also wanted me to teach literature and literature classes. I thought to myself, “How am I going to make this interesting to the kids?” So before I addressed the literature, I said, “Okay, I want each of you to read a book. In 2 weeks each of you are going to have 15 minutes to tell the class about your book.” So each of the students is interested in what the other had read and so forth like that. The kids changed all of a sudden. I didn’t have any bad kids. I changed, and they changed. When we both changed, then my problem was gone. That taught me a lesson too. Instead of trying to change the person I changed myself, and then we were both better. That became the hallmark that I could use all the way through my career.

Grace’s concept of changing herself to meet the needs of her students was and remains a radical idea. Teachers are usually scripted when they teach, whether self-imposed or state mandated, there is a script that must be followed. However, Grace had empirical proof that this method worked. Her students responded favorably to the changes she implemented in her classroom.

After 3 years, I decided that it's time for me to get back to the college level and to the specialty that I wanted to do, cataloging. I wanted to go back to those cards that I was interested in; what's on the card? What is it saying? You know? It looks like it's talking about the book but how did they get that information? That's what I wanted to do. A university in Alabama had an opening for a cataloger. Yeah, so that was my start into cataloging doing it there.

I stayed in the dormitory at the university in Alabama. They had dormitory faculty, faculty that were there with the students. I was faculty at that point. This was an interesting setup because you have common showers with faculty and students. I would pick obscure times to shower. Faculty had a dining room where the entire faculty ate together. We didn't eat with students. We showered in the same area with students; however, we did not eat with them [Grace stated with disbelief].

I learned another valuable lesson in Alabama. There is another faculty member; she is a very good friend; we were in graduate library school together. She is really sick. I said to my friend, "You are really too sick to go to work." So I thought she would go and tell the boss that she is sick, but she goes and tells the head librarian, that I said she was too sick to work. The head librarian calls me in and she just goes on and on and on. Her voice goes up, and she is talking to me, and I'm listening to her and so forth. I leave and I said to myself, "I think she blessed me out." So this is the lesson, let the person talk. Let them get it out, you know: I nodded my head as if I understood what she was saying. Then she said,

“Go on back to work.” This is another lesson that I took with me throughout my career.

The lesson that Grace learned in Alabama, was to allow her supervisor to rant and rave about the situation at hand. I understood Grace’s method of survival in this place at that time. However, my immediate need was to protect Grace from this manager who did not take context into consideration. I also wanted to protect Grace from her “friend” who chose to request time off by indicting her empathetic friend. Nevertheless, Grace did not need to be protected. She shouldered the sardonic correction of her supervisor and adapted the reprimand into a valuable lesson. I am not sure I would have been so insightful.

In the meantime, my future husband is at a school in Tennessee getting his M.D. At the end of his second year we got married. He went back to his dormitory at the medical School in Tennessee, and I went back to the dormitory in Alabama. After he finishes at the medical school in Tennessee, he moves to Georgia. That year I did not work.

He decides to do a residency in surgery. This decision takes him to St. Louis, MO. Now in St. Louis at this time they didn’t pay the residents but \$65 per month or something like that. This meant that I had to get a job. I’m 6 months pregnant. I’m at home while he is trying to find a place for us to live. It occurred to me that making \$65 per month will not be enough to find a place to live. I began to hatch a plan. My weight was small, I was 116 pounds. I said, “If I get a girdle and I pull up the girdle and if I wear suits a tad larger [all to conceal her pregnancy].” I started sending out applications so I had two universities to ask me

to come in for an interview. I had an interview with one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Both of the positions were for cataloging. I said, "Whoever hires me, I will take it. I won't wait. The university I interviewed with in the morning offered me the position, and I took it. The interesting thing is that the cataloging is of modern foreign language books.

That's why I got the job there, I had a history in modern foreign languages, and it was my undergraduate major. So the job was cataloging French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese books. I didn't know Portuguese so during lunch time I took a class in Portuguese. I took a first year and then a second year class. I also took a Brazilian literature class.

So that is what I did there for 4 years. By that time my husband had finished his 4 years of surgical residency. He was looking for a place to practice. He had a classmate who was from Grace-land, South Carolina. The friend said, "Why don't you come to Grace-land." My husband replied, "Okay." He went to Grace-land and met various doctors and they said, "Yeah, you know come. This is a good place."

Once again Grace's preparation met opportunity. Each time her life required a move Grace was equipped with a plan. She either donned a girdle to shroud a pregnancy or activated her historical experience in modern foreign languages. She and her fiancé were proven partners; both made sacrifices for the sake of their family.

I solicited Grace for the reasoning behind her need to conceal her pregnancy. She informed me that she would not have been allowed to work if her manager at her place of employment knew she was expecting. During this time a married pregnant woman was

required to leave her employment and dedicate her life and time to delivering the baby and rearing the child.

The annals of history give account that the 1960s gave birth to the women's movement. However, this era also limited women in both the work place and the family. The expectation was that women would resign themselves to marrying young, starting a family quickly, and then devoting themselves to homemaking. Wives were solely responsible for housekeeping and childcare. According to Coontz (2011),

Women spent an average of 55 hours a week on domestic chores. There was no hope of compensation beyond the expectation to be taken care of by their husbands. Laws favored husbands as head and master and women had no legal right to their husband's earnings or property. These same laws enabled husbands to control their wives' property and earnings. (p. 127)

With this research in mind, I developed a deeper appreciation of the partnership forged by Grace and her husband. During a time in America when women were legally subject to their husband's rule and reign, Grace and her husband saw each other as equals. This was a novel position in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Once Grace joined her husband, she too agreed that Grace-land was a good place. Grace began her story concerning Grace-land.

This is a good place. I realized in getting started I'm going to need a job so I applied at the Grace-land Public Library. I think I applied at Grace-land HBCU also; they didn't need anybody. The public library did because they had hired a librarian and she had worked for about 3 months, and she went into the military as

a librarian. So consequently, they needed that. So now we are in Grace-land, South Carolina.

During my time in St. Louis I fully recognized that I was a minority in that majority community. But they were a little bit more used to you, but they still hung onto some racist values. The university where I worked had a history of having hired an Afro-American librarian. She was a reference librarian. She was the main professional one [African American] that they had. There were also two Afro-American clerks. The interesting thing is that you only had conversations with the White librarians in the bathroom. You didn't have conversations with them in the public areas of the library.

I am working at the public library in Grace-land as a cataloger. I am a mother of three kids by this time. I am a tired mother of three kids, and I am working. So I take my lunch to work and during my lunch hour I eat my sandwich, and I go to sleep. I take a nap you know getting my rest. When my lunch time is over I go back to work. So this goes on for months, I take my lunch time to have a sandwich and to take a nap, and I said, "Oh, this is really a Godsend. Here I am, I got this whole staff lounge to myself." But then after all these months one day here come the head librarian, the technical service department head, and the children's department head. All these people come on my lunch period that I'm taking my nap. What on earth is going on? I said, "Well maybe that's a fluke that that this has happened." But then I noticed that next day that some more staff people come and the next day even more people come. Then I said, "Lord have mercy, my lunch period is gone. They have ruined my lunch

period.” So things just went along and that became the norm, everyone eating on my lunch time.

But then I became real good friends with one of the girls, a clerk, she said, “You remember when you first came here how you ate down there by yourself?” I said, “Yeah.” She continued, “Then all of the heads of the departments came down there to be with you?” I said, “Yeah.” She said, “They were doing that to show the staff that it was okay to eat with you.” [I gasped as Grace shared this story with me. Grace continued.] I always said that I think God gave me a cloak that I could put over me; maybe somebody else would have recognized it right off but I needed sleep time. I had three children, one right after the other. So I needed the rest.

I questioned Grace to assure that I had not misunderstood the context of the story. I said to Grace, “So the Grace-land Public Library staff was not eating with you because you were an African American?” She replied in the affirmative, with a slight nod of her head and a flush that ascended her neck toward her face. Not wanting to alter the course or tone of the interview, I once again silently thanked Grace for blazing the trail for me.

We all have had an occasion to be shunned at some point in our lives. Most often it was as a member of a group balked at by members of an opposing group. In high school it was the nerds spurned by the cool kids. In college it was the studiers ignored by the partiers. As adults many marginalized groups have been rejected by those in power and with position.

However, Grace as one individual of a group was shirked by a group of individuals who were so opposed to the group that she was a member of that they did not

take the time to know Grace as an individual. They recoiled from Grace and cast her aside as if she was the foundation stone for all African Americans. However, Grace's quiet strength and her faith in God persevered. She was protected from the truth of their surreptitious protest, she was given the opportunity to get some needed sleep, and she had maintained her pleasant nature. Grace persisted in telling her story.

But that was the way it was [referring to the treatment that she had endured at the Grace-land Public Library]. I noticed that other librarians and so forth would have to cover the public areas of the library, like the reference desk, the circulation desk, and the children's room. They [White librarians] had to cover those areas, but I never had to cover those areas. They kept me back in the technical service so nobody could see me back there. I stayed there.

My supervisor was retired from New York, but she is basically a southerner. She worked at the H. W. Wilson Company. The H. W. Wilson Company published a lot of library books, mainly in the library reference area. She was the editor of what was called the children's catalog. She was a well-known person. It was an excellent opportunity to work with someone who worked for the H. W. Wilson Company as well as someone who knew cataloging. I learned a great deal from her.

But here is where racism comes in. My supervisor was a White woman. There are people at the library that sort the books, and they bring the ones I am going to catalog. They also bring the ones that my supervisor is to catalog. When they bring me my books, I have sense enough to know where to put my books. I have sense enough to know to tell them to place the books I am responsible for on



my library truck [portable cart for shelving]. However, the delivery girl places my books on the general cart. All of my books are on this cart. It wasn't until my supervisor instructed the delivery girl to place the appropriate books on my cart that she actually did just that. That was hard, you talking about holding your peace. May be she [my supervisor] did this to show that she had control over me.

Here is the final story about the Grace-land Public Library. Remember, I have three children that I have to take care of and here comes on 4 years later. Well I do the thing again, I go get my girdle. But this time it's a little hard and so forth of going through that. Toward my final month and I decide to be honest. After all of these years of going through it, I will just tell them I'm pregnant and when the child comes I would like 6 weeks leave of absence to be with the baby. The baby was to be born December 28 during Christmas and then I had until school started back in January. That was the only time I would have off with the baby. I sent a letter making my request and they met with me, the head of the library and the library director. She said, "We have this policy here that if you become pregnant, you have to resign. If your job becomes available again, you have to reapply." I said, "I'm not going to resign." I'm saying this to myself.

Now in the meantime there is a janitor at the library who had been at the public library a long time; there is always a way [speaking about her situation at the library]. He goes to a prominent representative of the NAACP in the area and shares my story. He tells this gentleman that when a White woman had a baby there they gave that person 6 weeks off. She did not have to resign. This prominent NAACP figure makes a trip to the Grace-land Public Library to meet

with the library director. He says, “We know you have a policy that you have used before with an employee,” he calls the employee by name. He repeated the story to the library director with the details that the janitor had conveyed to him.

During the time of this visit, I was working at one of the public library branches. The branch is known as the Afro-American branch. The word got out that the NAACP representative is at the main library. Everybody wants to know what’s up?

So I go back to the main library the next day, I only worked at the branch one day a week. The library director said, “We found that in our policy that we have allowed one of our workers to take off for 6 weeks, and so we will do the same thing for you. We will give you 6 weeks maternity leave, and you will be able to come back.” She placed this information in a letter to me. Right after I got the letter or a day after I got the letter, here the baby boy comes, and they are startled. They are nice about it and everyone wants to know if they can come and see the baby. They all make the trip to see that baby, as if the baby is a spectacle.

I laughed as Grace disclosed the story. This little baby boy had no idea of the trouble he caused. This baby boy was clueless about how he changed things at the Grace-land Public Library. Nonetheless, my laughter soon turned to scorn. Repeatedly throughout my interviews with Grace and the other participants; overt racism, injustice, double-standards, White privilege, and White power continued to rear their respective repulsive heads.

These thoughts reminded me of something my mother repeated to me often. She would say, “Rochelle, God knew when you should have been born. If you had been born

during my time in 1926 or your father's time in 1917 they [White people] would have tarred and feathered you." She said these things to me not in protest or in opposition to the injustices of the day that I happened to witness and share with her. She said these things to me to remind me of how fortunate I was. I was privileged to not only recognize, but to voice an opinion regarding the injustices I witnessed. She would continue, "You may not have the power to change what you see, but you will always go on record about the injustice so no one can say, I did not know. For that I am proud of you." I agreed with my mother, God indeed knew when I should have been born. Grace woke me from my reverie with the following account.

So then the girl at the Grace-land Public Library who I developed a friendship with says that she is going to leave to take a position at Grace-land PWI. She leaves me at the public library however; she clasps me and says that they want a full-time cataloger. I told her that I would not apply. I told her that if I made any kind of move it would be to a part-time position at this point in my life. My husband and I had gotten to the point where we could pay the bills. So I told her that I did not want to be full-time because as a full-time cataloger I would have to work nights. I did not want to work nights and all of the rest that went with working full-time.

So maybe 6 months pass and she [my friend at the public library] said the library director said to get in touch with her because she cannot offer you part-time. But she has another person who wanted part-time also. The library director wants to offer me a job share with this other person. I said okay. So that was my move to Grace-land PWI in 1968. I stayed there 40 years.

I have done nothing for 40 years with the exception of living. I have held various positions within my profession but that was not accomplished over the span of 40 years. I marveled that Grace could maintain employment at one institution for 40 years. Her revelation regarding the length of time she remained at Grace-land PWI left me speechless. To persist in one place for so long showed commitment. I am not sure if Grace's commitment was to the organization, to her profession as a librarian and cataloger, or to some unnamed entity. But on this day as I interviewed her I witnessed the commitment, and I was sure with that level of dedication she would disclose what drove her to maintain her employment at that PWI for so long.

Let me start with purpose. I was basically in librarianship. I was a children's librarian and a cataloger librarian for Grace-land PWI. So one of the things I always wanted to do was to deal with the teaching aspect because prior to that it was just simply practicing librarianship. While I was working at Grace-land public library I was thinking it would be good to teach this subject area because cataloging was the most difficult area of library science. Teaching was always in the back of my mind.

I started off as a part-time cataloger, and I did that for 2 years. Then the State Department of Education, the area that covers and reviews schools started requiring that all schools would have a media specialist. That was the terminology that they used. This meant that Grace-land PWI would have to develop a program. Grace-land HBCU had a program in media services. The director of library services researched the things that we needed to start a media specialist program. The director got this information from the state.

We basically needed to have a syllabus for each course that would be taught. The approval process during that time was very simple. The syllabus provided the information for material selection for the course. I was given the opportunity to teach the course. We had students signed up for the course. Now this did not go over well because some of the librarians who taught other parts of the course started leaving.

During this time the director of the library had some personal problems that sort of caught up with her. So she had to tell us good bye. That meant that the program was sort of dormant for a while. But then we got a new director of the library. However, the new library director for Grace-land PWI was the type of librarian that was stuck in their ways. They had been performing library science the same way for the last 20 years. This meant that we were going to keep doing things the same way.

The first thing he did was to recognize that we did not need two part-time librarians or catalogers. He said, "We will just use one and then get the other one to do something else." I thought to myself, wait a minute. There are two of us. What is he going to do? Is he going to tell me to go to reference? Reference wasn't my cup of tea. I said well maybe I should just make an offer, so that is what I did. I offered to pick up the teaching program. So that's how I got into the teaching of library media courses. The director of the library dug me up two students that needed it.

Once again, I recalled young Grace's initial decision to apply to library school and to study library science. I remembered her fascination with wanting to understand

what the information on the cards in the card catalog meant. She spent many of her professional years as a practicing librarian in both a university library as well as public library setting. She honed her library science skills throughout her career. Now she was finally going to realize a dream, to teach others to do what she had done, to become a library media specialist.

Yet again, the young Grace that made this choice could not have known at the time that this would be the best professional judgement of her life. I watched as Grace revealed the story of how she came to teach library science. It brought a smile to my face. Her elation about teaching library science to the next generation of librarians remained evident. She was lit up from within as she shared this information with me.

The library director took my desk and moved it out into sort of like the circulation area. The public was coming in and out of the door and so forth. He told me to work with the two students. The library had study halls up on the second floor; I would use that area to do the teaching. I taught the students based upon the research. I decided on what I was going to teach. The various syllabi that I found were sort of dated. I then realized that I was going to have to create the model for library media specialist.

I started looking at various universities and colleges that had media programs. I was approaching the creation of the content from a graduate level. I thought you got better quality or better direction of where things were going than you would be using the state model. Of course, at the state level you had to satisfy the criteria. I was meshing it all together. I created a syllabus for each of the courses that I felt comfortable with.

The state then realized that what had been done in the past was dated. They realized now that the teachers needed to know audiovisual information. All of this audiovisual equipment is coming out and nobody knows how to use it. I did not have to create these courses because the teacher educators on campus had to teach the education students how to use audiovisual equipment. They already had a course that I could bring into the library curriculum.

The next thing the state realized was that computers were coming out. Teachers needed to know how to use them. The vast majority of the school systems in the area purchased the computers. However, the teachers did not know how to use them so they stayed in storage. They didn't know how to use them. But here is the thing, we could not afford a [computer] technology person. With this in mind, the now the medial specialist would have the job of helping the teachers understand the technology and the computers. This need required Grace-land PWI to create a major in computer science.

The development of technology often out paces the understanding, knowledge, and usage of that technology. As Grace communicated this story, I remembered my college days. I was still typing papers and using correction fluid or correction tape for typographical errors. My college roommate at the time was a computer science major. She was writing code and programing computers using punch cards. I told Grace this story, and we both celebrated the idea of how far we have come as a civilization.

At first the library media program was under the umbrella of the library. Then it was transferred to the Department of Education at Grace-land PWI. They do all of the paperwork and everything to transfer it to education. They sent me a letter

telling me what they are going to do. In the letter they map out what the library is going to do and what the education department is going to do. The new director of the library and I have an appointment with the department head of education. The library director walks me over to the education department head and makes a formal introduction, although I knew the guy. The education department head said, "If I had a choice, I wouldn't take you." He tells me that so I said to myself, okay I'm going to make you eat those words. That was my attitude.

The department head of education is going to show me where my office is. It was like a work room. There was a sink and a couple of tables. Going back to the librarian, I think he feels very bad about it [the statement by the department head]. He is trying to reassure me. He says, "It is going to work out. Give it some time."

When I finally move to the education department, there is another Black faculty member there in the office that I will be using. So then I think he realized all of a sudden he is putting Blacks together. When I return for the third time, I have a different office, a regular office. But then I think, how am I going to get him?

I got me a briefcase; my husband bought me a briefcase. I would take my things in a briefcase. I said to myself, I'm going to look professional. Then I said I am going to sit next to him at the faculty meetings. He is carrying on the meeting and so forth like that and he would make nasty jokes, now he is sitting here and I am sitting here so I didn't laugh at his jokes. I said to myself this is going to



ingratiate me with him or not. But then I noticed that after a while he didn't tell anymore nasty jokes.

Things were beginning to soften up. During student registration, I would sit next to him. Then he got this thing where he would come in early to see if I was there. I said alright he is coming in early, and I came in earlier to insure that I was there before he was. I would make sure that he saw me. Then if he gave us some type of report to complete he would come the next day to pick up the report. So when he would come and ask for it I would reach down in my pad and pull it out. Well he soon stopped that and then it looked like we were becoming friends.

When he would have a problem, he would come to me and talk to me about his problem. His problems were either personal about his wife or about his son or whatever. He would have somebody to listen. So we really became friends and then during the summer, I was off in the summer, I was reading the paper and I was reading the death notices and there he was. Yes, he had died. He was mowing his son's lawn and had a heart attack.

Grace got quiet, she stopped speaking. I sat still and quiet, and allowed Grace an opportunity to sit with this memory. Grace was genuinely saddened by the death of her department head. However, she kept the promise that she made to herself during their initial meeting. The friendship that she forged with the education department head and the fact that Grace became his confidante was her vindication against the words he spoke earlier, "If I had a choice, I wouldn't take you."

Grace's relationship with her department head morphed from the negative to the positive, however, I was also interested in her interactions with her fellow colleagues. My

mind raced with questions. What had she experienced in her transition from the library to the education department? Were her exchanges different? Was the culture in the library an anomaly? Grace answered these questions with the following account.

In my day we were taught to speak when we saw others. When I was out and about on the campus of Grace-land PWI, people were just passing by you like ships in the night unless they knew you. One of the things that I tried to do was to get on committees because that was my route to knowing people in various departments.

During this time I was splitting my time between the library and the education department. I was not allowed out in the main area of the library. They wanted me to stay in the cataloging area. I would be devilish. I know they hadn't scheduled me out front, but I would go out front by the circulation desk. One day the president of the university came over, and I was working, and he said, "I just wanted to see what you looked like."

The men were dominant on the faculty and there were women, but they were not the dominant figures. When I moved to the education department there were more women there but the men were in charge. There were a few men that I would say were always fearful about speaking. If you were on the elevator together and it's just the two of you and you're saying like hey, how are you doing or something like that? They wouldn't say anything. The women if you would speak to them at least you would get a response.

I felt isolated. I really felt isolated. How I was being treated on the campus of Grace-land PWI reinforced the isolation I felt at St. Louis University. I was not

allowed in the public areas of the library, I was not spoken to by colleagues or students, and I was working in two different departments that did not want my presence. I felt really isolated.

The pain of Grace's experience at Grace-land PWI was palpable. I found myself wondering how Grace and the other historical participants survived. I have had past experiences with microaggressions and bias as an African American woman faculty member teaching at a PWI in the Deep South. However, I have not experienced the daily buffeting of overt prejudice, bias, and racism that Grace and the other historical participants faced.

So as not to divert her train of thought, I silently thanked Grace for blazing the trail and charting the waters for me. If it was not for the Graces of the world, I could not have imagined teaching at a PWI in the Deep South. I returned from my daydream regarding Grace's treatment during this time and inquired about her relationship with the students that she taught and the students on campus in general.

Basically I think my relationship with students was good. I'm weighing this on the evaluations. I had positive experiences, and I had negative experiences with students. There were two Afro-American boys in my class. They have on red shoes and red hats. They are small in stature, but I tell you they made me want to cry. They gave me such a hard time while they were in my class. I asked another teacher who had them in class, "Do you have any problems with them?" She responded, "No, they are nice students." It made me wonder why they were giving me such a hard time.

The other incident that I had was this Afro-American kid and there were about four White kids, and they had gotten together that they weren't going to do the assignments, and they had their grievance. They had put the Afro-American kid as the leader. So I called her in, and I said look, "they are putting you up as the leader. You're not completing your assignments but they are completing their work. They are going to pass, and you are not." So that was the end of that.

In my reference class, there was an Afro-American guy and he became friends with one of the White students. She is helping him with his work and so forth. She was showing him how to use the tools we demonstrated in the class. So she is helping him, but he is beginning to call her at home. So she begins backing off because she was just helping him. He starts intimidating her walking behind her and saying things to her, and she is becoming fearful. One of her friends is telling me what has been going on. I didn't think too much of it at first but the friend returns to me and tells me that the student that is being intimidated is carrying a gun in her car. Now I have to do something. I brought him in to see me. I made up a story to fit his behavior. I told him this is what this student did and this is the results of that student's behavior. You can't do that because when people get fearful they do strange things. So that solved that problem. I learned to attack a problem immediately. I don't give it time to simmer.

Grace concluded these stories regarding her students, and I found myself contemplating why Grace used these specific stories to illustrate her relationship with her students. I did not query her about her reasoning. Nonetheless, I created my own counter-narrative based on my own perceptions; Grace was highlighting the difficulties of

integration on a college campus during her time as a faculty member as well as highlighting the challenges that remain with interracial and intraracial interactions.

Grace did not dwell much on how her institution shaped her scholarship as an African American faculty member. Her scholarship involved interviewing teachers who were teaching media courses and observing how they integrated microcomputers and microcomputer applications into their teaching. When asked about her road to tenure and promotion, Grace had this story to tell.

Well the first time that I prepared the documentation for tenure it seemed to have been a little bit automatic. You prepared your package. But when I did turn it in it was turned down. My department head said it was because I didn't have enough years. You apply for tenure and promotion at 5 years. I nearly dropped when he told me this news. What did he mean I did not have enough time? It was something I did not catch.

At one point I was working under the library. I started teaching the library science classes and so forth. So the librarian said, "Hey, you are full-time." But he had put beside my time an asterisk. The asterisk meant that I was three-fourth time. You know in that day you signed your time sheet and turned it in. I never thought to look at it. So I actually had 4 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  years in as an employee instead of 5 years. So the next year I would have 5 full years in and then I got tenure.

When Grace-land PWI hired me, they hired me as assistant professor. After I had gotten my doctorate completed and doing that work and trying to maintain my classes, maintain a home and so forth, I just didn't do more work for a higher rank, the rank of associate professor. I just didn't have the energy. But a

colleague said, “You do it. You do it. It’s not just for you. You are looking down the road for other folk.” So I did. I did my research. I researched what should be in the promotion documentation. I did not have any problems. I had been at Grace-land PWI for a long time; I had to prepare lots of packages highlighting my performance as a faculty member. I was promoted to associate professor.

I had done a lot of work for Grace-land PWI. I’m only one person. I was responsible for the library media minor, the library media major, and the library media certification. I was trying to prepare school library media specialists and trying to prepare those who were going on to graduate library school. I was doing all of that, but they never gave me the title of program director. Somehow or another I should have had it, but when they are speaking about the library and the library media program it is the head librarian that got all of the credit.

There was sadness in Grace’s voice as she ended this part of the story. I looked away momentarily to acknowledge her son who was walking up the stairs to address Grace. When I returned my attention to Grace, I missed the moment. Her face lit up when she saw her son and introduced me to him. Her son and I spoke briefly about the research I was doing. When he descended the stairs the moment that escaped me could not be recaptured. I was disappointed by what was lost. Grace’s career was coming to an end. She had given Grace-land PWI 40 years of service. She opened this segment of the interview with the following account.

Each year leading to my retirement, I had this thing, if I had a good year and I was motivated to go out and change things I knew I would get through another year. I

like to change things. I liked to look at what was new and coming. I liked to research and see how they are changing this or that.

I had asked them how much time I had. I know I have 40 years, but in order to get that 40 years there were some months that they could not figure in. I don't know why but they were there. When they added up my time there were 2 months that were not accounted for. I told them I do not want to retire and not be at the full retirement. I figured I would stay until the end of the academic year and retire.

They called a meeting and asked me to attend. The meeting was with the dean of the college, the assistant dean of the college, and the department head of education. When I got to the meeting they said that they were going to eliminate the library media program. They were going to take the money and open up a materials resource area so the prospective teachers could come in and make bulletin boards.

But no one had told me that this is what they were going to do. I don't know anything about it at all. The dean spoke to the department head and asked if he had told me about the plan to eliminate the library media plan. The department head stated that she had wanted to see me during the summer and to make an appointment. I made the appointment, but she was out of town. Now here is the summer and I am off during the summer, and you want me to come in for an appointment. The appointment was to tell me they were eliminating my program. I did not budge. They decided to get together and come up with a plan, a plan for

something I could do in the spring semester. I have nothing to teach in the spring if they eliminate my program.

The spring semester came, and I spent part-time cataloging books for the education library, and the other part-time they wanted me to supervise teacher education students. These students were placed in their various settings, but it's a whole different thing. I am going to evaluate the teacher. I speak with the person who is doing this job. I get the necessary materials, and I do some research on the process. The person in the job says that we will go together. So we go together to a school district and I observe what she is doing. She takes notes on what the teacher is doing and then after that she communicates suggestions to the teacher of what to do a little different. You write an evaluation and the student would write an evaluation of the mentor teacher's performance. I said, "Gosh, I can do that." So this is how I finished out the academic year. It wasn't that I retired on my own. All they had to do was postpone the closing of my program until the end of the year. What hurt the most is that they did not care about the students that were in my program. They didn't care, they really didn't care. The students were really very angry.

I could not imagine Grace's outrage at being told that her program was being eliminated. Without an appropriate announcement to Grace or the students, the administrators decided to alter their lives with the stroke of a pen. There was no plan for Grace who was at the end of her career, and there was no plan for the students who were at the precipice of their career. I understood Grace's reticence during this time in her career. She wanted to retire and did not want anything to jeopardize this desire. Forty



years of continuous service to the same institution did not earn her the respect of notification regarding the closing of the program. What a travesty.

As one of the two final questions I had for Grace, I asked what recommendations she had for other African American women faculty considering employment at Grace-land PWI or any other PWI in the Deep South. Without hesitation Grace uttered the following advice.

I would say keep your ears open, listen, and really listen a lot. Conversations go on but listen. You will find out so much from listening even if they are talking say in a committee meeting or whatever. You are a part of the committee but listen, because a lot of things are being said that will be impactful. You may not know what the impact will be but there will be an impact.

I would also say, consider going to and getting on these committees. Get to know people. It's hard work. I don't know how many committees; my magic number was seven. As time went on I learned to mold them and pick out which ones I needed to be on.

Finally I would say, you are held to a higher standard because you are Afro-American. It is something that goes back to slavery I guess, not teaching you to read and write and slavery. I learned this lesson a long time ago. My French professor would always say, "Hey, you got two strikes." They considered first you're Afro-American and then regardless to what school you attended, regardless of your achievement, you are still not us [White]. This is the reality, if you were Caucasian you would get more, and you wouldn't have to ask for it.

The realities that Grace shared on this day continue to ring true. Despite advances in medicine, technology, science, and globalization, the two strikes have not changed. I sat speechless as Grace shared these truths. Grace and I entered the academy as African American women faculty during different times, however, our experiences were similar. The world was advancing at record speed; nevertheless, it seemed to me the academy remained entrenched in the tradition of advancing Whiteness over everything else.

When I asked Grace the final question, if you could go back in time, what would you say to your administrators, colleagues, and students about how they made your life during your time at Grace-land PWI? She answered with one word, “stressful; it can have a positive affect because it pulls out the best. It makes you come up with the best product.”

The impact of Grace’s final word struck me hard. She placed a positive spin on the word, however, her physical response was telling. For the second time during the interview process, a flush spread across Grace’s neck and face. I was witness to the indelible impression Grace-land PWI left upon Grace’s life. I knew there was more to the story. I chose not to inflict any additional stress on Grace by asking her to expound.

*Researcher Reflections regarding Grace*

Grace invited me into her home and into her professional life with open arms. There was nothing pretentious about this woman. She presented with a soft but strong demeanor. She was poised and pleasant during each interview session. Her family members were equally gracious on the occasions that we met. Her husband was charming and quite the gentleman. I could see why Grace attempted to alter her life one summer long ago to spend time with him despite the missed opportunity. They reared respectful

and caring sons, sons that traveled a distance to tend to yard work and to bring grandchildren to visit. The love between sons and mother and husband and wife was evident.

During our interview times Grace was open and honest. We laughed and spoke with one another like old friends. She communicated story upon story about her time and experiences at Grace-land PWI. My initial views about Grace and the other historical participants remained fixed. These women had indeed charted unexplored waters and blazed trails that had not at that time been forged.

This woman of quiet strength survived and thrived during a 40-year career at a PWI in the Deep South. Others would have buckled under the pressure of being isolated and ignored. However, Grace was not one to succumb to the pressure of the time. She fought to survive since she entered the world as a premature baby. She continued the fight throughout her life. After all, God shielded her when she needed shielding and prepared her for the life she would live.

Grace and I met as strangers introduced by a mutual friend. When the interviews concluded, Grace and I established our own friendship. She invited me to a Labor Day celebration that I was unable to attend. But I was honored that she invited me. Grace met me in July and invited me to a family celebration in September. What Grace did not know when she made the invitation was that she was one of the few people who embraced this transplanted person from another part of the country. This invitation warmed my heart.

I drove away from Grace's home knowing that I would once again get lost leaving Grace's Island. But I did not mind. I could travel the roads, lose my way, find my way, and reminisce about my time with the beautiful person I met in the embodiment of Grace.

*Setting for Sophie, Historical Portrait*

When I was incessantly searching for participants, I queried many of my colleagues. I asked them for the names and contact information of African American women faculty members who they knew or knew of who taught or were currently teaching at PWIs in the Deep South. Questioning colleagues unearthed a rich seam of African American women faculty that I mined over the course of one year.

A colleague with whom I was currently working mentioned Sophie to me. She met Sophie while teaching at another institution, and Sophie had become a mentor of sorts to this colleague. She gave me Sophie's contact information and insisted that I call her. I was appreciative of the support this colleague displayed toward me. She befriended me when I first arrived on campus and continued to be a resource. When she mentioned Sophie to me, she had already made inroads with Sophie on my behalf. She mentioned that Sophie was expecting my call. Without hesitation, I telephoned Sophie mentioned in detail the research that I was performing. Without hesitation, she agreed to participate in my research project. She requested that we meet at her home and gave me the address.

Retired from teaching, she was currently residing in Sophie-borough, South Carolina. Armed with driving directions to her home from Google maps, I drove from my home in Savannah to Sophie-borough. This drive was not as impactful as the drive to Grace's Island, South Carolina. That drive required my undivided attention, and I still got lost on the way. My travels in and around Savannah do not often lead me to use the

interstate highway system. However, on this day, I entered my car, turned on the radio, and commenced the multi-hour drive to Sophie's home. The Google instructions directed me from my home toward I-16 W and then to a connection onto I-75 N toward Sophie-borough.

It was late morning when I left my home for Sophie-borough. I took the opportunity to eat a small breakfast of a banana and coffee, nevertheless an hour into my drive I became hungry. I took an off ramp that advertised eateries and fueling stations, and decided to re-fuel and grab something in which to nosh. I allowed myself an indulgence of diet Mountain Dew and Lays Jalapeno potato chips, yum, yum. Fortified with sustenance, I re-entered my car, turned the radio on once again and continued the drive to Sophie-borough.

Always one to arrive ahead of time, I took the opportunity to drive around Sophie-borough to view the attractions. I parked my car on a street lined with small-town businesses and walked in and out of the storefront shops. The employees of the stores were friendly and encouraged me to make a purchase. I declined and told them I was visiting the town for the first time. Many of them insisted that I take a walk around the nearby park to view all of the stores on the streets that fronted the park.

It was a beautiful summer day in Sophie-borough. Because I arrived early, I took the advice given to me by the shop-tenders and took a walk around the park. In the center of the storefront businesses that lined the street was a beautiful park where the people of Sophie-borough were enjoying a sunny summer day. This town reminded me of the small town that was the setting for the university I attended during undergraduate school. On one end of the park was a farmer's market, several vendors set of shop selling everything

from fruits and vegetables, food and drink, to hand-crafted wares. I purchased a to-go-cup of sweet tea and continued my walk around the park. Further along the path people were sunbathing, playing volleyball, and tossing Frisbees with their dogs. Other inhabitants of Sophie-borough took the opportunity to walk, run, or ride their bikes around the paved path that ringed the park. I completed one circuit around the park and noticed other storefront shops that lined the opposite end of the park. I wanted to peruse these stores; however, my appointed time with Sophie was nearing. I walked briskly back to my car for the drive to Sophie's home; I did not want to be late.

I parked in front of Sophie's home. It was a beautiful Victorian inspired house. It was artfully painted pale lavender accented with turquoise. The gingerbread molding was painted white. Sophie's home took my breath away. I exited my car and stood on the sidewalk to take it all in. Sophie lived in one of several Victorian homes that lined the street. There was a home painted yellow with orange and white accents; another home was painted in white with no accent color. It stood in contrast to the other colorful houses; however, it held its own beauty. I vowed to walk this street to look at the homes after my interview with Sophie.

I climbed the stairs to her home, rang the doorbell, and waited for Sophie to open the door, when she did I was greeted by her warm and broad smile. She was casually dressed in a pair of green pants and a white tee. Her short salt and pepper hair was in its natural state. Sophie's two small dogs also greeted me with wagging tails and loud barking. Their excitement mimicked mine. She quieted the dogs and inquired about my trip. I was ushered through the living room toward the dining room where the interview would take place. Prior to entering the living room, there was a long staircase that led to

the second floor. Next to the staircase was a hallway that seemed to go on forever. The part of Sophie's home that could be viewed from the doorway was covered in fine-looking hardwood floors.

There was a beautiful fireplace in the living room that was accented with what looked like a wrought iron fireplace hood and screen. When we entered the dining room she took a seat and invited me to sit across from her at the dining table. We eased into a comfortable conversation about my research, and our mutual colleague. She offered me something to drink; I requested water; she left the dining room, entered the kitchen, and returned with a glass of water in hand.

The dining room flowed directly from the living room. Each room was very formal. The dining room table was covered with a white linen tablecloth. This made me smile and think of my mother. The dining table in my home was always covered with a table cloth. My mother did not allow us to sit at or eat on what she called a "naked" table. I shared this story with Sophie, which made her laugh. Even now when I sit down to have a meal at the table in the breakroom of the office suite that houses my professional office, I am teased by my colleagues because I make a make-shift placemat out of paper towels so that I continue to honor my mother by not eating on a "naked table."

Prior to formally commencing the interview, she escorted the dogs from the dining room through a doorway that led to a screened porch. The dogs seemed content to be outside but continued to "voice" their excitement about my presence. She quieted the dogs with a voice command, and the first interview commenced.

*Sophie*

*Blessed are those who find wisdom,  
those who gain understanding,*

*for she is more profitable than silver  
and yields better returns than gold.  
She is more precious than rubies;  
nothing you desire can compare with her.  
Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.  
Her ways are pleasant ways,  
and all her paths are peace.  
She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;  
those who hold her fast will be blessed.  
By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations,  
by understanding he set the heavens in place;  
Proverbs 3:13-19 (New International Version of the Bible)*

*The Perfect Wisdom of our God  
(Lyrics by Keith & Kristyn Getty (2012))*

*The perfect wisdom of our God,  
Revealed in all the universe:  
All things created by His hand,  
And held together at His command.*

*He knows the mysteries of the seas,  
The secrets of the stars are His;  
He guides the planets on their way,  
And turns the earth through another day.  
And all the glory might go to Christ!*

*Oh grant me wisdom from above,  
To pray for peace and cling to love,  
And teach me humbly to receive  
The sun and rain of Your sovereignty.*

*Each strand of sorrow has a place  
Within this tapestry of grace;  
So through the trials I choose to say:  
Your perfect love in your perfect way.*

*Each strand of sorrow has a place  
Within this tapestry of grace;  
So through the trials I choose to say:  
Your perfect will in your perfect way.*



I selected Sophie as the pseudonym for this participant because she displayed and shared a great deal of wisdom during each interview. According to the commentary found in the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, the word Sophie is a Greek noun that means wisdom, intelligence, or knowledge. It pertains more to skill in living than to the attainment of facts. Additionally, in the Old Testament, wisdom does not refer to intellectual ability, but to the one who looks to God for instruction. Sophie possessed intellect; however, she spoke in such a way during the interviews that led me to know she sought council from a source higher than herself.

The Scripture and Christian song that I selected for Sophie seemed appropriate; the Scripture selection calls those who find wisdom blessed. The perfect wisdom of our God stated in the title of the song as well as in the lyrics, speaks to Sophie's desire to be imbued with the wisdom of God. During the interview, Sophie commented on her belief in and reliance on God's wisdom. Her daily practice was to accept the day that God gave her. The lyricist's request in the song that states, *Oh grant me wisdom from above* (Getty, 2012), as well as *teach me humbly to receive the sun and rain of Your sovereignty* (Getty, 2012) could have been Sophie's mantra.

Sophie was born and reared in the segregated South during the late 30's and early 40's. The Great Depression was in full swing, and World War II commenced and ended during her formative years. Other than what was chronicled in the history books during this time, I had no sphere of reference for what was occurring in the Deep South. What must be kept in mind is that the history books were written from a majoritarian point-of-view. The plight of African American life was minimally recounted in these tomes.

I commenced the interview with Sophie as I did with the other participants, I asked her to share stories from her childhood. She obliged and began to regale me with stories. She proudly stated,

I'm a Virginian; I was reared in a small town just north of the North Carolina state line. I was into everything. If they had a tryout for something at school, I tried out. I played tennis; I got into a dance group; whatever came up I was going to be in it. I was a majorette in high school, and I was into dramatics. I was very precocious. I was just a kid who wanted to do things. I played basketball, and I tried to help the other students write the school newspaper, I did it all.

Sophie was an adventurous child and teenager. This spirit allowed her to determine her likes and dislikes at a very early age. It also kept her active and engaged in her school as well as her community. I found myself wondering if this quality followed her into adulthood. As I listened to the taped recording of this segment of the interview it reminded me of my own childhood.

I was very social as a child; I loved playing with my cousins, my neighborhood friends, as well as my friends at school. My need for social activity was juxtaposed against my need to spend time alone. I loved being still with my thoughts and reading a good book. I imagine this started when I was 3 years old. The year that I turned three, I had major eye surgery, which stopped me from being very active until my eyes healed. Reading and watching television with a patch over my dominant eye was a part of the recovery and required therapy after surgery.

This experience taught me how to be comfortable in my own company. How we spend our time, in what activities we participate, and the organizations in which we have

membership during our childhood oftentimes serve as a looking glass into our adult lives and interests. I was eager to know if this theory would hold true for Sophie. I continued the interview by querying Sophie about her mother. She responded,

My mom was a quiet woman; she didn't participate very much. She did make sure that I got the boots I needed to be a majorette. We were a poor family. We are not talking about people who had money. Everybody in my hometown worked at the big Nut and Chocolate Company including my mother. She was, I guess, a typical mom struggling to make ends meet and keep things going.

She went to the 9th grade. If she stayed in school until the 10th grade, she would have graduated from high school. The 10th grade was as far as Blacks could go. You were lucky if you had a school that took you past anything else. But we were in a small city and the schools were segregated of course. Our city school was very very small and back two or three streets from us would be the school that the county kids attended.

We were a poor family. I'm not talking about people who had money. My mother's parents, my grandparents lived with us. We were all one family. I am one of six kids. Two of my siblings are now deceased, and three sisters are still alive. We were all one family. We were chipper; we didn't fight. I don't remember any fights between us. If we did something wrong, we'd get our legs spanked by my mother or grandfather. My grandfather was king of the roof; there were no ifs, ands, or buts about that. Much of what we learned in those early years came from our grandfather. Then my grandfather died, and my grandmother went back to North Carolina.

I was the queen. I'm the firstborn, so they followed my instructions. I know how to run the household, and so I kept them in line to do things that needed to be done. We stripped the beds on Saturday, and we washed the clothes on Monday mornings. We put them in soak because we did not have washing machines to really wash the clothes. My siblings had to listen to me because I was the oldest. We got our homework together at the kitchen table. I learned to cook at an early age. I learned to do a lot of things at an early age. I could manage a household, get everybody straight for the day, and still get off to school. I couldn't be lazy about my responsibility. You had to do your chores in those days because there was no one else to do what you had to do.

Without knowing, Sophie answered my question. The little girl and teenager who was interested in trying and participating in everything had grown into the adult who remained inquisitive and interested in trying new things and staying involved. As revealed throughout this series of interviews, Sophie remained true to her younger self by continuing to participate in new and challenging activities.

I asked Sophie about her father, she retorted, "I didn't know my father until later, and I didn't want to have anything to do with my dad. It wasn't for me." Her response was not rude; however, it was abrupt, which I interpreted as a subject she was not interested in pursuing. I curtailed this line of questioning and selected a course of inquiry that was more palatable and that allowed the interview to continue on an acceptable subject, which was school. Sophie continued,

The kids who came behind me all started talking about "Whitie" and other stuff, and I questioned them, "Where did you get that from?" My age group didn't do

that, probably because we knew that we were not allowed to be loud and vocal. We knew the stores we could shop in. We knew the places we could go, and we pretty much accepted that. We had a few strong leaders in the community who would be vocal and they would make changes within the community, they'd get stuff done. But in the segregated South, you knew your place, that's sad to say, but we didn't do anything.

“You knew your place.” This statement uttered by Sophie, spoke volumes to me. Knowing your place during this era in the United States meant remaining in the subverted places and spaces within the community and in the United States at large. Knowing your place meant acquiring a skillset for both physical and socioeconomic survival. The stock market crash of 1929 threw the country into the Great Economic Depression. All Americans suffered; however, Black American suffering was exacerbated by the demand for White employment over Black employment, which targeted Black firing for White hiring, thereby privileging the employment of Whites over Blacks. Sophie's conversation about the prominent people in her community pulled me from my contemplations. She recollected,

The kids whose parents had money, the kids would have money. They came from families with a bloodline. There were also hardworking people who had money because they worked and knew how to save. We had a few doctors, Black doctors. We had a couple of dentists. Those were the people you looked up to, the ones who made it, and we wanted that too. School and education was pushed in my era, it was pushed, and Black history was pushed. We knew our history. We

knew what the problems were. Members of our community were there for each other, some made it and some did not.

We didn't have a lot of bad boy problems, we had a few, but those boys were sent off to reform school. That's what we called it. We didn't have girl issues. Girls didn't fight. Girls didn't misbehave. Unfortunately, some of them got pregnant, and they had to drop out of school. That was the biggest thing. I mean some of your closest friends and they're not in school. You don't know why they're not in school. Then you would see them at night walking the street with their parents. You wondered about them. When you were old enough to understand you were told their secret, you were told what happened.

I wondered about the statement, "When you were old enough to understand." I queried Sophie about this. She remarked,

These were teenage girls. They were in the eighth or ninth grade. You know, they were in high school. They came out at night with their parents, mainly their mothers. They were kept away from the community during the day so that no shame would come to their families because they were pregnant before marriage.

I would see these girls at night but did not understand what was happening until I was older, and my mother explained everything.

Sophie saw this occurrence in her community as a child and as a teenager. When she was old enough to understand, her mother explained what was going on. I was reminded that Sophie came of age during a time when conversations about premarital sex and promiscuity were not considered appropriate topics of conversation. Parents wanted

to preserve the innocence of their children by not exposing them to adult topics. Sophie continued by telling me other stories about her community.

I remember we would get someone who had a car and they would drive us to South Carolina to pick up my grandfather's mother. Only a few people in the community had cars. That was not for Black folk to have a car. If they did have a car, it was a beat up piece of a truck. The local gambler had a nice car, the bootlegger he had a nice car, but not the common folk that worked every day. Gradually people started getting vehicles.

At an early age we were living in rental houses until something became available, and you could grab on to it, you know, get your own house. That's what we did. Many of the people worked together in the community all these years and then suddenly they began to move out. Many of them ended up in the same neighborhoods, and they're almost neighbors again. Not in the same house but on the same block or two blocks away. As soon as a house would become available, the word would get out, "There's a house next to so-and-so." That was how it happened, we didn't know any other way.

Sophie's story regarding moving from rental property to home ownership reminded me of my family's story concerning home ownership. I shared the following story with Sophie. I was reared in rental property. My family rented an upstairs flat from another African American family. The four of us lived in a space that totaled 800-sq.ft. There was a living room, my parent's bedroom, a bedroom I shared with my sister, a small bathroom that we all shared, and an eat-in kitchen. The bedroom that I shared with my sister barely contained the twin beds in which we slept. My parents lived in that flat

from the time they got married in 1953 until 1968. We out grew this space and my mother insisted that we all needed more room.

We moved from the Southside of the Midwestern city in which I was reared to our family home in what was known as the Central West End during the summer of 1968, I was 9 years old. I remember this vividly because I did not want to leave my best friend, Bridgette. I also remember this time because we were leaving all of our old neighbors behind. We were a close-knit community. We knew each family on our city block. Moving to a different part of town meant that I would have to attend a new school and meet new friends.

My father was not impressed with moving either and refused to seek a bank loan with my mother thinking this would prevent her from purchasing a home. Not one to be outdone, my mother sought the assistance of her brother and secured a bank mortgage. During this time in America, a woman of any color could not purchase property without the financial support of a man. My uncle had to cosign for the home loan.

When we picked my father up from work on the evening of the move, we drove past our normal exit, and continued to drive toward our new home. When my mother arrived at our new home, my father was angry and refused to enter the house. He paced up and down the sidewalk in front of our new home for what seemed like hours. My sister and I thought this was the end of our family. Eventually my father acquiesced and entered the house to look around to my sister's and my relief. I shared this story with Sophie; she and I both laughed at the bodacious nature of my mother. I continued the interview with Sophie by asking her about her preprofessional employment. She responded,



When I was planning to go off to school, I had decided I wanted to be a nurse. During all of my growing up years, I wanted to be a nurse because of Nurse Davis. She came to our schools and administered our shots and checked on us. She was very attractive, probably a little bit fairer than I am. She had that navy-blue hat and that navy-blue uniform. In the summers, she had on that seersucker suit, and I just wanted to be Nurse Davis.

So I needed to save my money, I never really had a job. A doctor friend of ours purchased a building and on the top floor was his office. There were other offices on that floor also. However, on the first floor there was going to be our second Black owned drugstore. Dr. Barnes, the first Black pharmacist in our community moved to Philadelphia. Dr. Barnes was the only pharmacist in the Black community at that time. On Sundays, we'd leave church and go by there, and the older kids would have milkshakes and talk about stuff we weren't interested in because we were youngsters.

James Richardson, the next Black pharmacist opened his pharmacy in the new building. I applied and interviewed for a job. I was hired to be the soda jerk. I learned how to make sodas, and we had the machine that rotated and cooked hotdogs. We didn't do hamburgers, but we had barbequed pork that we would heat and place on a bun to make sandwiches. So we served hotdogs and the barbequed pork sandwiches with special coleslaw that we learned to make ourselves. We also sold sundaes and had a full soda fountain with Pepsi, root beer, and orange soda. Every once in a while, we would venture over into the pharmacy if they got busy to assist them.

Before the job as a soda jerk, I always went to my great aunt's and worked the farm like she did. I would help them put in the tobacco. I helped them grade the tobacco. I know tobacco from a seedling to a giant stalk. So for the first 3 years, when I was 14, 15, and 16 years old, I was in Easton, North Carolina working on a tobacco farm.

Working on a tobacco farm did not appeal to me at all. Sophie's tobacco farm story reminded me of a story of my own. Once when I was a child, my family visited my paternal grandmother who lived in Starkville, Mississippi. She lived on a farm where they grew cotton. Just as something to do, I decided to assist my older cousins by going with them to pick cotton. I thought to my young self, "How hard can it be to pick cotton? Surely it must be like picking a flower." Needless to say, my fingers were bloody and my back hurt after a short 20 minutes in the cotton field. I quickly found out that I did not have the skill required to pick cotton. I never attempted to "help" my cousins again.

I asked Sophie to explain to me her path from Virginia, segregated schools, and eldest child to knowing that she wanted to attend college? She shared the following story,

Attending college was an influence throughout our days in school. The kids who went to college were welcomed back, and they would come and tell us about being at A & T and Morehouse and all of the Southern schools. Some of them went to Virginia State or Virginia Union. But we would hear all about being at school and being in college. About how you have to prepare and write papers. Then they would tell us about the fun times, homecoming and the other fun stuff. So I knew I wanted to do that, but I also wanted to be a nurse.

Nursing was not offered in the schools so I wrote to the National League for Nursing; the librarian at my school helped me. The National League for Nursing sent out brochures that told you where all of the nursing schools were located. So I found a small hospital in Maryland, and I went to their School of Nursing. I stayed there for 2 years. After my time there, I transferred to a mid-size hospital School of Nursing where I finished. I began working as a nurse once I completed nursing school. I worked for a pediatric hospital. I was on an all toddler floor.

I wanted to return to school but, I needed a job that would allow me to have a flexible schedule. I was asked by a supervisor, “Would you like to work for Dr. Seinfeld [pseudonym]? He’s going to be interviewing people; I’m going to put your name in.” I agreed, this meant I would be working in the cardiac catheterization lab every day, and I would work in the rheumatic fever clinic every fifth weekend. I became head of the cardiac catheterization lab; I was a part of the open heart cardiac team.

I was married at this time; we lived in Ohio. I applied to and was accepted at the local university. This was a completion program that allowed me to get my Bachelor’s Degree in nursing. We were there for 7 or 8 years, I can’t remember any more. My husband was working for a well-known tire and rubber company. He said that he was going to take a job in Massachusetts with General Electric. So right during the riots, they were burning down the city in protest of the assassination of Martin Luther King. I was sitting in Ohio with all of my furniture

packed, one pot, one pan, three dishes, and my two children. He was in Massachusetts.

The children and I moved to Massachusetts with my husband, and we leased a house. I decided that I was not going to work because I did not need to work. Then I decided that I wanted to work; I started meeting people. Because I was Black and had a bachelor's degree, it was suggested that I teach. We drove around the city and noticed the hospital; I made an appointment. I went in and informed them that I was interested in a part-time position, maybe in pediatrics. I had my credentials with me.

I went home, the next thing I know, I got a phone call from the head of the School of Nursing, she stated that my name had been given to her, and she wanted to know if I would be interested in coming to teach. I informed her that I had never taught formally. She stated that they could help me with that. I agreed to talk to her about the position.

I voiced my concerns. I told her I had two children, within 5 minutes a woman from the library came in and gave me the name of a baby sitter. I spoke with the baby sitter; she agreed to keep my son, and my daughter attended nursery school at a nearby nursery school. With these issues solved, I began teaching at the Massachusetts School of Nursing [pseudonym]. I taught there for about 3 years and then accepted a position at the local community college.

I identified with Sophie's transition from practicing nurse to nurse educator. I too spent the majority of my career as a practicing nuclear medicine technologist prior to entering the academy as an educator. Like Sophie, my first choice was honing my skills

as a technologist. However, life has a way of redirecting your efforts and your point-of-view. Again, like Sophie, I did not regret the circuitous path that took me from being a working nuclear medicine technologist to a nuclear medicine educator.

Having a bachelor's degree opened doors for Sophie that would have otherwise remained closed. Nevertheless, the community college was impressed with her credentials and her experience. Not one to be satisfied, Sophie set her sights on the next target that she wanted to achieve, obtaining a Master's degree. She affirmed,

A colleague mentioned that she was taking classes at Boston College. I was interested in what she had to say. I contacted the college; they sent me all of the information about the Master's program. Boston College received a federal grant used to provide Master's degree education for nurses in four subject areas, adult nursing, medical surgical, community health, and psychology. I was in my mid-30s at that time and, that's how I got my Master's at Boston College.

I met some interesting people, one of which announced that she was going for her doctorate. What did she say that for? I asked her to tell me about it. She did and from that information I found myself back at Boston College working on a doctorate.

Never one to shy away from something new to participate in or experience, and in the spirit of her younger self, Sophie was once again answering the call of a new challenge. It was not hard to imagine the commitment required of Sophie to accept this new challenge. Returning to school meant working during the day, attending classes in the evening, returning home at night to attend to family and matters of her home, sleeping, and wakening to do it again and again.

I was back at Boston College taking courses at 4:30 p.m. Eventually, I took enough courses to do my residency, it was supposed to be for a full year but they modified the requirement, which allowed me to take three courses in the summer and three during the following fall. Taking these courses met the requirement of residency. This meant I was now ready to start working on my dissertation. But I dropped out of sight.

I was an ABD. If my colleague had not said, “I am going to defend my dissertation,” I would have remained an ABD. I’m approaching 40 years old and I am ABD. Her statement spearheaded me to get the dissertation done. I said to myself, “This is ridiculous. You spent all those years doing the course work. Get up and get this thing done.” I had to get back to Boston College to get an advisor so I could get the dissertation started. The same colleague who told me about the doctoral program was the same colleague who inspired me to finish. I picked my subject and began to work.

I was surprised by this information. Until Sophie shared this revelation, I imagined Sophie as a never-stop-until-the-task-is-completed kind of person. The process of writing a dissertation is a self-directed and self-driven activity requiring copious amounts of perseverance. I now understand why acquiring the status of ABD, all but dissertation, is so easily achieved. I shared this revelation with Sophie. She continued the interview with the following story,

It’s the early 80s, and I was now at North Shore; we started a new program for nontraditional students. It was call Self-Step. I was a part of the curriculum-building faculty. We offered the students three or four ways to take courses. The

choices were discussions, seminars, or lectures. The curriculum required that the students write papers throughout the curriculum. I was in charge of this program. I was keeping up with everything. So I decided to look at the nontraditional students' approach to education. I compared the nontraditional students in the Self-Step program to the traditional students. This became the topic of my dissertation.

We were told to have three copies of our paper, one in the freezer, one in the car, and one that you carry. So every time I printed my paper, I printed three copies. The copies were all Xerox copies. The school allowed me to make these copies because I was advancing myself. I would go to bed as early as I could. I would get up at 5:00 a. m. in the morning, brush my teeth, wash my face, and, make myself a cup of tea. My children were older and in college. I would enter my daughter's or my son's old room where I kept copies of my paper, and I would write.

My husband would bring home a portable computer from his work. It was a suitcase type, you pulled it out, got the keyboard, and the screen was huge. I knew all of the keys. You also had to use the function keys to do certain things. I had to write the function keys and their operation on a list so that I could remember what they did.

I went home to Virginia for the summer. Our house had a veranda. I took the portable computer my husband was able to get for me, and I put tables on the veranda. I sat out on that porch with cords running all over the place and wrote and wrote and wrote. I also spent a lot of time at the local university's library

making copies of articles for my research. My coin purse was filled with coins I used to make copies.

I returned to Massachusetts with nearly all of the chapters written. I had someone run my statistics, and my secretary typed my dissertation for a fee. I defended my dissertation successfully and everyone began to call me Dr. Sophie. I finished in '88. I should have finished in '84 or '85, but I was tired, just plain tired.

The feeling of being tired resonated with me. I understood how Sophie could be tired from all that was on her plate as a doctoral student who was working full-time and rearing children. This was my story, sans the child rearing. It is the story of many doctoral students. Balancing work, school, and family is not an easy task. One of these entities usually suffers on the road toward becoming a newly minted doctor. Sophie offered the following words of wisdom,

That's why you need a support system when you are in school taking classes or working on a dissertation. I have a few buddies, and we finished about the same time, and we would give each other grief. We would ask, "What have you done? Get up off of your butt and do something. Get this thing done!" By this time, I had been promoted at North Shore. I moved from chair of the curriculum to chair of the department. I was still learning a new job. Despite all that I was doing, I realized that I had to stick with it. I had to finish my doctorate.

Once again, Sophie's words resonated with me. A support system is a necessary thing on the road to completing a doctorate. Someone or a group of individuals must be tasked with encouraging, persuading, and/or holding to task the person who is pursuing a



doctoral degree. My support system was vast; it included my sister, my husband, and a host of my colleagues. I was grateful to each of them for their contribution to my accomplishments. Sophie resumed her story with the following information,

I had taught at mid-size hospital's School of Nursing for approximately 3 years, and then I went to the community college where I moved up the ladder from faculty to director. I had a large nursing program so I would always bring in 80 or more students each semester. So when the third blizzard hit, it got to me. I said, "This is it, I can't take it anymore. I want to go where no shovel is allowed even for the garden." My colleagues would laugh at me because the last blizzard is the one that did it for me.

During the last blizzard, I fell down in the snow. There was so much snow that I could not see the steps on the front of my house. I had my briefcase. I had my lunch. I had my shoe bag, and I had my purse. I fell down in my driveway and landed under my car. I looked around to see if any of my neighbors saw me, and I started dragging myself from under the car, and I am cussing and fussing. I said, "This is it! I can't take it anymore." That night when my husband got home, I said to him, "We should look for jobs in the South." He said, "I have been thinking about that too."

I understood Sophie's need to move south away from the snow. I moved to the Deep South during the winter. The temperature in the Midwestern city from which I was moving away registered 16 degrees on the day we drove south. We were lured south by the mild winters and the prolonged summers. During the first winter I returned home for a visit in the Midwest, I realized I was no longer acclimated to the cold weather or the

snow. Although I enjoyed visiting with my family, I longed to be back in the South where the temperature was 40 degrees during the winter. Sophie stepped away to tend to her dogs. Upon her return, she resumed her story,

We started looking, and we went to Daytona. My husband was one of the finalists for the position in Daytona; however, he was not selected for the position. I said, "Let me try." I applied to all of the schools along the southeastern coast including Richmond. I don't know why I applied in Richmond; I thought maybe I could go home. The school in Richmond didn't bother to look at my application. After that, I began to get interviews in other places. The school in Richmond called, me and I said, "I'm sorry, I hoped I would have heard from you before now, I have been offered other positions, I am no longer available." I had an offer in South Carolina and an offer in Georgia. I accepted the offer in Georgia.

I inquired of Sophie her reasoning for accepting the position in Georgia over the position in South Carolina, she responded with the following account,

I rejected the position in South Carolina, because it was a 2-year program and I wanted a position over everybody, and they wanted to limit me to nursing. That's what I was doing where I was. The offer from the school in South Carolina was not as appealing as the one in Georgia, so I chose Georgia. I had a doctorate in higher education administration. I knew I was prepared for a higher level position and I had been well taught by some of the top professors in the country. The interviewer in South Carolina said I would have been over refrigeration, air conditioning, and two other programs. There was a division system in the community college setting and not a department. So that's what happened.

I questioned the interviewer as to whether the interview was real or if I was just going through the motions of an interview. I said, “Now I’ve come here to be interviewed and I hope this is a serious interview because I don’t want you to be meeting someone’s goal or objective to interview candidates of color.” I knew there were White candidates. He said, “No, no, no. This is a serious interview.” When I got the phone call that I had been accepted, I was shocked, but I was happy and pleased because I wanted out of the northeast. I had no other reason to leave. I was tired of the bad weather.

I entered this new position as an assistant professor on tenure track, because I did not have the experience of teaching at a 4-year school. I came as the head of the associate degree program. I moved up to associate professor pretty soon. But there were real issues within the department, I struggled for the first few years. The faculty that reported to me opposed my ideas. “If I said, white, they said blue.” So I finally worked out ways in which I could get the group to focus on what we were talking about. The common topic was students.

When I was hired, I came into a new curriculum that I had not developed. I left a very promising curriculum, that I had developed, a self-pacing program. The faculty had rewritten the curriculum, but it was not self-pacing. The faculty anticipated that I had been hired to change the curriculum. I said, “No, I’m not coming here to change this program. It has to be your program. It has to be the program of the department.” This was the issue in the department. So after that things sort of eased a little bit.

There were always tensions, and I knew there was real sabotage, and I'm saying it openly. I was the only Black person. There were no other Blacks except for a few part-time clinical instructors in my program. There was a Black faculty who taught in the baccalaureate program, however, she was not under me, we had a professional relationship. There were several other women who were not going to allow me to be beat up on. I would get messages that would inform me when the little gimmicks and the little talks were going on so that I could deal with them and not be blind-sided.

On one occasion, a faculty member within my department went to the President with a grievance against me. This faculty member was one of the ones who were determined to make a mess for me, and they did. They complained that I went away for the weekend and did not leave anyone in charge; they accused me of neglecting my duties of leadership. I don't remember what the specifics were anymore. I informed them that I would be contacting my attorney to represent me regarding the complaints. I was not going to put up with what they were trying to do to me. The complaints were all petty. A grievance committee was convened and charged with examining the issues of the accusation. The results of this committee were that I had not done anything wrong.

My relationships and interactions with colleges outside of my department was a different story. Those relationships were wonderful; I never had any problems there. People enjoyed talking to me and what have you. I had excellent relationships with faculty from other departments. I was a part of welcoming the

faculty of new disciplines, and new programs of study that were coming to campus.

I identified with Sophie's position of being one of a few African American faculty members. I was one of two African American faculty members hired in my department during the same time period. Prior to our acceptance of these positions, there was a lone African American faculty member who worked in the clinical environment and was on campus infrequently. The majority of the faculty members in the department were kind to me nonetheless; there were also faculty members within the department who were not so kind. Never one to be intimidated, I went about accomplishing the work I was hired to do. I continued the interview with Sophie by asking her what her relationship was like with the students she taught. She shared the following stories,

One student wrote a letter to the State Board of Nursing (SBN). She informed them that I was not qualified, this student was Black. She further accused me of not knowing what I was doing. The Director of the SBN called me; she told me about the letter and informed me that she was going to send the letter to me. In the meantime, we found out there were other letters also. I went to the Vice-President of the University, and he assured me that they would investigate the issue. The student was identified and informed she was never to write another letter to the SBN.

This student did not go through the proper channels. She did not share the complaint with anyone in the department prior to sending the letter to the SBN. I was notified by a confidante that the student was encouraged to do this by another

faculty member in the department. I received this information but did not deal with it by confronting the individual.

At another time, I had a student come down to talk to me from the baccalaureate program accusing the faculty of being racist and not understanding him. I said, “Okay, tell me what you are talking about.” He proceeded to tell me that when he turned in his papers, they would be returned to him full of blood (red ink). I asked him what he wanted me to do. He informed me that he needed some help. I told him to bring me the paper, he did. I read the paper and told the student I would have given him a “F.” I told him, you are writing like where you come from. You are writing from the street. You are a professional, and you need to learn to write formally. I told him once you enter an institution of higher education that all that ghetto and street culture stuff needs to go. I further advised him that he needed to speak with subject-verb agreement. I just let him have it.

I remember I was teaching an orientation class and speaking to students about the expectations of college professors. A student asked me, “Are you saying we have to behave and talk proper?” I told her what I think you are saying is that I want you to all to use subject and verb correctly, that you speak proper English, and that you write. You need to know where commas go. If you want to call it proper, yes, I call it speaking correctly. Sophie continued, I was told when I first came here that some Black students mentioned “it was not cool to be smart as a Black kid.”

My thoughts regarding the stories that Sophie shared with me about the African American students she encountered at this PWI sent my thoughts in many directions.

Initially, I was taken aback, and unsure of how to react to or respond to her comments about her interactions with these African American students. I took a moment to assess my thoughts, and to try and understand Sophie's position.

I was taken aback by what I perceived to be Sophie's disparagement of the students based on the way they spoke and wrote. The students were speaking and writing in Black dialect. In 1977 Smitherman made the following observation,

Black Dialect is an Africanized form of English reflecting Black America's linguistic-cultural African heritage and the conditions of servitude, oppression, and life in America. Black Language is European-American speech with an Afro-American meaning, nuance, tone, and gesture. The Black Idiom is used by 80-90 percent of American Blacks, at least some of the time. It has allowed Blacks to create a culture of survival in an alien land, and as a by-product has served to enrich the language of all Americans. (pp. 2-3)

I must admit my bias. I did not want to equate Sophie's response to the students with the way many Americans, both Black and White perceive individuals who speak in Black dialect. I wanted to think more of her than where my bias was leading me. I did not want Sophie to be "one of those Black people," African Americans who look down their noses at other African Americans of lower socioeconomic status, and who might have minimal education. I did not want Sophie to "other" African Americans who speak in a Black dialect.

I speak from experience, talking and writing in a Black dialect is not an acceptable way to speak or write in a university setting. Students must enter the academic setting of a college or university with the ability to speak in Standard English. The

students Sophie responded to needed to understand that they were viewed and judged on their ability to navigate different social, economic, and professional structures where Standard English is the traditional and accepted language.

However, in this instance, I was reminded to take Maxwell's (2013) advice. He would encourage me to ask, "How might I be wrong?" What I know about Sophie is that she is a kind, straightforward person, and not one to mince words. She responded to the students in a manner that would not have them confused about her statements. My thoughts immediately turned to Delpit (2006), a K-12 teacher who purported that students should never be belittled for their language; however, it is necessary for teachers to provide access to the skills needed to become a master of the language of power, or Standard English. I agreed with Delpit.

Although Sophie was an African American college professor, she still exhibited the need for the students to speak and write in a manner that would elevate them in the academic setting. I understood her response to the student who spoke with broken subject-verb agreement. I understood her response to the student who asked about speaking properly. Sophie knew these students would be judged based upon their ability to adapt to the academic setting. Furthermore, Sophie did not have the time to coddle the students. She perceived that they were already behind. What should have been taught and learned prior to the students entering college was not evident. She gave the students the unabridged version of the lesson in her tone and comments. She encouraged the students to speak and write in Standard English only in this environment. Truth in its unvarnished state can be a challenge to accept.



The conversation with Sophie turned to her scholarship interests and activities. Sophie's dissertation compared nontraditional and traditional students in a 2-year nursing program. I asked her about the specifics of this research, she responded,

I looked at the adult as a learner. I went through all of the learning theories, and what have you. I was well suited to deal with the adult learner. I knew how to counsel them. The results of my dissertation were that there was very little difference between the students in the traditional program, and the students in self-paced program. The students in the self-paced program were driven to succeed based on their desired goal to become a nurse.

In the beginning of my career as a college professor, I was a textbook reviewer. So I didn't spend too much time around that. Then some of those colleagues from across campus and I got together because we found that when we would write articles for our own journals, if your article subject was not the topic of that journal edition, your article would not be accepted. So we did a lot of article writing around non-traditional issues. We would write as partners, and we would write as individuals.

Another thing was that I served on the National League for Nursing Board. I was on the accreditation committee for that board. My work with that Board added to the scholarship. Those were the things I did because it was hard to even get an article published in the *American Journal of Nursing*. You needed to know far in advance what the subject of the journal would be and write an article to fit a specific journal edition.

Sophie was voicing my unspoken thoughts. It was also challenging for me to write articles for academic journals in the genre of radiologic sciences. The *Journal of Radiologic Sciences* is interested in clinic-based research. I no longer work or teach in the clinical environment, and this fact precluded me from writing articles desired by my professional journal. To add insult to injury, my scholarly interests lie outside of this genre. Additionally, my duties and assignments at my university impede the time required to perform scholarship. This fact is a double-edged sword. I cannot be promoted without a doctoral degree (this dissertation removes this issue), I cannot be promoted without a prescribed amount of scholarship, and I do not have the time to write given my current schedule of being a full-time (12 months) faculty member, program director, and a full-time student. However, I remain encouraged. Once my dissertation is completed and successfully defended, I will turn my attention to the scholarly activities that interest me.

During the third and final interview with Sophie, our conversation turned to her experiences as an African American woman faculty member on the campus of the PWI from which she retired. She made the following observations,

I didn't have any issues as a woman; it may have been because I was such a strong woman and not a pampered person. I had no issues whatsoever. I had the respect of most of the males that I had met. I had the respect from the dean of my college even though I didn't care for him. In my opinion, he was not one of the people for me and not for a lot of other faculty members either. Instead of working with faculty, he chose to work against faculty. We attended a few conferences together, which meant that we rode in the same car. I sat in the car,

and he usually drove. He wanted to converse about other faculty members or problems he was having with faculty members. I would respond with, “Well it’s in your backyard; you need to clean it up.” I wouldn’t say anymore.

I was well respected across campus, and people all knew me. That was because I was a minority, and there were only 8 or 9 of us on campus. I know there are more minority faculty on campus now. I don’t know when the desegregation mandate was made, but it required that there be a concerted effort to hire more minority faculty. I came to my campus in 1989, and there were no minority faculty members in history, English, or math.

I didn’t have any issues as an African American. I had been exposed to Whites in other institutions where I was the only Black. I was very comfortable in that setting, and I had no problems with telling people that I was one of the nicest people I know; I don’t know why anybody wouldn’t like me. I would just candidly say that. I knew there were some faculty members who were uncomfortable with me but that was their problem, not mine. Many of the faculty members of my department had a problem with having and reporting to an African American leader.

Some of the statements Sophie made regarding her perceptions concerning her status on campus and issues of gender and race sat in contradiction to some of the actions of and interactions with the faculty in her department. I did not think that she was deliberately deceiving me or herself. As I age, I become less interested in investigating the truth about my life or the lives of others and more interested in the way I see that truth. What matters in the end is not so much what happens to us, but how we perceive

what happens to us. That perception ultimately becomes the world view that we hold, and the world that we inhabit.

I fully understand that facts are facts, but facts can take us only so far. For instance every faculty member and administrator on campus that Sophie interacted with had an opinion of her. That is a fact. However, what did their opinions mean to them, and what did their opinions mean to Sophie? That is the crux of the situation. However, the realm of perspective, and limitless interpretations are possible. That is why different people can experience the exact same circumstances or be exposed to the same facts and yet have totally different outcomes or arrive at totally different conclusions. Yes, Sophie understood the truth surrounding the faculty within her department, yet she opted to see her interactions with the faculty and actions by the faculty with the most generous eye of interpretation. Sophie chose to perceive a more beautiful world.

We turned our attention to tenure and promotion. Sophie began her employment as an assistant professor on a tenure track. She retired from the PWI where she taught as a full professor with tenure. I asked her about this journey, she replied,

My road through tenure and promotion was rugged. I did not have the time to write. I took the route of book reviews and serving on committees. I was on local committees as well as state and national committees. If the committee had anything to do with health, I sat on that committee. Until a faculty member across campus pulled us together to write as a team, we were unable to get things published. Publishing articles was the hardest piece to accomplish.

Every faculty member who sought promotion and tenure had to do a big portfolio. It would be three inches in a three-ring binder. It contained all of your

teaching, service, and scholarship activities. Then a committee was assembled to evaluate your portfolio. Some of the feedback would be negative; some would be middle of the road, and some would be glowing. Those first few years I just didn't have it. I had committee work; I had evidence of effective teaching, but I did not have the scholarship.

The department heads were supposed to teach one course per year, not one course per semester. I would go to faculty and assist them with courses every semester. I would have board meetings and department head meetings. Some of those board meetings meant an overnight stay. I was on campus 4 or 5 days each week. I would arrive on campus early in the morning and stay late at night, sometimes arriving home after dinner time. I was oftentimes the last faculty in the building, and my car was the last car in the parking lot.

As the department head, I was responsible for the student files. I had all those students, not just those enrolled but I had a whole cadre. I had three files of student records. Only 500 or 600 of them were active. So I had all of that to do plus the campus stuff. I complained to the dean about being held to the same scholarship that faculty across campus was held to, but it fell on deaf ears.

Sophie's comments could have been my own. The faculty members of my department have just completed a workload policy that we presented to our department head and the dean of our college. On average, faculty members in my department have workload hours of 15- 20 hours per semester. Our contact hours per week are exorbitant. Yet we are held to the same standards of teaching, service, and scholarship as faculty members across campus who teach English, history, or psychology, and whose teaching

loads are not as heavy. This policy has not yet been accepted, and the issue has not yet been resolved.

Listening to Sophie's story regarding the challenge of attaining appropriate amounts of scholarship to meet tenure and promotion criteria was redundant. This issue is not isolated to the university where I teach, but in fact can be found on any campus with programs in health professions or allied health. The accrediting agencies that accredit programs in health professions require that the faculty teaching courses in those programs have national licensure or certification in the courses that they teach. We are not interchangeable. No one else on my campus can teach courses in Nuclear Medicine Technology. I also cannot teach courses in respiratory therapy, medical lab science, radiologic sciences, or any other program specific content within the College of Health Professions. Oh, by the way, I cannot teach nursing courses either. Yet I remain responsible for my path to tenure and promotion through teaching, service, and scholarship, all of which are equally weighted.

I asked Sophie what it meant to her to be an African American woman faculty member at a predominantly White Institution, she provided me with her insight,

Well the first time I had that relationship was when I was teaching at the Hospital School of Nursing in Massachusetts. It was a sign of pride for me that I had made it. Because I was so accepted, I didn't have to deal with issues of race. All of my academic life after I left high school I have been in White institutions. I just knew after I started getting degree after degree and things, it was expected that I should move up the academic ladder.

Going to college and getting degrees was expected of me. I didn't tell anyone in my family that I was getting degree after degree. The family didn't even know. The doctoral degree caught them off guard. Before I got it, I would just say, "Well I'm still in school." Then to be called Dr. Sophie meant a lot to the family. Until then I was just taking courses.

I have always been the only one, the only Black person. I went to a university in Massachusetts to take a course in enterstomial nursing. I was the only Black nurse in the whole bunch that decided to be an ostomy nurse. So it really didn't hit me that I was the only one. I cannot remember any time at any point where I really concentrated on thinking about it.

When I went to the community college to teach, I was the only Black that taught in the nursing program. I have always been the only one. When we moved into a neighborhood, we were the only Blacks. I ran for the school committee; I was the only Black on the school committee. Some people have problems, and some don't. I just didn't have any issues being the only Black.

There are still the stereotypes as to who we are, and who we are not. To know who you are, and to know yourself well is the key. Also whatever the academic area or background you pursue, you need to be well prepared in that area. Don't give anyone any cause to question you, your knowledge, or anything. I have always known who I am. I am a poor Black gal who grew up in and came out of Virginia. I have known that for years. When I did encounter issues with being Black, I just dealt with it. I would say, "Excuse me or am I hearing you correctly? How do you mean that?" I wouldn't put them down. I wouldn't get

sassy even though in the back of my throat I could spit out a few things. I responded like that because I had been through it all already.

Sophie employed the advice she was giving me throughout her life and career. She was comfortable in her own skin, with the people and places she had encountered along the way, and with the knowledge she had attained. She encouraged me to accept and employ this same advice. I appreciated her wisdom and vast experience.

The interview continued with me asking her about what she would like to say to the inhabitants of the PWI she retired from including administrators, faculty, and students. She thought for a few minutes and replied,

I have probably said it already. I think people need to put themselves in my shoes, and learn to behave the way I do. See, one of the things you didn't ask me was about culture shock. That was the biggest hurdle that I had to deal with. People have preconceived notions of who you are, and what you know, and what you are about. So I wish they would understand that the world is bigger than they are, and that there are people who are bigger and wiser than they are, and that not every symbol is an accurate symbol. Just because I am Black doesn't mean I am like every other Black that they know. I try to pass that on. I would keep it at that.

I am sure Sophie had more to say, however, in keeping with her requirement to maintain civility at all times, I did not press the issue. I know that you cannot travel the path that Sophie travelled without obtaining experiences that teach you how to navigate predominantly White environments. Sophie had decades of experience in this area. However, she remained true to herself by sharing only positive comments and observations.



The final request I made of Sophie was to ask her to define success in the academic setting and to tell me if she felt like she had achieved her definition. She did not hesitate to begin this retort. She confirmed,

I don't know if I ever thought about it. I don't recall ever having to say, "I must be successful." I was a successful person, but I never put it in those terms. I knew there were goals to meet and I met them. I superseded them sometimes. But I don't think I ever used the word success. I was too busy running a large program and keeping it flawless. I have always been a goal oriented person; I just think success was always a goal. I would measure success by setting goals, and either you meet them or you don't.

I think I achieved success because we had one of the most successful programs. We supplied the community with one of the best lots of nurses. I heard professional people say that they were better prepared than other baccalaureate nurses skill-wise. I don't think I have many shortcomings when it comes to Sophie-borough College. The sum total of it all is that it's only years later that you can sit back and reflect. That's why I'm very comfortable saying, "Yeah, I was very successful."

The final interview concluded with Sophie offering me words of wisdom regarding my life and experiences with academe. She stated emphatically,

Remember that this is a job. Make sure you have a life outside of your university. You have got to have a life outside of your university. The life you have outside of work helps you to maintain employment. Without comradery and freedom outside of work, you will go crazy. You cannot be all into your university because

your university is not all into you. I know you value your students but you must set boundaries. The university has you 5 days a week, 8 to 10 hours per day.

Learn to turn it off.

Tears pooled in my eyes, as I tried to prevent a breach in the dam. Without knowing it Sophie spoke directly into my spirit. This woman, who had already done so much for me by successfully navigating and charting the waters of a PWI in the Deep South, was giving me words of wisdom to live by. The gravity of the debt I owed her settled on me like a weight. I knew in that moment I would never be able to return the kindness or satisfy the debt, nonetheless, I made a silent vow to pay it forward.

*Researcher Reflections regarding Sophie*

Sophie walked me to the front door of her home. Her dogs were in tow to bid me farewell as well. Their tails were wagging as they once again “voiced” their excitement. I gave Sophie a hug and descended the stairs waving enthusiastically at her and the dogs. For one last time, I paused to view the historic homes that lined the street on which Sophie lived. I entered my car and drove away. It was a beautiful summer day, and I made the decision to peruse the shops that fronted the park. I did not invite Sophie to join me. This was not a selfish moment. I needed time to decompress, retail therapy is always my solution of choice when I need to unwind.

While I walked in and out of shop after shop, I thought of Sophie, and all she shared with me throughout the interviews. She was open and honest in the delivery of her story. She espoused wisdom throughout the interviews, often sharing words of advice, and lessons learned. I marveled at her humble beginnings, and all that she achieved. When I sat across from her listening as she conveyed her life and academic histories, I

was impressed that she remained positive and upbeat despite the responsibility of being the eldest child, keeping her siblings in line, being a good student, and maintaining an active school life. Sophie was the epitome of a life-long learner. Never one to settle on what she achieved, Sophie the adult never betrayed Sophie, the little girl by becoming stagnate.

Inspired to become a nurse after seeing and interacting with Nurse Davis in her navy or seersucker suits when she was in elementary school, Sophie vowed to become a nurse one day. She started on this path with a decision to attend nursing school upon graduation from high school. Sophie never wavered and remained on the path, which led her from nursing in clinical practice to university professor. I admired Sophie for choosing her life path and career at such an early age.

I identified with Sophie who made the decision to move away from the cocooned environment in which she grew up for a more heterogeneous setting that allowed her to achieve her childhood goal of becoming a nurse. Like Sophie, I too was oftentimes the only African American or one of a few African Americans in the room. However, in my assessment, I believe Sophie adapted to this extreme change in milieu better than I did. She acquired skills that allowed her to flourish in this new setting and throughout her life. I have nothing which to attribute this difference; it may come back to perception. Maybe, just maybe Sophie's perspective was more positive than mine, I do not know. I was pleased that she found a path forward that served her well.

I returned to the vendor from whom I purchased the sweet tea. I purchased another sweet tea and walked toward my car with the results of my retail therapy in hand. I started the car and drove toward the highway that would take me back to Savannah.

Relaxed by the time I spent participating in retail therapy, I felt a sense of accomplishment having concluded another series of interviews.

*Setting for Tabitha, Contemporary Portrait*

I entered my car preparing for the drive to “Tabitha-town” in the Deep South for the final interview with Tabitha. I was not particularly happy with having to drive to Tabitha-town again. This trip, my third trip to interview Tabitha required that I travel once again on I-16. I loathe this highway! I spent 2 years of my life traveling back and forth on it from my home in Savannah to Macon State University, now Middle Georgia State University, located in Macon, to attend classes required for my doctorate.

This interstate route does not provide the driver with the most picturesque views. There are trees, asphalt roads, a few farms dotted along the way here and there, and miles and miles of road that seem to stretch on forever. There are no billboards announcing upcoming events or businesses to explore at the next exit. The only signs on the road were the mile markers indicating the remaining distance to be driven to reach Tabitha-town. The owner of one of the farms I passed flies a larger-than-life Confederate flag, a constant reminder of the protests and violence that erupted across the Deep South regarding this flag, its meaning, and its place in America’s future. I loathe this highway! I turned the car radio on to listen to Sirius XM radio, which distracted me from the dark thoughts and the path that would follow. I needed something upbeat to drive to. I chose 60’s radio; an R & B station that played the music with which I grew up. As my car ate up the miles, I sang and popped my fingers to the beat of the music.

Finally, I reached the exit announcing my arrival at Tabitha-town. I took the indicated exit and drove the remaining distance to Tabitha-town University. I drove up

and down rolling hills and was struck by the contrast this city has to Savannah. Tabitha-town is more urban in comparison. However, neither of these cities illustrated the urban environment to which I was accustomed as a native of St. Louis, Missouri. It took me an additional 15- or 20-minute drive to reach the entrance to the university where Tabitha taught. The path took me along a commercial area of the city where fueling stations/mini-marts dotted every intersection. In close proximity, fast-food chains lined the street; McDonald's, Wendy's, Chic-fila-A, and an Applebee's. There was a sign announcing the entrance to a Walmart at the next left. I continued to drive, and there was a shopping mall to the right anchored by J. C. Penny and Sears. There was also a string of hotels on the path; Holiday Inn Express, La Quinta, Clarion Inn, Spring Hill Inn and Suites, and a Red Roof Inn. I noticed no residential areas along this street, there were only commercial offerings. Another noticeably absent component as I continued my drive was a Starbuck's Coffee store; I needed to indulge my coffee addiction. I left home without partaking in my morning ritual of brewing a cup of coffee and listening to CNN for the breaking news of the day.

I arrived earlier than my appointed time with Tabitha therefore; I pulled into the college and drove to the safety department so that I could acquire a guest parking pass. I reentered my car parking pass in hand; I hung it from my rearview mirror and drove through campus following the path I had taken on previous trips to this campus. Tabitha-town's modern campus has large buildings, and I found myself wondering when it was established. The campus stands in such stark contrast to the campus where I taught at the time: modern versus traditional architecture; wide open spaces versus intimate and

secluded spaces; each campus offering its inhabitants opportunities to explore, learn, and grow; each different, however each guided by the same mission of educating students.

I took a moment to center myself by sitting in the parking lot adjacent to the building that housed Tabitha's office. I was reflecting on a multitude of things: preparing to commence the third interview, feeling a sense of accomplishment; yet fully aware that many miles remained between this final interview with Tabitha and the completion of writing the dissertation.

I met Tabitha prior to my interviews with her; however, I cannot say that I knew her. I was aware of her from a distance. I saw and talked to her at professionally sponsored events, but to say that I knew her would be a stretch of the truth. Many of my preconceived notions of Tabitha were dispelled during the initial interview. Prior to the first interview, I perceived her as aloof and unapproachable. These were my notions of her from a distance. Maxwell (2013) would instruct me to ask the question, how might I be wrong about my perceptions of this woman? I checked my preconceived notions at the door and refused to allow these thoughts to dominate any impending interview.

I now know her to be no nonsense, intense, strong, and intelligent beyond my imaginings. Her attire is most often Afrocentric, and her hair is in its natural state. I know her as unpretentious, a "what you see is what you get" kind of woman. She is unimpressed by the window dressing of others. She is caring and compassionate. There is warmth to her that she displays in intimate conversations among those with whom she is close.

I experienced excitement as I walked across campus. As I approached her office building I saw nestled between the wings of her building a beautifully landscaped garden.

This garden could not be seen from the main street of the campus or the other entrance I used on previous visits. The space this garden occupied invited you in to walk along the paths. Within the green space were bricked walls and artfully crafted stone benches interspersed along pathways. These spaces invited you in to contemplate or have intimate tête-à-tête. The garden reminded me of how I imagine Eden. The planning and plantings of this garden appeared to be a mix of intentionality and allowing Mother Nature to have her way within the space.

This bucolic haven was in stark contrast to what was seen from the main entrance of the college. Students bustled between buildings and scurried off to places that were important to them as I passed them on the walkway. The calm and the beauty of the garden juxtaposed the energy displayed by the students. I was keenly aware of the duality of that moment. I walked into the garden; sat on one of the stone benches and took a moment to just breathe. *Selah.*

I entered Tabitha's office building and was struck by the calm that existed within the walls of the space. I envisaged the frenetic pace and sound of campus-life within the building that I experienced on the outside as I watched the students move to and fro. I expected to hear the sounds of student chatter, people interacting, and background noise. However, the calm atmosphere and quietness of the building enveloped me like a soft blanket and the nervousness I felt about the interview subsided. I basked in the peace and quiet that I found in this place. I realized in that moment, in that space, and at that time that noise was my constant companion. The noise of traffic, the noise of the constant bombardment of information, the noise of requests being made of my time, and loudest of all, the noise that exists in my head persistently reminding me of all I have yet to do

before I can rest. Needless to say the moment was fleeting. I woke from my reverie and took notice of my surroundings. This was not my first time in this building; however, on previous occasions I was nervous about the interview and concerned about finding my way to Tabitha's office through the maze of hallways I accessed to get to her office.

On this day I took the opportunity to notice the colors in this public place. They were subdued tones of orange, green, and purple. Although the calendar indicated that it was winter, the colors of the décor of the building reminded me of fall, my favorite time of the year. I wandered with purpose as I walked to Tabitha's office; I knew I was getting close because the numbered rooms approached the number of her office space.

Finally at her office, I knocked gently on the door that was ajar. She acknowledged my presence, entered the hallway where I was standing, and immediately escorted me to a small conference room off the main hallway. Once again I was surprised that the interview was not going to be conducted in her office. Allowing the interview to take place in her office would have finally afforded me the opportunity to peer into a facet of her world that she held dear. I wanted to consider the art on the walls and the bric-a-brac that sat artfully on the shelves. None-the-less, I followed her to the conference room, my intrinsic good manners winning over my need to surreptitiously assess the content and atmosphere of her private space. I commented about the interview taking place in the conference room again. She laughed and told me her office was very small and that there were piles of research, student papers, and all manner of "stuff" on the floor that migrated from the top of her desk.

The conference room felt small and claustrophobic as it had in the past. I was aware of the fact that the peace and tranquility I experienced in the garden and in the



vestibule of the office building had been replaced by apprehension. We exchanged greetings, and I gave her a brief hug before we sat. She returned the gesture. I thanked her once again for participating in my study and assured her that I would protect her anonymity at all costs. During previous interviews we conversed without the cloak of using her pseudonym. She acknowledged what I stated with a nod. The conference room not only housed the conference table but also accommodated the office copier as well as the office coffee maker, doubling as the departmental work space as well as the breakroom. We sat at the small round table in the small conference room, and the final interview commenced.

I noticed she was not in her usual Afrocentric attire. She was dressed casually in a purple plaid shirt and jeans. It was Friday after all, and I knew she did not have class on this day. Her natural hair was artfully held in place by a white headband. I found myself wondering if the Afrocentricity of the way she normally dressed was reserved for public appearances. My next thought was that she was recently elected to a prominent position on her campus, and maybe her change in attire reflected this new position so as not to insult or offend the audiences she now accessed in this new position, *hmm*.

As I pondered these thoughts I felt a sense of disloyalty to Tabitha, to the woman whom I had grown to know. I was under no obligation to check my questions at the door or to exhibit an allegiance to this woman. Yet I remained anxious about these thoughts. I realized I was scrutinizing her like the others on her campus had done in the past. During a previous interview, she commented how members of the faculty and administration found her challenging when she shared her differing opinions in public forums. She also mentioned that students labeled her the “race doctor” when she spoke about race in her

communication classes. I perceived from these statements that there was a faction on her campus that considered her an enigma. I did not want to be like them. I wanted to receive her story; I wanted to be straightforward in the “painting” of her story, and lastly, I wanted to remain unbiased and allow her to speak for herself without my voice in her mouth.

In the end, I chose loyalty over disloyalty, loyalty to the process. As suggested by Moustakas (1995, pp. 82-84), I chose to “be-in” relationship with Tabitha, “be-for” Tabitha, representing her voice, and “be-with” Tabitha in our pursuit of being “centered” in this microcosm called academe. These distinct positions contributed to the development and growth of my relationship with Tabitha.

### *Tabitha*

*Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. Acts 9:36 (New International Version of the Bible)*

*May the work I've done speak for me*

*(Lyrics by Sullivan Pugh)*

*May the work I've done speak for me.*

*May the work I've done speak for me.*

*When I'm resting in my grave,*

*There's nothing that can be said;*

*May the works I've done speak for me.*

*May the life I live speak for me*

*May the life I live speak for me*

*When the best I've tried to live*

*My mistakes He will forgive;*

*May the life I live speak for me.*

*May the service I give speak for me.*

*May the service I give speak for me.*

*When I've done the best I can*

*My friends don't understand*

*May the service I give speak for me.*

*The works I've done,  
it seems so small,  
it seems like I've done nothing at all.  
When I stand before my God,  
I want to hear Him say well done;  
May the works I've done speak for me.*

I selected as a pseudonym for this participant, the name Tabitha. The aforementioned Scripture and lyrics from a renowned African American gospel song reflected the spirit that Tabitha displayed in service to others. Tabitha's character and calling is one of performing acts of "*kindness and charity, which she continually did.*" The acts performed by Tabitha are evidenced throughout this portrait and span from childhood throughout adulthood.

I began the interview with Tabitha by asking about her childhood. Who we become as adults is always revealed through the stories we tell or the stories that are told about our childhood. Tabitha was direct, soft-spoken, pleasant, and calm in her delivery. She was engaging as she spoke, I immediately noticed the rich, tonal beauty of her speaking voice. Her story poured from her mouth like rain water down a spout. She was forthcoming and open in the telling of her childhood memories.

She was born in Seattle, Washington and spent the first 10 years of her life there. Her household included her mother and father and two siblings, a sister and a brother. She muses;

I am a typical big sister. I was responsible for everything. My mom had me responsible for everything. You know, you try to protect them, take care of them. We did a lot of things together because most of the time when we moved to a new community all we had was each other. We didn't know anybody. I am the

problem solver in the bunch. I am still the one who solves the problems. I still do that big sister thing. Our whole driving force now is taking care of mom and making sure that she is okay.

Seemingly out-of-the-blue and not connected to the story she told about her siblings, Tabitha proudly stated, “My mother and father were married until the day my father died,” countering the master-narratives regarding African-American families suffering from absent fathers and broken family structures. She and her siblings were Army brats. According to her, “we moved around quite a bit.” This information is evidenced by the fact that she graduated from high school in Germany, while her father was stationed there. However, what I did not hear from her was the usual rancor that can be heard in the voices of many children of military parents. Tabitha took the high road; she considered herself “well-traveled.” Seattle seemed to be the home base for her family; she spent her elementary school years in this city.

She spoke lovingly of her father and saw her life in stark contrast to his. She stated, “My father grew up in the back woods of Georgia, some little town called Smalltown, Georgia, and he did not graduate from high school. He got his GED 2 years before I graduated from high school.” [Pride could be heard in her voice as she recalled this childhood memory.] She continued, “He got his GED because he did not want his kids to think that education wasn’t important. I used to help him write his papers and stuff like that.” [She stated contemplatively.] In response to the question, what was your father like? Tabitha stated,

My father was a military man. His father left the family when he was small and then lived in the same little town. His father would do things like walk past my

dad and see him on the street and not even speak to him. He never supported him. His mother was a gambler. She would go to all of these parties and take my dad out late at night. You know, he's 7, 8, 9-years old. She got him out three or four o'clock in the morning gambling and drinking. [Vitriol can be heard in her voice as she got lost in the reverie.]

He got out of the backwoods of Georgia by a man he started working for. The guy took an interest in him, and my dad loved to work. He loved to work because he had to work because they were dirt poor. If he didn't work he didn't eat. He didn't even have clothes. So, this guy got him in the Army. A nice Jewish businessman got him in the Army. That's when my dad began to see that there was life outside this little Georgia place that he was in. We went back to that little town, I mean Small-town is probably bigger now, but back then it was about that big. [Tabitha snaps her fingers.]

We never were hungry or without clothes, now, he didn't like to give us money because he was tight with cash [I laughed] you know. But it was hard for him to get it. So if you wanted food, we could have all we wanted. If we needed clothes, we could have all of the clothes we needed. If it was an educational thing, he would pay for it. If we wanted to go to the movies, he wasn't into that. You know if I wanted to buy a record. You remember [speaking directly to me], the little 45's and 33's? He would buy it for himself. But, he really was into the basic stuff because he said, "You know I want you kids to have." And he said, "I will always be here. I am not going to have my kids growing up without a dad."

Tabitha's relationship with her father and her thoughts about her father stood in direct opposition to her father's childhood experiences and what the scholarly literature states about the presence of the African American males, fatherhood, and family. McDoo and McDoo (2011) gave voice to this issue,

African American fathers are as different from one another as they are from other groups. They come in all shades, shapes, and types, yet the stereotyped Black father is seen—by those who are not of color—as a visitor to his family, underemployed, marginal to his family, inattentive to his children, rather violent, and plainly not in the family picture. In reality, African American fathers are as dedicated to their children and families as are men of other racial groups; some are models of perfection, and some are deadbeats.

An important issue is why the negative image of Black males and fathers is so strongly embedded in the psyches of lay and professional family social scientists. The reasons lie in three historical circumstances: economic isolation; enslavement; and the carryover of African family forms that differ from Western forms. The contemporary portrayal of African American men in the media only adds to the negative images. The ultimate reason is racism that they face throughout their lives. This racism has isolated them from the world of work and education and is seemingly ingrained in the fabric of Western societies. (p. 10)

The presence of Tabitha's father in her home and the impact of his presence were evident by her life choices. She was proud to admit that she was third generation military, having followed the military lifestyle of both her grandfather and father. Her departure from this family tradition was her choice. She chose in which branch of the military she

would serve. Tabitha enlisted in the Air Force influenced by a story that her father told. She began,

My dad should have gotten promotions in his later career. His boss looked at him and said, “Joe, you do good work but I can’t give a promotion to a nigger.” [I gasped.] She continued, this was in the 70’s. And so he didn’t get his last promotion. [This incident impacted her choice regarding in which branch of the military to serve.] So I told the Army guy my dad’s story, because the Army tried to recruit me. I said to the Army guy, I’m walking right over there to the Air Force. So, I went into the Air Force. You know there are not as many Blacks in the Air Force as there are in the Army and the Marines.

I deliberately went into service where I felt that I was going to be challenged and so that people wouldn’t say, “Oh she’s Black, that’s why she went into the Army.” My dad was glad; he did not want me to go into the Army. He said, “They don’t treat their people well, particularly women. He stated that I would do well as a woman in the Air Force. Yeah, he did. He was a pretty quiet type of guy, but when he did talk it was profound. Like right before he died, he had cancer everywhere, he said, “You know, I can say this, I am proud of my kids. Proud that my kids did well, you guys never went to jail. I didn’t have to worry about you guys.”

When asked about her grade school years, Tabitha regaled me with story upon story. However, the stories that follow are ones that impacted Tabitha. Tabitha’s elementary school years were challenging. The difficulty had nothing to do with her scholastic abilities. Although she volunteered that math was and remained problematic

for her. Tabitha's issues stemmed from her interactions with both White teachers and White students to whom she was exposed during this time. According to Tate (2002),

The roots of Seattle's long and still unfinished effort to achieve racial balance in the public schools lay in the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the 1954 case of *Brown v Board of Education*. In that legendary ruling, the court held that segregated schools are inherently unequal and unconstitutional. Seattle lawyer Philip L. Burton (1915-1995) cited *Brown* in a lawsuit filed on behalf of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) against the Seattle School Board in 1962.

Decades of discrimination in housing had created an increasingly segregated school system in Seattle. The Lake Washington Ship Canal had become a *de facto* racial dividing line, with students of color concentrated in schools south of the canal. At Garfield High School, for example, 51 percent of the students in 1961 were African Americans, compared to 5.3 percent of the students in the district as a whole.

The NAACP lawsuit was settled out of court in 1963 when the School Board adopted a program allowing students to voluntarily transfer from one school to another to ease racial imbalances. However, the effort resulted in little movement of students of color into North End schools and even less movement of white students into South End schools.

Tabitha's mother took advantage of Seattle's decision to voluntarily integrate schools. It was the late 1960s. She prepared Tabitha for her transition to a new school and



a new environment. Tabitha's mother wanted little Tabitha to have the same educational opportunities that White children had.

I read a lot. I mean, you could look on my bed and there would be about four, five, or six books on my bed. I was always reading. I was also into sports. I was always active. In fact, I was hyperactive, before Ritalin and all of that. I was the kid that if you had disciplinary problems in class, it might have been me. So the teacher would put my desk right up front, right next to her desk. I couldn't sit still, simply because I was bored to death. I have read the literature about kids, who are ADHD, and I look back on my childhood, and I recognize that I was ADHD. But back in the 60's and 70's you were considered bad. I got good grades, but I was labeled the bad kid.

When I was in the 4th grade we had been going to an all-Black school and most of our teachers were White. Seattle decided to voluntarily integrate schools. Black families were from the central areas of Seattle. All of us Black kids lived in the central area. So my mom decided she was going to enroll us in a White school. She didn't tell us this by the way. She just tells us that we are going to go to a new school and that we were going to get on the bus and go.

Twenty-six little Black kids get on this bus to go to this upper-middle area of Seattle to integrate an elementary school. When we arrived, we have people as we come into the school calling us *niggers* and *monkeys* and all of these different types of names, and we're going through all of these racial battles. You know, like fighting kids off and fighting all of the time [I question Tabitha if this fighting was physical; she responded,] physically fighting. We were taught that if

anybody hits you, you hit them back. White kids were taught hitting is wrong. But they did not mind hitting us. I used to have to kick some serious butt. I was in the principal's office all of the time. The principal hated me and really just wanted to get rid of me. He was a racist pig [She stated vehemently.] As a kid, you know when people don't like you. You feel it; you feel the hatred. They did not want us there. The courts had us there. It wasn't my fault; I didn't know any better.

I empathized with Tabitha as she related this story. I too was a victim of school integration. As a child, I wondered why I could not attend the school in my own neighborhood. Although I was thrilled with the daily bus ride, I remember wondering if little White kids were taking my place at the school in my neighborhood.

Tabitha's mother was as equally influential in her life as was her father. Tabitha's mother served as her advocate during this period. As an aside, Tabitha testified to the following story as insight into her mother.

Now, my mom was a rebel, I tell you. [She stated with pride.] I'll start by saying this, she got involved with the NAACP or some other civic organization, and she decided that she was going to join a protest group, 8 months pregnant with my sister. She got on a bus to go to the capital of Washington State, which was Olympia, to protest against unequal housing in Seattle, unequal housing and unequal schooling. She started out that way even before we showed up on the scene.

Tabitha returned to her original childhood story and continued with how her mother responded to the issues that she was having at this integrated school.

My mom got tired of it. She wrote a letter to the school and sent it through me to take to my teacher so that the teacher could give it to the principal. Anyway, it was funny; we were getting a spelling test. The teacher was sitting there reading the letter while she was giving us the spelling words. It was about a 10-page letter that my mom wrote. And my mom wrote things in there like, my kids are just as good as the other kids. We don't bite, just because we are Negroes. We're just as good as everyone else, and I want my kids to get a quality education. I don't want my kids picked on. I mean she went on and on and on in this letter. She still talks to me about that letter.

Tabitha's fourth grade school year continued to be a challenge despite her mother's effort to intervene on her behalf. Tabitha relayed another story regarding her time at this integrated school.

Do you remember the Iowa Basic Skills Test? I would score super-high on those tests. It bothered them [White teachers and the White principal] that I scored so high. They took me out of class and had me do another type of test just to see if I could make the same types of scores because they didn't believe that I could be that smart. Needless to say, I scored high on that test too.

Once when I was in the fifth grade, I did fourth and fifth grade at the school. I was in fifth grade and the teacher [of the class] said, "If you get 100 on your math test, I will post your math paper on the wall." When this occurred then you knew you did a good job. Anyway, I got 100, and I was so excited because I never do well in math, I still don't do well in math. I got 100; she took my paper and looked at it. She said, "This is messy, I can't read this, I'm not going to post

it.” Now there was another kid in her class, his name was Phillip Oz, who had what is now recognized as some type of learning disability, where his handwriting was all over the place. He couldn’t stay within the lines. He got 100, and she posted his paper. When I saw her post his paper and she gave my paper back to me, I took it, balled it up, and threw it on the floor. That’s all I knew how to do as a 10-year-old. I looked in her face, she was ashamed of what she had done and what she had said, but she couldn’t take it back. I remember that, and I am 57 years old, and I can still remember that. I remember the hurt, the sense of betrayal, and the why did you say that? Then I said that it must have been because we were colored, we were Negroes back then. That type of pain stays with you. You can’t articulate it. You can’t define it, but it stays with you.

The 2 years that young Tabitha spent in the White school affected her profoundly. Being the recipient of Tabitha’s childhood story reminded me of a childhood catchphrase, “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” The author of this phrase is unknown; however, we all know that words once spoken can never be unspoken.

Words are powerful. Words are capable of and often do inflict more pain and cause greater injury than the biggest stick or the heaviest stone. Words do hurt us. What we say, how we say it, what we mean when we say them have a profound effect on both the speaker of the words and the recipient of the words. Words have energy and power. Words can heal or harm; comfort or destroy. I am reminded of a quote by Maya Angelou, which she recited during an episode of Oprah Winfrey’s Masters Class (Winfrey, 2011) Angelou affirmed,

Words are things; I am convinced you must be careful, careful about the words you use or the words you allow to be used in your house. In the Old Testament we are told in Genesis that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was God and the Word was with God, that's in Genesis. Words are powerful. Words are things. You must be careful, careful about calling people out of their names, using racial pejoratives and sexual pejoratives and all that ignorance. Don't do that. Someday we'll be able to measure the power of words. I think they are things. They get on the walls. They get in your wallpaper. They get in your rugs, in your upholstery, and your clothes, and finally in to you.

The arresting words and actions employed by her fifth grade teacher were an attempt to thwart the spirit and stunt the growth of young Tabitha. Her mother's attempts to protect and advocate for her fell on deaf ears and hardened hearts. The social climate of the time wrote little Negro girls like Tabitha off as inconsequential. Our childhood experiences make a lasting impression on us. Our childhood experiences teach us to trust or distrust the people who serve as authorities. Despite the struggle Tabitha experienced at this school, change was on the horizon and young Tabitha would soon be transformed. She asserted,

I can remember the day that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed. I can remember that day just as plainly because my mom had not been feeling well so she sent us to get some Chinese food. It was April, 1968. When we got home from school, mom said, "Oh my God, they shot him." I thought she was talking about my dad. He was deployed at the time. So immediately I became hypervigilant and alert. Mom said, "No, they shot Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,"

who I kind of knew about a little bit. Nobody ever talked about him. Seattle went crazy that night, and I knew that something was wrong. I knew that they killed a Black person for thinking good about Black people. We went back to school the next day, and all of the White kids were nice to us. They were nice to us because they were scared. They were nice to us because of the riot that broke out in Seattle.

The year 1968 had been troubling for Negroes. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been killed in April. But in August of that same year, James Brown came up with the song, “Say it loud, I’m Black and I’m proud.” And people would say, “Oh, it’s just a song.” But that song was my metamorphosis. It let me know that being Black was okay, and I was going to get through it. That summer when he came out with that song, I don’t think I ever called myself Negro after that or colored. Seattle’s central area, where all of the Black people lived changed. Everyone started wearing the afros and bright colors.

People on campus wonder why I wear Afrocentric outfits, part of that stems from then, the time period, 1968. It makes people remember the culture that we have. That’s something that is still in me, the pride of my Blackness. Sometimes I get mad at some of my colleagues of color because they forget where they come from.

The balance of Tabitha’s academic years was “normal” by comparison and remained less eventful. However, insights into her personality were revealed through her experiences at home with her family and at the church she and her siblings attended with

her mother. Like many African American children, Tabitha's childhood was impacted by attending and participating in church activities.

The Black church was and continues to be a safe haven for many African Americans. The mission of the Black church is service to the community, service to fellow church members, service to those less fortunate, and most important, service to God. It is one of the few places that require nothing of its membership but service. The Black church provides a sense of community and connectedness in what can be an exhausting existence to African Americans attempting to assimilate and navigate the current climate of America. Tabitha explained,

I grew up in a religious household. My mom was holiness, but she didn't really raise us in the sense that we were true holiness because they have an anti-intellectual demeanor. So my mother took it beyond just being holiness. She wanted us to experience the finer things of life. Like holiness people didn't listen to rhythm and blues, jazz and other types of music. Church music was the only music that you could listen to. She exposed us to everything because she said "you have to live with the world." So she argued with the people at church all the time. She still went there, but she argued with them. She would say, "These are my kids, and I am responsible for seeing them into adulthood, and this is what they are going to do." I grew up with a very definitive sense of right and wrong. I grew up with the sense that you take up for people who are less fortunate than you and that you always remember that you are blessed to be where you are. You always have to strive to be your best, this use to bother me as a kid. As a kid, it's like, give me a break.

The Bible tells you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made and that God knitted us together in our mother's womb. When I was a kid, the old mothers of the church used to pray over my mom when she was pregnant with me. They prayed over her, and they prayed over me in her womb. I believe that whatever they prayed has had a great impact on who I am today. They did not have a lot of education, they didn't have fancy jobs, but these were praying women. They prayed safety; they prayed wisdom; they wanted me to be smart; they wanted me to be talented; they wanted me to serve God. They were instrumental in my life as I was growing up. There would be a prayer meeting and I'd be on the floor in my pajamas sleeping by my favorite mother of the church, but I would hear them praying just pouring into me. When you are a kid, you don't know, but you are comforted. You know that you are being taken care of. You know there is somebody there to help you. As I look back on them, I say, your prayers are being answered in what I do. So whenever I think I might be getting too big for my high-horse, I look back and say, these are the people who made me, these are the people who define me, and that is why I do what I do.

All of my childhood stories have to do with me getting involved in things and bringing other kids home with me. I was always bringing kids home for lunch, always trying to protect other kids. I always served as an advocate very early; my mom says that all the time. I was always out front. I was the kid who could memorize the Scriptures or who could memorize poetry. I would get up there [in front of the church members] and recite. We used to have Sunday school and there would be times when we could not get to church to attend. So my



mother would say, Tabitha, you get to teach the lesson. I'm 8, 9, or 10 years old, and I'm teaching my brother and sister.

The influence of Tabitha's mother continued to impact her life, not only by exposing young Tabitha to different types of music and church life. Her mother was purposeful to expose her children to foreign languages as well. Tabitha reads and speaks fluent Spanish thanks to her mother. Tabitha affirms,

My mom would say, "The world is bigger than the world we are living in. There are other people who speak other languages, but first, you need to know how to speak your language well." We could not get away with saying "don't got and ain't." When I was little I had a problem with words that had double "s", like message and sausage. My mom did not send me to speech therapist; she did it herself, she would just say the word and make me repeat the word over and over and over again.

My mom was ahead of the bilingual folks. When we moved to Texas, my mom had Hispanic friends; she wanted me to be able to speak with them. Sometimes they would let the people come by and sell goods on base, and the only language that they spoke was Spanish. Young Tabitha became an interpreter for her mother.

My mom required that we be well rounded. However, she did not get her GED until I was 10 years old. When I was in my first couple of years of college, she returned to school and got her AA. She went and got her associates and she did some classes beyond that but did not get her BA. But every time there is a class, she would take it. She took piano lessons, and this was just a couple of

years ago. She took a jewelry making class; she makes her own jewelry. She wrote her own little book and sells it in the church's book store. There is a painting in my office, she painted it, and people would walk into my office and go, "Where did you buy that?" I would say, my mom painted this. My mom always had the goods, but she wasn't encouraged like she encouraged me.

My grandmother had my mom when she was 14 years old. My grandmother did not encourage my mom, there was none of that. They had an I-really-don't-like-you-because-you-are-my-big-sister-not-my-mother type of relationship rather than a mother/daughter relationship. My mom never called her mother *mom*. She always called her by her first name. So, I didn't even know that she was my grandmother for the longest time. My mom was raised by her grandmother, my great-grandmother. She called her, grandmother *Mama*. Situations like this are common in lots of Black families. We had a large extended family in Seattle, but when we moved around, we didn't have them. So the military people took the place of family.

The military continued to play a pivotal role in Tabitha's life. Directly after completing her bachelor's degree in communications at a small college in central Washington State, Tabitha enlisted in the United States Air Force. She purports,

At every level of higher education, I have been dragged kicking and screaming. I really felt that after I got my bachelor's degree and entered the military (doing exactly what I wanted to do, public relations); I saw absolutely no need to get another degree. But, in order for me to get promoted to the next rank in the

military, I had to get a master's degree. I returned to school, majored in creative writing and minored in public relations. So now I think I am fine.

One day I am the emcee for an ethnic commemoration at the military base where I was stationed, and there happened to be the Provost for one of the local community colleges in the audience. After it [the ethnic commemoration] was over, he said, "I like the way you speak." I'm like okay, thank you. As he was beginning to walk away, he said, "I would like to know if you would be interested in teaching a speech class." I had never taught anything formally in my life. I had done military briefings, presentations, and talks. I said to myself, "How hard could that be?" He said, "We already have the book and all you have to do is figure out a syllabus." [Again, speaking to myself, I said,] "How hard could that be?" They [the community college] had some sample syllabi, so I just stepped into it. I tried it, and I loved it. That was around 1993. So I continued to adjunct and serve in the military.

Conversely, Tabitha was becoming fatigued with her current position in the military; she felt that she accomplished everything she needed to do. Peering into her future she predicted that her next job would be at the Pentagon sitting behind a desk. This seemed like a distasteful move to her. Additionally, she imagined that she would continue to serve in the military and move up the ranks. Tabitha asserted,

I felt I had done everything that I could do. I had dealt with national media, international media; I had written speeches for senior department of defense officials on equal opportunity matters. I had done a lot. I had talked to senators

and congressmen. I had done that stuff that people who were average everyday public relations people never got the opportunity to do.

I got tired of PR. One of the things about public relations is you spend a lot of time talking out of three sides of your mouth. You are always accentuating the positive . . . the positive . . . the positive. You minimize the negative even though the negative is there. Sometimes there is a lot of negative, and you just try to creatively pull something out of your head to make it positive or at least make it streamlined. I was getting tired of doing that for the military. I decided that I was going to get out, and I was going to teach [pause] I just made the decision.

I said to myself, “I could do this [teach] full time.” However, I found out that in order for me to do it [teach] full time, I was going to have to go back to school and get a doctorate. I was like, man, no I really don’t want to go back to school. I kept convincing myself that I didn’t need to go back to school because I had this military career. I could have remained in the military and pursued a doctorate, but that would mean that I would have had to get a doctorate in what the Air Force required if they were going to finance the degree. I decided against this decision. I said, “What am I going to do when I get out of the military?” So after serving the country for, as she stated, “15 years, 7 months, 12 days, and a few hours, I retired.” She retired but continued to adjunct.

During the next 3 years Tabitha focused on her ministry and serving her church. Throughout this time, she was presented with opportunities to travel to Kenya and to Israel. However, she continued to gravitate toward teaching. After 5 years of convincing

herself that she did not need a doctoral degree, she yielded and returned to school to pursue that degree.

I went back to school to pursue a Ph.D. I started picking up other classes to teach, my goal was to become a generalist in my field of communications. I had an area of expertise; I wanted to be able to teach a whole bunch of different classes just in case they had a slot for a generalist that could teach full time. That strategy served me well. It took me approximately 4 and ½ years to complete my doctorate.

During this time, I was finding out about the adjunct field. Many people end up in adjunctville, and they stay there. My determination was to find myself a fulltime position. I never ever thought that I would stay in adjunctville. I was absolutely determined not to do so.

Tabitha's entrée into academe was not by way of a direct route. Although her pathway to a full time position in higher education was circuitous, she remained steadfast in her pursuit. A classmate assisted Tabitha in gaining an adjunct position at Low Tide Community College and an instructor in her doctoral classes was the broker for her adjunct position at Old Province University. She affirmed,

A guy I had taken a family communication class from said, "We need some speech teachers at Old Province, and we need a teacher to teach nonverbal communication. Do you think you could do that?" Well yeah, I can do that.

Never one to turn away from an opportunity, Tabitha, went about selecting a textbook and searching online to see what other instructors were doing. She explained further,

In the years that I was working on my dissertation, I started to teach different classes for Old Province University and Low Tide Community College. I started teaching personal communication, nonverbal communication, and organizational communication. They asked if I would be willing to teach one of these classes online.

Online teaching during this time required that you sit in a TV studio and deliver the content to four or five local students and other students all over the country. You had no idea who the students were. Students were watching you via television. They had testing centers at the students' locations. You would set up your exams, and the exams would go out to the students via U.S. mail. There were proctors at the testing site to administer the tests. The homework that was required would be mailed to the instructor. You got to have a TA [teaching assistant]. I had 100 people in my class. You were paid extra money to teach online in addition to your regular pay as an adjunct, which was scrap, nothing. All of the training they offered was free. Soon I was learning how to use Blackboard and other online resources. The training was offered during the day.

Convinced that this was the correct direction to pursue, Tabitha continued to teach online and take advantage of the different online training offerings. She also took advantage of other opportunities, which presented themselves. She began to volunteer to supervise student competitions. On Saturdays or Sundays, she could be found volunteering at a university function. She continued,

I always thought of myself as full time even though I was adjunct. I treated myself as full time and thought of myself as full time. In fact, I was on that campus so

much that people thought I was full time and that is what I wanted them to think. I didn't teach there at night on purpose because I didn't want people thinking "Oh, she is just an adjunct teacher." So I made sure that I taught during the day, that was my whole strategy.

The passage of counter-narrative regarding Tabitha's strategy to be perceived as full time faculty reminded me of the passage of Scripture found in Hebrews 11:1 of the King James Version of the Bible, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Although a full time position had not materialized; nevertheless, Tabitha saw herself, conducted her actions, and thought of herself as a full time faculty member at Old Province University.

When I finally got my doctorate, I was looking for positions throughout the area. I didn't find anything, but I applied for a visiting professorship at this Christian school in Washington State. I was born in Seattle, Washington, and this position would afford me an opportunity to return to my home state. The school was located 2 hours from the college I received my undergraduate degree from. This was a totally White school. I mean, they might have had maybe a handful of Black students, Black students that they went and got from Seattle to come. They were trying this big experiment to recruit Black students and Black faculty. There was one other Black professor besides myself. You had to look three times at her to make sure that you knew she was Black. She taught Spanish. She wasn't on tenure or anything. She was very quiet.

I received the visiting professorship. I taught nonverbal communications, and I taught speech. I taught extremely overly privileged White kids. Some of

them were home schooled. Their parents could afford to pay the whole tuition. The campus had everything you could ever ask for. I had 3/3 workload. I could have had a 2/2 workload. They paid me an extra 5,000 dollars to stay there in Spokane. They had a thriving Black community in Spokane.

I was living on “the hill.” [What I perceive as the receiver of this story an affluent all-White area of Spokane, Washington.] I was living in a cottage that colleagues of mine had. I was renting because I was thinking about buying, but I didn’t at the time. Every time I would go up “the hill” I would be profiled. There would be cops wondering why I was going up “the hill.” They would follow me, I got stopped by the cops all the time.

I went into a store one time. I gave the lady a 5 dollar bill to pay for some tacos. She took the 5 dollar bill and held it up in the air [to look for the security strip]. I said, “That’s a 5 dollar bill, 5 dollars.” [She responded,] “We have had reports of counterfeiting.” I said, “And what did the gentleman who was before me pay you with? Why didn’t you hold his money up?” I said to myself, “I’m too old to be going through this!” I went back told the guy I was working for, I said, “You know, I like the school, for the most part, I like the students, but . . .”

In reality, I did not like the students; I would tell them all the time, “You guys live in a very sheltered world.” I said, “When you get outside of this world, you will see that the things that you say, the things that you think about minorities and other people are not necessarily true, and if you stay in Washington State on this side of the state you are going to be pretty safe, but on the other side you got a crude awakening coming.” Anyway, I wanted to be around people who looked



like me, sounded like me; I wanted students who really wanted to learn because they had to.

Tabitha's reasons and decision to leave the visiting professorship at this elite private PWI located in Washington State was rife with the same explanations identified in the professional and scholarly discourse examining why faculty of color leave PWIs (Sadao, 2003; Thompson, 2008; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006). Faculty members of color in general and African American faculty specifically are challenged by attempting to "fit in" on the campuses of PWIs as well as in the communities surrounding these institutions. The racial profiling, isolation, and alienation demonstrated in both of these environments can take a toll on the desire of the faculty member to remain in an atmosphere that is toxic to one's existence.

I imagine having lived for 15 years as a member of the military services, where the ethos of equal opportunity, multiculturalism, and fair race relations were established and honed that Tabitha's exposure to prejudice, bigotry, and bias required a great deal of adjustment on her part. This too contributed to her decision to disassociate from this institution. Quoting Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird (1972),

Education in the dynamics of difference is one of the most important stages the Department of Defense has undertaken. Most people enter the military service with insufficient knowledge of, and appreciation for, the culture, history, experiences, and sensitivities of persons of other races to enable them to function well in a multiracial environment. (pp. 1-2)

This 1972 statement from Secretary of Defense Laird spoke directly to the current positionality and campus climate of PWIs within the Deep South. Oftentimes

administrators, faculty, staff, and students come to these institutions from homogenized environments that do not require an understanding of other ethnicities or sensitivity to other ethnicities or cultures. Requiring tolerance by the inhabitants of these environments becomes impossible without an understanding of other cultures, a concerted effort toward acceptance, and purposely orchestrated opportunities for people from other races and cultures to interact. Opportunities to engage others from different cultures, races, and lifestyles must be presented by the leadership of these bastions of higher education. Multiracial and multicultural engagement must be more than a diversity statement or an element of a strategic plan that is never enacted. Continuing to explain her exit strategy and actions for leaving the visiting professorship, Tabitha portended,

So I started looking for jobs, and I did a few interviews at places, but I saw this advertisement for Tabitha-town College. What I liked about the college was that there was no communication program in existence. I could build my own classes and build my own courses, and they could be both graduate and undergraduate classes. I had not taught a graduate class in my life. I said. “It can’t be that hard. I was a member of the National Communication Association so I started borrowing from people [the professionals of her discipline].

I came down here and did my interview. I wanted to be here, 7 hours from my mom who lives in [the Deep South] first of all. For the most part I thought it was a thriving Black community, although I didn’t think they were very progressive. Some of the people I met I was like *hmm* this is a little bit too southern for me, and it’s small, but the saving grace is its 2 hours away from two

major metropolitan cities I can go up the road and go whenever I wanted to. So I started looking at it like that.

Despite the fact that this new institution that Tabitha was considering was not a panacea in comparison to her current employment situation, she justified her decision to consider this new environment based upon the enticing idea of creating her own courses and classes as well as non-professional reasons. This is what I do as a Black woman; maybe it is what all women do; I survey the situation and perform a cost-benefit analysis to determine my next course of action. I have been known to arrive at these decisions at the expense of my professional or personal comfort. Tabitha continued.

However, when I came in here [to her current position], I guess it was expected that I would come in here and be mealy-mouthed, be grateful that I got this job, be very quiet, and just do my job instead of telling the dean, the assistant dean, and other people about communications. But here is my thing; I was the only Ph.D. communications scholar on this campus. I said, "I don't get in your lane and you don't get in my lane." So I started telling them things that you know we needed to do, courses that we needed to develop, and this is how a good program would flow. This is how a communications program really should be, not what you guys had thought about putting on paper, because oh, by the way, that is not communications that is sociology or that is English.

I had to start out like that. I think I was put in an adversarial position because I had to establish my authority, and I had to establish the fact that I knew what I was talking about. So when you are really junior [faculty] dealing with

senior people who are telling you what a program should be like then you are going to have problems.

For example, [another] department had a program called professional communication and it's just a hodgepodge of a whole bunch of classes that are not interrelated that they threw together. They got somebody teaching introduction to communication who was not teaching it the way you are supposed to teach in accordance to my field. So I refused to teach the class because I don't want to teach it their way. They had journalism classes and film classes put into all that, so they were like let's just see what will stick, you know, throw it up against the wall. [Consulting her discipline], I would send them assessments from my field. I said, read the listserv, read what communication scholars are saying.

So I had to start fighting to get [communications] journals in, fighting the whole time. People who think they know what they are doing are telling you that you are wrong. I was 48 years old when I got here. I'm like first of all you are not going to talk to me [disrespectfully] like you talk to these 30-something-year-old kids who are just glad to be here because they just got their Ph.D. in hand. I said, "I may have gotten my Ph.D. in 2003, but I have lived this. I have all of these years of military experience so I have been a leader. I have done everything that I need to do. I KNOW what I'm talking about." [Tabitha spoke passionately and emphatically as she recalled this conversation of the past.]

So it bothered them that I was confident in my abilities. So [to them, senior faculty], I became the "cocky, angry, race-driven Black woman." One because on campus, I wear African prints, Afrocentric attire, because I'm proud

of my heritage. And after 15 years of wearing blue uniforms, you bet I'm going to bring some color in there. So I began to express who I was and that bothered them. [It bothered them] because Black students started seeing that and they were intrigued. I'd get evaluations that said, "You are the first Black professor I had; I'm getting ready to graduate."

This story as told to me by Tabitha reminded me of the quote by, W. E. B. Dubois (1903). It can be found in the forethoughts of this dissertation

It is a peculiar sensation; this double-consciousness, this peculiar sensation; this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. (p.2)

The following is an excerpt from a memo I wrote while listening to this segment of the taped interview with Tabitha.

My imagination and the muted conversation-bubble above my head during her telling of this encounter mused as I interpreted this interaction. The senior faculty speaking to themselves, "I dare this nobody to think she can come into my environment and tell me what I am doing wrong. I dare her take a stance and consider herself equal to or as qualified as I am. Who does she think she is challenging my knowledge and authority? She better stay in her place." This has been my experience when I have advocated for myself or my students of color. It is as if they, the White majority on campus, are channeling an ancestor of the antebellum south. They usually respond with outrage.

Just as Tabitha's passion was misinterpreted as anger, so were the spoken and unspoken responses of the senior faculty to whom she was speaking. Rightfully insulted

as the lone communications scholar on campus, Tabitha continued to eke out her place among her new colleagues. This elbowing for a place at the table did not occur without some bumps and bruises as well as some scrapes and wounds inflicted on the battlefield. However, Tabitha was a soldier; she was accustomed to the rules of engagement required on the battlefield.

One of my White colleagues said that he was concerned about the way our African-American students talk. I said, “Besides the fact that they use African-American vernacular or what you call Ebonics. By the way, Ebonics is not a grammatically incorrect language; it is actually a specific dialect that is unique to African-Americans.” I said, “You are not concerned with the White students in your class who say things like ‘y’all’ and ‘thunk.’ You are not concerned about them saying those types of things.” His response, “Well, yes I am.” So I started getting into all of these different conversations with them because I was the only one [Black faculty]. I was always the only one. In many situations in my department and as well as in my college, I was the only one. The population of African American students on campus at that time was 25.5%. I could only imagine what they experienced.

Tabitha interpreted these moments with her colleagues as teaching moments, opportunities to educate. Opportunities to eradicate the ignorance associated with existing in a homogenized environment; opportunities to expose her White colleagues to an African American academic whose thoughts and conversation were worthy of their attention; and opportunities to negate the media’s watered-down, stereotypical version of who African Americans are.

Because I was the only one, I became unique in a whole bunch of different ways and so what I started doing was getting involved in activities on campus.

Activities that I liked and activities where I felt I needed to be.

There was a committee called the Gender and Women's Advisory Council. I did not want to be on this committee, I knew this was all about second wave feminist agenda, and it was led by a senior faculty member who is avid second wave feminist agenda. It was her way of feminism or nobody's way. So immediately she and I clashed big time.

We clashed because I developed a class called Communication between the Genders. She went to the curriculum review committee to fight me because she didn't like the name. You cannot have communication between the genders in her mind because gender is a binary. It's a social construct, I said, "Fine." She said, "Well, you should know the literature." I said, "I know my literature. When you look at a social construct you still have to look at the people who are a part of that community who see this as a reality. My students believe there is gender so I have to let them look and see if they will still believe it by the end of the course." There are biological differences between men and women. We have to acknowledge that. There are people who believe that there are psychological differences between men and women, and we have to acknowledge that. I have to meet my students where they are. I said, "This is a communication class, this is not a gender class."

During the college level curriculum review committee meeting she cried; she cried because I laughed at some of the stuff she said. I laughed. I laughed. She

felt I was laughing at her. So she decided from that point on to make my life a living hell. I am in this to work. My whole mindset was to get involved as much as possible. Still try to do my scholarship and go on my promotion track. This was my mindset.

Tabitha's experience at her institution was not unique. According to Tuitt and Bonner II (2015),

The unfortunate reality is that many faculty of color willingly come to work with the full understanding that they are more likely to be scrutinized and held to higher standards (McGowan, 2000), marginalized, and devalued (Turner & Myers, 2000), and teach in the line of fire (Tuitt et al., 2009). (p. 1)

Faculty members of color in general and African American faculty specifically cannot escape the conditions and experiences such as those described in the aforementioned statement by Tuitt and Bonner II (2015). The academy remains a microcosm of society as such the misguided notion of a post-racial, race neutral (Lawrence, 1987), colorblind (Banks, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2003), and colormute (Pollock, 2004) academy has implications for how African American faculty navigate the academic environment.

Tabitha, like many African American faculty conduct their professional lives in a guarded and virtually paranoid fashion. This place contributes to the normally acceptable levels of stress encountered in any professional environment. However, the fatigue of being constantly buffeted and censored multiplies the need to be guarded. It becomes a vicious, recursive process, an Ixion's wheel of sorts. However, life in the academy continues and like tinnitus, the additional energy required for African Americans to



survive the academy fades into the background noise of teaching, service, and scholarship.

So a lot of the stuff that I do here is out of necessity for the students, and I'm not going to say it doesn't help to benefit me. It does, but then I have to take on whole new battles. I'm becoming known on campus and rumors get around, real or imagined about me being arrogant, me being cocky, me pushing my blackness in other people's faces. But on the other hand rumors also get around that if I'm on a committee I get the work done and that I have a very good relationship with students. Students like me. White students as well as Black students like me. I relate very well with male students.

When I started teaching my gender class, I started getting more males to take those gender classes simply because they took a class with me. Most of the students in my gender class now are about half male and half female. Most of their classes [with the opposing faculty that she battled with at the curriculum review committee] have maybe one or two guys in it. Because what you hear is a lot of male bashing in those classes because of the second wave feminist agenda.

I don't do that, I let them do a lot of the talking. In any of my classes I don't take my life philosophy and put it on them. I tell them, you guys are grown; here is the material I want to give you. Here are some thoughts that I have, but you don't have to share these thoughts. At the end of the day when you go home what do you do with what you have learned? That's how I have always taught, because that's how I've always wanted to learn. That's how the best teachers that I've had have taught me. They have left me to ponder the question.

The success of this class and the fact that both male and female students were equally enrolled in this class that was created and developed by Tabitha was a resplendent feather in her cap, a moment to be proud of her accomplishment. She had not only successfully defended the right to name that class as she saw fit as an academic, she also proved that she was correct in her insistence on claiming the position among her colleagues as the only communications scholar on campus.

Repeatedly, African Americans are faced with the reality that the playing field is not level, that our start line in the race is pushed back so that we have to run farther in an attempt to win or compete effectively in the race. We constantly have to contend with a playing field that requires we take on Sisyphean characteristics of always pushing the boulder uphill. Rarely reaching the goal, rarely reaching home base, rarely gaining an advantage equal to or surpassing that of the home team.

Tabitha's challenges continued with this contentious colleague as well as with other female colleagues who championed her rival. Although she had successfully defended the naming of her class at the college level, the defense was continued on the university level as well. Never one to face an opponent unprepared, Tabitha gathered the literature from her discipline and went in defense of her viewpoint once again. However, at the university level, her contender did not do her own bidding. She elicited the assistance of other female faculty whom Tabitha called "the coven." Notwithstanding the contention of this defense, Tabitha reigned in her challenge.

Once the defense of her course had been successfully challenged on both the college and university level, Tabitha approached the Dean of her college to seek

assistance. She was still having issues with this group of female faculty members despite the fact that the curriculum issue had been settled. She recounted,

So I went to the dean and said, “We have a problem here. The problem is I am still being challenged because of this course. I want you to tell her to stop. This certain colleague [she names the colleague] used other colleagues in the college in an attempt to harass me.” I didn’t know what to call it at the time but I said, “I’m being harassed.” He said, “I don’t know if I can tell her that.” I said, “I tell you what if you can’t tell her then I know somebody downtown, a couple of agencies, organizations downtown, like the NAACP that can help you tell her.” There was no challenge.

I went on my merry way. I got to my fourth, my fifth year and my two male defenders left the university. One accepted a promoted position at another institution and the other one retired. So I still had my graduate school chair, but these people were formidable. You didn’t beat these guys. Anyway, these women began to come out after me in force. We get a new dean the same year I was supposed to go up for tenure and promotion. The new dean is friends with “the coven.” She didn’t know very much about me.

For example, in my discipline we get credit for directing plays, that’s scholarship. Well, I had directed two plays. Two of the people who had made my life a living hell ended up being on my first T and P committee. All of the stuff I did for service, they discounted when they read through my package. The guy who was the chair of the committee was from my college, but he didn’t know anything about me. He spent one hour with me talking about what I do so he

thought he knew what I did. They [the coven] took over the entire T and P process.

When I read the notes that came back from that, it described my service as being satisfactory, as being stuff that I would normally do; it implied that because I was Black I would obviously be involved in those things. The second thing, for scholarship they didn't count any of my plays that I directed as scholarship. The book that I was writing, getting the book contract and having the book and stuff [was not seen as scholarship]; I had another book that had already been published, but it wasn't peer reviewed. The book I was writing had a publisher, but they decided that it wasn't relevant because the topic was again something that dealt with my Blackness so they marginalized my scholarship. They downgraded my service.

When I got the letter that talked about the vote, they voted for me to have tenure, just barely. They didn't vote for me to be promoted. When I got that letter we were having graduation and I went back to look at my mailbox. I looked in my mailbox and read the letter, and I just cried. I said, "I cannot believe this." My boss immediately fired off a letter to the President. I fired off a letter to the President that talked about how they demeaned my scholarship, and I said that this place is racist. This is a climate of racism in that you do not respect the work of scholars of color. They voted down a lot of people. They messed up a lot of people's stuff. They had to change the way they do tenure now because of those women. They changed the whole board in my college. It took another Provost to get here before I got my promotion.

I went through hell. To me it was kind of embarrassing in a way because I didn't get promoted. Other people that I went up with at the same time were getting promoted. I said, "I'm just as smart as they are, just as talented as they are. They are not running me out of here. I'm going to fight this; I'm going to make my being tenured, their living hell, which I did." So when I got my promotion, I didn't make a big deal about it. I knew I was going to get it. I said, "Now I'm going to pursue being a full professor. I am not leaving here until I make full professor because you cheated me out of one thing, you ain't going to cheat me out of anything else."

I think they wanted me to quit. They wanted me to run. They wanted me to lose. They wanted me to walk around with my head down. My mother told me, "Don't you walk around with your head down. Keep your head up. Don't let them see you cry, you don't let them see you get upset. You try to make [achieve] all of the things that you can do." She goes, "And you stop that from happening to other people."

In an attempt to counter this positioning on her campus and to heed her mother's words of "And you stop that from happening to other people." Tabitha made the decision to run for President of the Faculty Senate. Tabitha stated her reasoning for commencing her campaign,

So that's why I ran for the senate. I ran for the senate simply to be a voice for other people. At first, I was not going to run for President of the Faculty Senate, and then I said, "Why should I wait? They haven't had any women. They haven't

had any people of color. They haven't had any African Americans to run for president.”

Tabitha's campaign was a success, and she was elected to the faculty senate as President. She revealed,

Now some people are not exactly excited about the fact that I'm here because now people are saying I'm too visible. I wear this like I'm reigning in it. I'm very visible because I'm always in the face of administration, and I am not afraid of administration; then I've had people accuse me of sucking up to administration, but I've been through a whole year, and I've gotten a whole heck of a lot of stuff done.

One of the reasons I wanted to do it [run for Faculty Senate President] was to introduce and submit a bill dealing with academic hazing and bullying. To me, that's my crowning achievement [the passing and adoption of this bill]. Everything else is gravy. But I'm not going to stop there. I want to try to do as much for faculty of color as I can. Try to get them involved in leadership as much as I can. Like getting them on search committees and getting them visible.

In the faculty senate there are things I don't know. There are things that I do know. However, many of the senators will go to the Vice-President of the Faculty Senate. They go to him under the auspices of well he was the parliamentarian he would know. He doesn't articulate like I do. He can't command presence like I do. So I said, “Go ahead [answer their questions], President Obama got his Joe Biden. I got you.”

This need to participate, to get involved, to advocate for, and to protect is yet another example of Tabitha's charitable acts. This aspect of her personality identified in childhood remained evident in her adult life. Always the one to represent individuals who were marginalized, or perceived as weak, or whose voices had not been heard, Tabitha's motivations as President of the Faculty Senate, were equity and inclusion for faculty of color in decision making.

Though some of her colleagues of the faculty senate, perceived her as self-promoting, arrogant, and representing a "Black" agenda. Others perceived her as sagacious and conversant. Tabitha perceived herself as one who had the opportunity to highlight the issues of faculty that had been "othered." Her office in the senate not only allowed her access to university administrators but also gave her opportunities to enlighten those administrators from a perspective that was oftentimes muted or omitted.

When asked her perception of what it meant to be an African American woman faculty member employed by a predominantly White institution, Tabitha testified,

I think it means that you always have to be on point. You are always an example. When I was in the military, the Commander said, "The General knows where all of his raisins are in his Tapioca pudding." I have always seen myself as a raisin. Being an example sometimes is exhausting. Being on point all of the time is exhausting. There are things you know you can't get away with that others can get away with, but on the other hand I enjoy it because I enjoy being unique. I enjoy my students knowing that you can be unique, and they can be unique and that they have role models. I think that if I was at an HBCU I might get lost, although I

don't know if I would. Everybody can't go to an HBCU. We do need more professors of color at PWIs.

We have a lot of first generation kids that we get through here and they walk across the stage. They are emailing us and saying, "I got this job and I thank you." I keep in touch with them, and I'm proud of what I've accomplished here. That's why I left the military, to teach. People asked, "Why did you leave after only 15 years?" I left because I needed to go back to school, and I wanted to teach and make a difference in kids' lives. So that's what I am doing.

Tabitha exhibited no signs of giving up. There were times that she admitted to battle fatigue; however, she did not see this as a reason to quit. She loves what she does and recognizes teaching as a calling to change the lives of students for their betterment. Tabitha also recognized that all of the battles that were fought and won left battle scars. Yet, she continues to live, teach, serve, and create scholarship for another day. In the last words of Tabitha,

I know I'm supposed to be here. I know I'm making a difference. I know that God put me here and if He put me here, He will keep me here, and when it's time to go, it's because He says it's time to go, assignment over.

*Researcher Reflections regarding Tabitha*

My initial thoughts concerning Tabitha were true; she is a no nonsense kind of woman—intense, strong, and intelligent beyond my imaginings. She is unpretentious, a "what you see is what you get" kind of woman. I perceived her as being unimpressed by the window dressing of others. This too holds true. However, what was not evident in my initial perceptions of her was the level of her commitment to God, the passion she



displays for her discipline, her love of teaching, the depth of her Black pride, and the compassion and advocacy she displays for those whose voices are silenced, discounted, or omitted. She does not require acknowledgement of these attributes. This is a rare quality. Many of us are motivated by the accolades afforded to us by others.

I was impressed with this woman from a distance. However, now that I have had an opportunity to peer into her mind and her into her heart, I am in awe. I am in awe of her application of God's commandment to love. Much of what she does springs from her commitment to leave positive outcomes in her wake. In a world that is obsessed with self-absorbance and whose energies are turned inward, Tabitha is a contradiction in comparison to this position. Tabitha chooses to direct her energies toward the outside where others dwell. This can be a selfless place; however, as African American women we must remember the need for balance, a place called self-care.

Several things come to mind when thinking about what we can glean from Tabitha. She uses her awareness of the past and present conditions of African Americans as well as her experience in the military to inform her scholarship. She speaks from a place of knowledge and experience. She is keenly aware of the need to possess the required pedigree and knowledge acknowledged by academia. The military training she received while in the Air Force and the official motto of the Air Force, "Aim High . . . Fly-Fight-Win" remains apparent in all of her efforts. Last but not least, she remembers the young Tabitha of her youth and all of the people who poured into her then so that she would be the manifestation of their pouring, their prayers, and their hopes and dreams.

*Setting for Faith, Contemporary Portrait*

I met Faith through a mutual friend. She and Faith were colleagues at a PWI in South Carolina. When I met our friend, I had recently moved from a major metropolitan city to a small town in South Carolina. The move represented a quantum leap from the life to which I was accustomed. Missing the bright lights and attractions of the city, I found myself searching for other transplanted individuals feeling home sick for big city life. Just 2 short years after our union, Faith accepted another teaching position in North Carolina, I moved to Georgia, and our mutual friend remained in South Carolina.

When I was searching for participants, I immediately thought of my two friends. I contacted each of them. The friend that remained in South Carolina did not meet the research criteria, and Faith said, “Yes.” I mentioned not wanting to travel to North Carolina for the three interviews, and Faith did not want to travel to Savannah. I reached out to our mutual friend who volunteered to host us for each interview. She mentioned her need for a reunion and some girlfriend time, Faith and I agreed.

I entered my car and began the drive to South Carolina for the first interview. Arriving before Faith, I took the time to catch up with my friend. Upon Faith’s arrival we decided to take the evening off for an adult slumber party. We laughed and talked until the wee hours of the morning, and only concluded the party as the sun began to rise.

*Faith*

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.  
Hebrews 1: 1-3, 6 (New King James Version)*

*Great is thy faithfulness*  
(Lyrics by Thomas O. Chisholm)  
*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;*  
*there is no shadow of turning with thee;*  
*thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;*  
*as thou hast been thou forever will be.*

*Refrain:*  
*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!*  
*Morning by morning new mercies I see;*  
*all I have needed thy hand hath provided;*  
*great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,*  
*sun, moon and stars in their courses above*  
*join with all nature in manifold witness*  
*to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.*

*Refrain:*  
*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!*  
*Morning by morning new mercies I see;*  
*all I have needed thy hand hath provided;*  
*great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth*  
*thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;*  
*strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,*  
*blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

*Refrain:*  
*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!*  
*Morning by morning new mercies I see;*  
*all I have needed thy hand hath provided;*  
*great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

I selected the name Faith for this participant's pseudonym because I perceived her as a faithful person. Her fidelity was displayed in her faith in God, her faithfulness with family, and her loyalty in friendship. When we initially met she presented herself as a person of high standards with a moral compass. She spoke of her faith and relationship with God. She was not haughty or falsely pious. She simply presented herself, and allowed me to decide whether to befriend her or not. I found her forthrightness

refreshing. Additionally, she spoke of moments in her life when God had shown Himself to be faithful at a time when everything around her attempted to shake her faith. I had no doubts about the Scripture and song chosen to characterize her relationship with God. Faith did not withhold her views regarding the fact that she trusted God to orchestrate her life, family, and career.

I was fatigued from the drive, and the late-night slumber party. I was sure Faith was suffering just as I was. We meandered into the day and commenced the first interview while our hostess prepared lunch. Faith and I took up residence in the dining room so that we would not be distracted. I began the interview with Faith as I had with every participant before her. I asked about her childhood, and where she was born. Faith replied,

I was born in Mississippi, in a small rural area. Nobody knows where it is, so I usually tell people I am from Memphis, Tennessee. That is the nearest large city that everyone is familiar with. I am the youngest of 10 children. I was the kind of child that talked and behaved older than I was. I was very mature for my age. My siblings don't call me the baby of the family; however, one of my sisters says that I act like the baby. When people outside of the family meet me they think I am one of the older siblings.

I have older siblings; I picked up language, probably inappropriate language for a child. I had a history of using profanity at inappropriate times like around my mother. Of course, she wondered where I got it from. However, if you hang out with older brothers and sisters, you pick up interesting language. I had siblings who were teenagers when I was very young. That's the thing that still

makes them laugh. The neighbors would push me off of my bike or something, and I would curse the kids out at 4 years old.

This made me laugh. I have known Faith for some time now, and I have never heard her use profanity. This confession by Faith solidified my beliefs that you cannot know the totality of anyone when you first meet them. We are an amalgam of all of our life experiences and exposures. When we meet a person, it represents a snapshot in time. Faith admitted to me that using profanity was a part of her past. I laughed again when Faith admitted that she got all of the profanity out of her mouth when she was in preschool. The interview continued, I asked Faith to share with me the childhood memories of her mother, she replied,

My mother is very authoritarian, no non-sense, very domesticated in the sense of knowing how to cook, cooking real food, things that grew in the garden. We had real food every day. My mom was very strong. From a child's perspective, things never seem to fall through the cracks. She is in the same house she was in before I was born. So, everything was stable. She was able to hold everything together no matter what was going on. Apparently, we were probably poor but none of us knew it because everything was always together. We've never come home and didn't have lights or didn't have full meals every day, and bigger meals on Sunday.

My mother didn't hold her tongue. She challenged anything that wasn't right. She never upheld us in wrong. If you were wrong, you were wrong whether you were her child or not. My mother worked outside of the home also. She worked outside of the house, and we still had full meals every day. My mother

worked in textiles factories where clothing was being produced. Working in textiles is what she always did. She moved from factory to factory.

Faith could have very well been describing my mother when she described her own mother. Her interpretation of her mother made me think of my own mother. My mother was a woman who did not mince words, did not suffer fools, and did not tolerate wrongdoing. My mother was not perfect; however, she did set perfection as the standard. She too worked outside of the home as well as inside of the home. We rarely ate out, and warm meals were served every day once she transitioned from nurse to mother and wife. I shared this information with Faith. We both paused to reminisce, and pay homage to the strong women who reared us. The interview naturally turned to her father, and I asked Faith what her father was like? She shared the following depiction of her father.

Umm, He was very intellectual. My mother was very much a proponent of education. You have to go to school . . . the importance of education. His perspective of it was probably a little different. He was not just interested in attending school, for him it was the types of educational experiences you had. He was very big on reading and exposing you to things of your culture.

My father was college educated. He finished college. My mother finished high school. He operated a local non-profit agency that looked at welfare and community development. My father was community action oriented. This was not necessarily so for my mother. Education was pushed, mostly because in my parents' generation, if they didn't have the opportunity to get educated, they didn't want their children to have to live the same life that they perceived was hard for them. So, education was always a measure of living a hard life or not. My

father was college educated, my mother was not, but the same message regarding getting an education came from both of them.

In my contemplation while listening to the recording of Faith speaking about her parents, I recognized another parallel that existed between our parents. There was an educational disparity between my parents also. My mom finished high school and went on to nursing school; my father on the other hand did not finish elementary school. I always wondered if, and how this disparity affected my parents' relationship. I found myself wondering the same thing about Faith's parents. This was territory that was not germane to the research, and therefore I did not pursue this line of questioning with Faith. Yet I continued to ponder this thought. The one thing I know for sure is that out of each of these unions, education for their children was elevated, and both Faith and I benefitted from their desire to see their children have a better life. I queried Faith about her siblings. She reiterated that she was the youngest of 10 children. I questioned her about growing up with nine other siblings. She retorted with the following account.

I don't know how to describe it in likeness because I don't know anything else. I don't know if it was unusually loud or if it was unusually busy because I do not know anything else. But it wasn't like having 9 or 10 children small children at one time because of the age range between us. There were various people in the house at various times. Some of my siblings were in college, others were returning from college, and others were home at various levels of school. Some of my siblings were in high school, some in middle school, and some in grade school.

I enjoyed having siblings around. I didn't know that others didn't have what I had. I don't know what it would have been like to be by myself. Reflecting on this, I am glad that I had people around, and I always had someone to do things with. We have always been close. Observers always described our family as extremely close. My sibling that was the closest to me in age, we didn't get along growing up because we were the younger children at home with each other. But as she got older and went off to college that changed. Like I said, everyone described us as close, and I would agree with that assessment.

I asked Faith to identify the source of closeness that she shared with her siblings. She communicated the following account.

That question has been asked of me before. I don't know the answer to the question. I can't think of anything explicit that instructed us to be close or do this or that to be close. I can't recall any of those instances, but we were close. I can't think of what my mother might have done that someone else's mother did not do. We always looked out for one another. Always enjoyed being with each other. If I had to guess, maybe more than anything, it was probably my mother's character, how she conveyed how you should treat people.

We were close as children, and remain close as adults. My older sisters would get me ready for school or things like that. They were teenagers when I was in grade school. You did nice things for each other as kids because you didn't have anything else to give. Like a lot of siblings, we had normal sibling fights but it was never long-lasting. We fought and then it was over. We were jovial, we



liked cutting up with each another. We liked putting on pretend show and things like that. I don't know what other people did, but those were the things we did.

I shared with Faith that I am one of two children; however, my mother was the eldest of 21 children. This made Faith gasp. The running joke among my aunts and uncles was to question my origin because my mother vowed she would only have one child. She spent the majority of her childhood and teenage years rearing and looking after her younger siblings. Like Faith's brothers and sisters not everyone lived at home during the same time period.

I have always been fascinated by large families, and the birth order of children. Questions like, how do you carve out alone time? How do you process the noise? How do you get noticed when there are so many people vying for the attention of the parents? All of these questions and more occupy my thoughts when I am in the presence of a large number of siblings. I usually find myself in observation mode in these settings. Faith continued by telling me about the neighborhood in which she grew up.

We lived in a neighborhood where all of the kids played with each other. Most of your friends were outside of your family because there was nobody else that was my age. So I played with the neighbors. My sisters played with the neighbors who were in her age group. We were friends with and remain friends with people from our neighborhood. In the era I grew up in, you played outside. You went outside. You rode your bike. You roller skated on the street and walked around the neighborhood with each other talking. We went to buy candy and kept walking the neighborhood. I was reared in a rural area. There were times when the fields were clear, and we would play in the fields.

My neighborhood was multicultural. There were Black people, White people, and a few Asians. I have no idea how the Asian people found the small town I grew up in. We went to elementary school together, but as we got older, most non-African American children went to private school while the African American students stayed in the public school. I had lots of multicultural friends in elementary school, a few in middle/junior high schools, and a very few in high school.

I look fondly on my childhood. I wish my kids could be raised similarly. We don't have that same sense of community. I have neighbors, I don't know their names, and I don't think they want me to know their names. There aren't many kids around my neighborhood. When I was a child there were other kids in the neighborhood that you could play with. You weren't afraid of anybody doing anything to your children. Everybody was friendly. You knew everybody. There wasn't one house in my neighborhood where you did know who lived there, and there were 40 or so houses, and you knew everybody in every house. When you walked down the street, you could name who was in every house, you knew them all. That is not how things are now. There are things, probably philosophically that are the same about how I'm raising my children, but they don't have that same freedom to roam, the same connections or any of that.

Melancholy could be heard in Faith's voice as she compared and contrasted her childhood with that of her children. We acknowledged that the world we were reared in was not the world in which Faith's children were being reared. We confessed to one another that there are people in the world who are looking to do something they shouldn't

do. Parents must be prayerful and vigilant in their efforts to rear and protect their children in the world in which we currently live. I asked Faith to share some of the life lessons she learned as a child. She admitted that she had not thought of this question with any depth. However, she began by stating,

My mother never told me or said to me I love you until I was an adult. But I never questioned whether I was loved. I never wanted her to say it or longed for her to say it because I already knew it. I never once said, "I just wish my other would say she loved me." She said it in everything she did. I never questioned her love. It was obvious that she loved us. Even people in the community knew that messing with her children was not the right thing to do. Regardless of where it was, at school or in the neighborhood, you did not mess with my mother's children. If you mistreated her children, everyone knew that was going to be a bad situation.

The other lesson learned in childhood was an understanding that wrong was wrong. It didn't matter who you were. From my mother's perspective, it didn't teach you anything to ignore your wrong doing. It was a moral lesson to know you were wrong, and to accept it. There is a tendency in this society to uphold each other in things that we shouldn't rather than call each other out.

I tell people that I work with, I say, "I don't usually trust people who only have good things to tell me." I say this to my close friends also. I don't expect people on the street to yell out truths to me, but for people who are close to me, the people I share my inner thoughts with, I can't always be right. If you can't speak truth to me, I can't trust that. That's what I have come to value, true, honest

friendships. We are never always right. You should be willing to tell people the truth. If the people I surround myself with can't speak truth to me, I can't trust them. So I am often labeled a very truthful person. I am also labeled as a very loyal person. Loyalty is very important.

The life lessons of know you are loved, and admit when you are wrong and accept the consequences of your wrong doing were valuable lessons that Faith learned as a young child. Those life lessons remained with her, and show up as classroom lessons on professionalism. Those life lessons are also revealed in her relationship with personal friends and professional colleagues. Faith retorts,

I understood that wrong was wrong. It doesn't matter who you are or who you know. Wrong is wrong. To be upheld by others when you are wrong, it's not teaching you anything. It is a moral lesson to know when you're wrong and to accept that you are wrong. Oftentimes we uphold each other in what we shouldn't, rather than call each other out.

I asked Faith if she interacted with or played with the other children in her neighborhood who were not Black. She recounted

Very much so, in elementary school, but as we got older, most of those children, most non-African American children went to private schools around the time we entered middle school. It was certainly that way once we were in high school. The Black students went to the public school and, the White and Asian students went to private schools. Anybody who had not transferred to private school by their middle school years certainly did by the high school level. My older siblings went to high school with more Whites. But lots of White friends in elementary

school, a few in middle school/junior high and very few would be in high school. Maybe in the entire high school you would have one or two. All of my elementary school teachers were White, every last one of them. I don't think I had a Black teacher until I got to the fourth grade, maybe the third grade.

I asked Faith to share with me the types of employment she held during the summers or after school. She stated,

I had summer jobs; I didn't work during the school year. I worked the summers before my junior and senior years of high school. Usually in our community, which was small, a lot of jobs came through summer work programs. They came through the school. They were usually at some local business. Law offices, county offices, and other businesses participated. I participated in the summer work program. That is the only work I did as a teenager.

These summer work programs would have been one of the first jobs I ever had. I ended up working in one of those county offices. I worked in an office with a young woman; it was very pleasant. I worked in her office. It wasn't very busy. Remember it was a small town and in those offices, nobody needs something every day. In these summer positions, you maintained records and then you would have a lot of free time. I like the fact that you got to interact with people who came into the office. Other than that you just tried to find a way to pass time because there was not a lot to do.

Faith shared no additional stories from her school days. Any events that happened while she was in college or graduate school remained a mystery. I walked a fine line with this participant. I attempted to press her for additional information during the opening of

the interview session, she shut down the line of questioning I pursued. I treaded lightly, not out of fear, but out of respect. Prior to commencing the interview, Faith mentioned that she was very guarded when it came to her personal life. Throughout the interview process, I found this to be a true statement. Faith was indeed very protective of her personal information. She spoke of the demographics of her community and the schools she attended; however, she withheld personal stories or memories from her time in college. When I attempted to probe or go deeper, Faith did not become irritated or rude, however, her posture changed, and she became very formal in her responses.

The first interview concluded. I thanked Faith for agreeing to participate in my study. We exited the dining room and joined our friend in the kitchen. We enjoyed a lunch of spaghetti with meat sauce and salad that our friend had so graciously prepared. We laughed and talked while we ate. It was refreshing to be with these women who were both comfortable and confident. Needing to get back to our respective lives, we thanked our friend for her hospitality and said goodbye. Faith exited for her drive back to North Carolina, and I left to return to Georgia.

During my drive home, I replayed the interview from the digital recorder. I critiqued my interview techniques. There were times during my interview with Faith that I was reminded of how new I was to this process. Becoming a good interviewer takes time. There is a delicate balance between questioning and encouraging your participant to expound versus probing and causing your participant to shut down. While listening to the first interview, I was unclear about which process I had accomplished. Faith's interview challenged my interview skills. I did not know if it was her need to guard her personal

life, my inadequate interview skills, or a combination of the two. I vowed to myself to find the balance during the next interview with Faith.

Ten weeks passed between my first and second interview with Faith. During this time Faith's children had bouts with influenza, Faith was ill, and she had experienced a loss of a family member. It was a difficult time for Faith. I was sympathetic and prayed for her during this time. When her crisis averted we rescheduled the second interview. We again met at the home of our mutual friend. This time however, we each drove to South Carolina for the day. I was mindful that Faith was grieving her loss. I was also grateful that she chose to continue the interview series. Faith displayed her commitment to me and the interview process, for this act of sacrifice I was grateful.

Mindful of my vow after the first interview to do a better job of questioning, I found myself in a quandary. I had a need to be compassionate with Faith, and I had a need to gather the information for the interview. Right or wrong, I chose compassion over ambition. Our attention turned to her professional life, which appeared to be a more palatable subject matter. I asked Faith to share with me her background in higher education. I asked her about where she worked prior to her current PWI, she answered,

I was at a larger institution, a larger, predominantly White institution. I worked as an instructor there. But I knew it wasn't what I wanted to do when I was ready to lock in and do full-time employment. I worked part-time while I attended school and while I was working on my doctorate. Before that I worked in the professional world outside of academia, as a clinician.

I prefer being in academe. When I was in undergrad school, I knew I would get my doctorate. I don't know why but I just knew. I am sure it was based

in something, probably overachievement to be simple. As much as I enjoy aspects of my profession, there is a monotony involved in what you do. It is not always appealing to me. I prefer the flexibility in academe. I also like teaching.

In my specialty, you don't get to do much teaching. Not in the same way that you do in the classroom. You can be a clinical preceptor or something like that but that's still very different. Being a clinical preceptor is like hands-on demonstration type of teaching rather than classroom instruction. I enjoy the academic environment where education is appreciated.

Like Faith, I too came to academe from the clinical environment. I served as a clinical preceptor and found a degree of fulfillment by teaching undergrad students to do what I did as a professional nuclear medicine technologist. This clinical preceptorship was fulfilling for a time, but I longed to teach fulltime as Faith had longed. I appreciated my time in the clinical setting; it gave me the necessary professional experience that I take into and use in the classroom every day. I was interested in how Faith arrived at her current institution, she replied,

I came to my current place of employment in 2006. I applied to and was offered positions at other institutions; however, I selected my current institution versus others where I had applied because of the proximity to family. The other institutions were similar in what their focus was, whether it was research versus teaching. When offered jobs I tried to look at the quality of life.

I asked Faith to summarize a typical day in her life as a faculty member, she asserted,

A typical day for me would be coming in the office between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. I usually have an onslaught of emails to answer so I spend an exceptional



amount of time coming in to see what fires are burning and need to be put out. I put out what I can. If it is a teaching day I have to stop to prep for class. As soon as I am out of class, I return to my office to address a list of tasks. It might be grading assignments, responding to emails, or other tasks related to my job description. It's not really specific. It's whatever comes up for that day, because there is very little consistency beyond classes or prescheduled meetings, those things that are on the calendar. Beyond that, I really don't know what my day is going to look like until I get in and answer voice mail or emails and handle whatever administrative tasks might be on the table.

I asked Faith how she processed the uncertainty, she responded with the following,

Not knowing what I have to handle is not an issue for me, the biggest probably issue for me is not managing my time well. It really doesn't matter what it is, if I were to manage my time better, it wouldn't be so easy to go down the rabbit holes. When you open up an email and someone asks for something unexpected and you stop to do that and you don't keep track of whatever is on your list. So the uncertainty is not necessarily what bothers me, its controlling my time well enough. It's something that I need to do a better job of. I need to prioritize.

When I listened to this segment of Faith's interview, I empathized with Faith's situation. There are no typical days in my world of academe. I am in the habit of writing a to-do-list. It is a running tab of assignments and tasks that I need to accomplish for the week. However, I am easily taken off tasks if a student, college, or administrator contacts me with an issue that needs my immediate attention. I forgo my to-do-list for the

immediate needs of another person. When I return to the list, I often find that there are other things that must be added.

I wanted to capture Faith's position on her relationship with her colleagues, I asked her to tell me about her relationship with her colleagues within her department and across campus. Faith contemplated for a moment, and then began to speak,

I really don't have many of what I would call relationships across the campus.

There are people I am familiar with but that's different than relationships. There are names of colleagues that I know, but I don't have a relationship with them. I certainly do not have personal relationships with these colleagues. I may be fond of them or I may have served on committees with them, however, I would not consider that a relationship or mentors or anything like that.

I would say that in the college where my program is housed there are few more people that are closer to me that I would consider more as friends, friends and colleagues. When I look across campus it is simply a colleague in my opinion. Within my program I have really good relationships with most faculty, and work well with them from a collegial standpoint.

I am a very private person, maybe to a fault. I am a very private person. I am always concerned about my privacy. I have a distinction between work and my private life. There are times when I don't intend to be authentic because I don't think that parts of my life or even who I am is for everyone. I don't want to share all parts of myself with everyone on campus. I am not afraid to share. I just don't want to share that part of myself with you. I don't want you to be a part of

that part of me. There are people on campus that don't know me, and I don't know them, and I don't care for them to know me.

I think there are layers to most people, if you have any depth. But there are times when I will only unfold so many layers. So, if you have gotten down to the core, perhaps you may see me interact with someone else and think, is that who she is? The reality is yes, it's me on a level, because this is the only level that I'm going to expose to you in this environment.

Faith's conversation regarding layers and revealing different levels of her to different individuals on campus enlightened me. We all negotiate the relationships we have with family, friends, and colleagues. We traverse these different relationships based on how we perceive the other person as well as how we perceive their perceptions of us. When she initially shared her level theory with me, it came across as artificial or unnatural. Willing to see this theory through Faith's eyes, I now understood why she chose to reveal herself at different levels to different people.

We control ourselves. We control what we reveal about ourselves. We control what we choose to share and, what we choose to withhold. When we limit what the world sees, we attempt to manage others' perceptions of who we are. However, I believe this position is flawed. Regardless of our efforts, others will acquire a perception of who we are real or imagined. Once formed perceptions are difficult to change. Faith continued to share her perceptions regarding her colleagues and the academic environment.

When you think about the world of academe, when you think about where we work, I don't think of it as the real world. You have an unconscionable

opportunity for professionals to be lofty and pontificate and create a life to emulate a lifestyle of old. Think of commencement, we put on our big robes and we march in to *Pomp and Circumstance* (Elgar, 1901), really?

We get to be, no matter what we do in the classroom. Whether we flip it or not, we get to be the sage on the stage, the expert imparting wisdom. People really get caught up in that. Especially in some disciplines, there is this lofty, almost fairytale-like experience that gets created around academia that is not real or accepted anywhere else. Even the idea of tenure, you get to have this job forever.

Despite my perception of academia not being the real world, I enjoy the academic environment. I enjoy the opportunity to interact with colleagues in my program and bounce ideas off of them. I talk often with my colleagues about what I am doing, about what they are doing, and how they or I might do it better. We ask each other, “What do you think I should do?” We have the opportunity to not just impart knowledge to students but to share with each other. I enjoy the intellectual conversations.

Despite Faith’s seemingly opposing positions about the academy not being the real world as well as enjoying the academic environment, these positions are not mutually exclusive. It is possible to have both perceptions simultaneously. While listening to the recoding of Faith’s interview where she is sharing this view, I remembered an interaction with my colleagues that gave credence to Faith’s view.

During a fall commencement, faculty were lining up to process into the ceremony. At the university where I teach, faculty line up according to rank and longevity at the university. The longest serving member of the faculty with the rank of full professor is

the first in line. Other faculty members follow suit. Last to enter are those faculty members who are non-tenured and without doctoral degrees. On this occasion, there was literal pushing and shoving to gain place in the processional. I was stunned and amazed at the energy expended to gain and control a position in line. When I was told by a faculty member and physically repositioned, that I was supposed to be near the back of the line, I replied, "Relax, this is not the line to heaven. I have a guaranteed place there where pushing and shoving for position is not required." I relinquished my position in the commencement line and repositioned myself near the rear where it was safe. The interview continued with me asking Faith, to tell me about her relationship with her students. She replied,

I don't even know how to define relationship. It can be as minimal as an interaction or the empirical definition of relationship. From my standpoint what I often try to establish is a clear-cut understanding that there is difference between student and professor. I don't seek to be my students' friend. That is not what I am here for. I like a clear-cut distinction in the hierarchy.

As far as how they see me, I am often referred to as someone with high standards probably the toughest faculty in the program as far as rigor of the classes. One of the words that students use when referring to me is intimidating. I have asked the students that I do have or have had a personal relationship with to explain what that means. None of them can describe it. It's just a sense of, "She's not going to play around, and you are going to have to do what she asks you to do."

I asked Faith if she had a perception of what the students meant when they said she was intimidating. She replied,

I have asked to try to pin-point it and what has been described to me would not fit my definition of intimidation. So I am not sure, but the funny thing is they all say, “don’t change.” I have often asked the question because I often try to figure out what is it about me that makes me intimidating. When I walk into the room that’s often the students’ impression, upon appearance, they find me intimidating. I don’t get it. It may be that I am a no-nonsense kind of person.

I have students that are not in my program that I advise, students that are interested in my program. I talk with these students and that always goes well. That is always positive; students usually walk away having said, “You have been very helpful.” Oftentimes comparing it to what they have gotten in other majors or other disciplines, I feel like that is very helpful to them. I have seen some of my colleagues take advisement as something else on the list, something else to do, and I think it should be more personal for that student. I think it should be credible, not just something fatiguing to me. They come, and they don’t know, and they have such great need.

I was moved by Faith’s apparent concern about taking the time to assist students with advisement. I again, thought about her *layer theory*. She was exposing a layer of herself to students in need of her experience and expertise regarding her discipline. I interpreted this layer of Faith as compassionate and caring. Faith was correct in stating that oftentimes advising students can be treated as another item on the list that must be accomplished by faculty members. Faith continued with the following statements,

I like teaching about things that I am very interested in. I really like my profession. I was intrigued with it from the moment I got into it. I like sharing that information. I like helping students understand the information, and the importance of it. If there is anything that I do not like about teaching it has to do with those things that have nothing to do with directly teaching in the classroom. They have nothing to do with content or learning per se. Personality issues that you have to deal with, co-worker issues sometimes, but it's probably now more student issues than co-worker issue, issues with millennial students.

Millennials or Generation Y as this demographic group is sometimes referred to have dominated conversations in the faculty break room within my department. Whether eating lunch, or having an impromptu meeting, millennials occupy the topic of conversation among faculty members in my department. The reason for this may be caused by the fact that they represent the age of the traditional college students we see and teach in our college class rooms. According to the research of Rouse and Haughn (2014, April 25) bloggers for WhatIs.com,

Millennials are those individuals born between the years 1978 through 2000 and number approximately 79.8 million individuals. Millennials grew up in an electronics-filled and increasingly online and socially-networked world. As the most ethnically diverse generation, Millennials tend to be tolerant of difference. Having been reared under the mantra "follow your dreams" and being told they were special, they tend to be confident. While largely a positive trait, the millennial generation's confidence has been argued to spill over into the realms of entitlement and narcissism. They are the first generation since the Silent

Generation that is expected to be less economically successful than their parents.

(Rouse & Haughn, Characteristic of Millennials section, para. 1)

Much of the information stated Rouse and Haughn (2014, April 25) research was included in the conversation that can be heard from my colleagues. Faith was no different; she made the following comments,

I've found perhaps with the millennials, who seem, and it's a shame to classify everybody in one group because that's not fair, but there are some issues, enough issues where they are classified as a group. They have a different work ethic, a very different engagement style, and very different expectations from my generation.

I have had to be proactive in addressing things I feel are problematic to learning and thinking. Things like how to maximize learning by tapping into some of the things that may be positive. They may also come to the classroom more ready or better able to adapt to technology and things that I am very capable of doing and am interested in doing.

I communicate more, I communicate explicitly, and I communicate my expectations to them. I make clear what I expect as far as a work ethic and behavior. Teaching millennials has required that I adjust my communication style in my classroom. For them, I perceive that there is no distinction in persons. They don't change their register, according to context or person, and they should. We all do that. We all change register based on the formality or informality of the situation, and the person. They don't do that well. Therefore, I am very careful not



to elude that our relationship is different than it is. I make sure we maintain our teacher-student relationship.

I completely understood Faith's perspective of maintaining a teacher-student relationship with her students. We live in a casual and very informal society. I believe this gives rise to a relaxation in the conditions that govern relationships. There is often a blurring of lines between divisions of authority. When these lines are not clearly marked, they can be easily crossed unintentionally. It is my opinion that a degree of formality between teacher and student is necessary. My interview with Faith continued and we turned our attention to her scholarship. Faith stated the following,

My scholarship has almost been nonexistent until the last couple of years. Getting into academia causes a lot of things to come to a grinding halt. I heard people talking about that and encouraging me to protect my time. I am now trying to make more of a priority to make scholarship out of the things that I do daily since that's so much of what we do. The institution requires scholarship but they do not have a mechanism in place for it to be accomplished. So in the last couple of years I have been conscience of thinking about what scholarship I can make of the things I am currently doing.

You can do presentations or you can publish manuscripts. However, initially there seemed to be very little support to assist faculty in getting those types of things done. There are a few people on my campus that are successful, they get it done, but they are certainly the exception rather than the norm. There are a few faculty members in my department that have it as an art form. They do it

seamlessly, and so well. I really don't, and this is just my perception, but the flip side of that is I don't really know how effective they are in other places.

I am always looking for the ever-elusive balance, and I think that is a joke. I am always pursuing it, but I am never there. Something is always taking priority. What takes priority is usually what is going on in the classroom. I have class stuff. There is a deadline for this report, so I have to do that. So your motivation to accomplish comes from different places. If there is something that can wait, that thing usually waits because it does not have a deadline.

Faith shared with me her concerns about finding the time to perform scholarship in the midst of her other duties and assignments as a faculty member. I felt her pain. Balance, whether it concerns work-life or teaching-service-scholarship is an elusive place to capture. When I speak with and interact with faculty, this balance concern can be heard from many faculty members across campus regardless of their discipline. I asked Faith if employment at her institution had an effect on the type of scholarship she pursued, this is what she had to say,

I would say yes, to a degree because you have areas of interest but you then look to see how you can fit those areas of interest into some of the things that you are doing. It is harder to do a lot of basic research or huge studies. Many people are interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning where you are teaching anyway and hopefully people are learning how you can then take whatever you are interested in and fit them into those categories. It is not always possible but to some degree making and trying to make use of what you are doing daily.

For instance, if you want to look at things from the scholarship of teaching and learning there may be things that you are already doing in your classes that you can set-up as a research study and, then talk about whether or not those strategies, those techniques were actually helpful. That is something that most people in the clinical programs were always trying to understand, if these formative and summative things that we are doing are really making a difference. Those are the things we have to do anyway, so why not collect some data and, make something of it.

As mentioned before, my scholarship has certainly slowed but in the same instance other areas of interest have developed. The key is to make some of your interests and to make scholarship a priority. I think there are ways to do what I need to do. I need to make some very hard lines about things I don't need to do. Time or lack thereof has been the greatest influence on my scholarship. Time is probably the biggest factor but perhaps the reason there is not more time is an internal issue that I have not taken or carved out. I am sure that other people do whatever they need to do that makes them successful in the area of scholarship. I think I have fallen into the trap of taking on more than I should.

I identified with Faith's position of taking on more than she should. I too suffer from the same ailment. There was a time that I sat on 20 committees at my university. I was determined to make sure there was an African American presence and voice represented on each of these committees. This occurred at a time in my life as a new faculty member when I did not know how to say *no* to senior faculty or to administrators.

This self- induced service load along with my assigned teaching overload left no time for anything else.

During this segment of the interview I shared with Faith some information I gathered from attending a professional conference. The topic of scholarship was introduced. There were both male and female scholars in the room and, they were all African American. They talked about how they carved out time for scholarship. I was very interested to learn how they accomplished authoring articles and books. The general theme among these scholars was setting aside a portion of each day to write. This set aside time usually occurred prior to the sunrise, around 4:00 a. m. This meant that they had a bedtime of 9:00 p. m. Many of them mentioned getting up each morning and writing for an hour or so. Others stated how they dedicated their weekends to writing and, yet others set aside night time hours between 10:00 p. m. and 12:00 a. m. to write. As I shared this information with Faith, I could see her bursting with a response. She retorted,

There is still no time left in the day itself. It still goes back to does your institution have mechanisms that allow scholarship to be performed and, do we have the internal motivation. Some of the things those scholars described do not appeal to me; they represent things that I do not want to do. None of their examples were viable for me. The point made by each of these scholars was the morphing of their day to meet the demand of scholarship. It wasn't a part of their day as an academician that was filled with teaching and service and scholarship. However, I know that the rule is "publish or perish."

I asked Faith if there were any additional areas of scholarship in which she was interested. She gave the following account,

I am interested in academic success and development and disorders, which are somethings with a unique multi-cultural perspective. I am very much interested in the development of language and dialectical features in culturally and linguistically diverse populations. That covers a lot of different areas and, so does the scholarship of teaching and learning. You look at clinical strategies that assist our students in learning classroom strategies to make the content more applicable. Program accreditation as well as student learning outcomes is essential and, that makes it interesting to you as a faculty member.

When I think about the requirement of teaching, service, and scholarship, teaching will always lead my professional life. I think it is the biggest part of my job, probably has been the part that I have enjoyed the most. Teaching represents the time in my schedule that is set. Teaching drives more things than others.

I asked Faith if her attitude regarding scholarship had changed since she gained tenure. Her response was a resounding *no*.

I felt I had freedom before I achieved tenure. People mean different things when they say prior to tenure. I speak my mind to students, I speak my mind to my colleagues on issues that are hot button issues or not. I did that before tenure. I don't know if it is freedom, my attitude has not changed. I think tenure provides a sense of relief that so many of the things you have to do I don't think carry the same weight. I have colleagues who try to manipulate their teaching evaluations by befriending the students and things like that so that they would have nice

things to place in their portfolios. I didn't do those things before tenure, and I don't do them now. To be honest in the last few years, I probably do more service than I ever have. My scholarship has seen an uptick also. Because I am internally motivated, my attitude toward what I am doing has not changed.

Our second interview concluded. Faith had given all that she could. I could see fatigue on her face. I felt guilty about requiring her to drive to South Carolina for the interview. I had an overwhelming need to come to her aide or rescue. I did not know how to help Faith. It was evident that she was not at her best. Yet, she continued to persevere. She continued in her roles as wife, mother, friend, sibling, griever, faculty member, and other roles of which I was unaware. I wanted to help shoulder what she was going through during this time. I felt helpless. I knew Faith was caring for everyone in her family and possibly neglecting herself. I hugged Faith as she approached the door to leave. I assured her that I would continue to pray for her and her family. She smiled and walked to her car, entered, and drove away. I knew at that moment that the pseudonym I chose for Faith was on display. She was indeed relying on God's faithfulness to strengthen her. I was in awe of her ability to keep moving forward.

During the final interview in the series, I wanted to capture Faith's thoughts on her experiences as a woman at her institution. I asked her to share any stories or instances when she felt that her womanhood or gender was elevated in a way that othered her. She shared the following thoughts,

Nothing in particular comes to mind. I don't know if it's unique to my institution, but I always think about how my womanhood may impact how I'm seen at work or what I do at work. For instance, being a woman with children may require you

to delay your tenure clock. Coming into the academy as a woman I find that you're always thinking about those things, what your trajectory would look like and that is something a man, even if they have children, would never have to think about. If I am pregnant, would that time be taken off of my tenure clock? If you have to come off of the clock, is there any allowance for that. Men don't birth babies, and therefore they aren't concerned about those issues. So, I'm always thinking about that.

I haven't had instances where I've felt like this or that has happened only because I am a woman, but I have had to consider things that men wouldn't have to consider. Look at positions that may be available on campus, if those positions are 12 month positions, what I or any woman with children would have to think about is childcare. I appreciate the flexibility and the summers off that I currently have. If you consider moving up into administration, the university owns and controls your calendar and you don't. I am always thinking about things that are unique to women as I think about my goals at the university.

Faith's thoughts regarding her womanhood and the things that occupy her mind were an eye-opener for me. I do not have to consider childcare, and I do not have to consider tenure at this juncture of my career. Faith is the youngest of all of the participants of my study, her perspectives on child bearing, childcare, and their effect on career decisions had not previously been represented.

When I consider the changes in faculty that I witness on my own campus, I see that many of the faculty members who were present when I first arrived on campus are beginning to retire. These faculty positions are being filled by younger faculty members,

who like Faith may have to take into consideration the same things that are on Faith's mind as she considers her womanhood and her career path and choices. The conversation changed direction when I asked Faith to share any situation where she felt like her race was being elevated. Faith contemplated the question for a moment and began with the following statement.

What comes to mind may be based more on previous experience than having concrete evidence of some things, but it is amazing how I've had students who seem to have trouble using my terminal degree title. However, they attribute the title to non-minority faculty who don't have a terminal degree. Somehow they automatically assume that the non-minority faculty has a terminal degree title.

I have the title in my syllabus, and I use the title when I introduce myself to students. Yet, there seems to be a difficulty with them using that title. I've had other students in class get frustrated because their classmates don't use my title. More often than not, they want to use the title of Ms. or miss or they want to refer to me by my first name. I know this is not unique. I was speaking with another colleague of color, last month. Her biggest thing more often than not was that the students wanted to call her by her first name, not even by miss. She does not have the terminal degree and the students want to call her by her first name, which is in my experience in education, unheard of.

This informality displayed by some students makes you create a level of formality that perhaps others do not have to create. And that is good and bad, because those individuals are seen as more approachable and friendly because



they have not had to create those same lines of formality to get the same level of respect.

As a person of color, there are unique things even about the way that you may wear your hair. You have to think about these things because the norms in your culture are not considered the norms of professionalism in the academy. It is very common in my opinion, to see women of color in the academy sporting dreadlocks and braids. For some reason, when you see intellectual women of color in the academy, the style of their hair is often in dreadlocks and braids. I begin to wonder if it's an outward statement when you're in what has been dubbed the ivory tower. I think some wear it as an act of, not defiance, but of recognition of who I am. However, it is not always accepted as something that is professional.

When I listened to the audiotape of Faith's interview, this statement from Faith regarding the hairstyles that women of color may choose to wear struck a nerve. There was a time when I wore my hair in its natural state. It was not chemically straightened, and it was not straightened with heat. To make it manageable, I twisted my hair at night and released those twists in the morning for work. To add injury to insult for some of my non-African American colleagues, my hair was color-treated in unnatural shades of blonde-red.

One early morning as I entered the building where my office was located; a White colleague stopped me in the hallway to have a conversation with me regarding my choice of hairstyle and hair color. According to her she wanted to give me some professional advice. She made mention of the fact that although she liked my natural hair, she thought

that my short natural hair in its natural color was more professional. After the nanosecond required for the shock of her audacity to wear off, I queried her and sought her opinion of what professionalism was. She became defensive, and I was instantly insulted. This person had been my colleague for many years at this point in my academic career. She knew of my professionalism and had commented on it in the past. However, she was now questioning it based on my choice of hairstyle and hair color. Correctly reading the disdain on my face she apologized and scurried down the hall to where she was going prior to stopping me. I watched her hurry away and continued to be insulted. I never looked at this colleague in the same way after that interaction. In my opinion, on that day she attempted to other me based on the style and color of my hair.

I did not share this story with Faith during her interview; however, we did have a long discussion after this interview about this issue of personal or ethnic culture versus professional culture and, how they are oftentimes in opposition. We agreed that they should not be mutually exclusive. In the academy I should be able to honor my ethnic culture while simultaneously adhering to my professionalism and not having it questioned based on how I choose to display my heritage. Nothing was solved on this day, however we acknowledged the issue and decided that being our authentic selves was all that mattered.

I asked Faith what had been her experience with gender and race. I wanted to know if she had experienced the intersection of being an African American woman at her institution. She responded with the following,

Well, there are just differences in women period. The things that the world and the academy value in men, straightforwardness and directness, is never valued in

women. I often use the comparison between Marth Stewart and Donald Trump. He was viewed as a true businessman and she would be an expletive, the “B” word for doing the same thing. For them being direct, having high standards, being driven, and being task masters, they would be characterized differently. I think that is no different in the academy. People in the world and in academia say they value transparency, openness, and honesty. Instead, what should be said is they value those things as long as it does not inconvenience them. As long as it does not make me feel uncomfortable, as long as your truth is something that I want to hear.

When you are a woman who is very upfront and direct, you are labeled in a way that men are not. If you happen to be a woman of color, especially an African American woman, there is the persona, the urban myth of the angry Black woman. So any time you speak with any directness and confidence, somehow you’re angry, confrontational, and too assertive rather than being direct and transparent as your male counterparts are often seen.

Faith gave no personal examples of this double standard; however she mentioned earlier in the interview process that she was an honest and direct person. Given her views on how the same communication style is interpreted differently based on the gender and race of the person speaking, Faith has had some experience with the phenomenon. She chose not to share this information. I asked for examples but she was not forthcoming. I did not perceive that she was being rude. I did perceive that she was being protective of her professional information. Changing tack, I asked Faith to share information regarding her road through tenure and promotion. She shared the following account,

It was pretty none eventful. Many people don't do everything they plan to do as you prepare to earn it. I do think I was put in a position to take on more responsibilities than perhaps a junior faculty person should have been and, in that way probably limited some of the things that I would have liked to accomplish. When you think about what you want to do with your teaching, scholarship, what have you because of my additional responsibilities, it created less time for those things. But, nonetheless, it happened, and I was successful in achieving tenure and promotion.

What I would say is that I do not think that the processes on campus are clear. That's a campus-wide, college-wide argument. There is ambiguity in the process, and I think it's designed to be that way. When I looked at the process, I read what it said and felt like I had an understanding, even without specifics. I took it to mean if there were no specifics. That is what I would have stood on should I not have been granted tenure and promotion.

I can't remember the specifics now because the document describing the tenure and promotion process has changed. When I applied for tenure and promotion the document required that the applicant needed to excel in at least two of the three areas of teaching, service, or scholarship. I had accomplished that. What does exceeding in one of these areas mean? Is it teaching evaluations? Since they were not specific in how these areas should be evaluated or measured, I documented my excellence in those areas as I deemed necessary. It didn't bother me that that the document did not state that tenure and promotion process required one article, three committees. The non-quantitative nature of it did not bother me.

Faith's tenure and promotion process proceeded without incident. She interpreted the how-to instructions, prepared the document, and sought and received tenure and promotion. Her accomplishment in this area led me to ask her about her future or her plans at her institution or in academe. She was contemplative for a moment and then she responded,

You know, I really don't have a plan. Where I see myself now, there does not seem to be a clear path beyond where I am now. For instance, some people would say, if I'm department head in 5 years, then I want to look for an assistant dean or dean's position. There is nothing I am looking for in the academy beyond where I am now. But I have been thinking about how I reinvent myself. Perhaps reinvent is not the right word, revive my interest might be better. One of the things I have been thinking about lately is that my future might not be in the academy or at my current institution. I don't know. The fact that I don't have any desire beyond this point, encourages me to think about the next steps. The next level into administration is not something that I find interesting.

I perceive that managing faculty would be like wrangling cats. I don't want that. In different circumstances, perhaps in my past framework, that would have not been as big of an issue for me, but in our current framework and considering how the programs in my college are being grouped and aligned, it would have to be a divine assignment. I wouldn't want to deal with the personalities. I have the pedigree, but people don't often get over your youth, your race, and your realness. Those are things I can't do anything about.

When listening to Faith's interview and reading the transcript of her interview, I laughed when she mentioned pursuing the department head position or managing faculty would have to be a divine assignment. I completely understood this sentiment. I felt the same way about returning to school to acquire my doctorate. I said aloud while reviewing and re-familiarizing myself with Faith's interview that she had better be mindful, the very things that we cannot imagine ourselves doing are the very things that becomes our divine assignment.

The interview continued with the following question to Faith. What does it mean for you to be an African American woman employed as a faculty member at a predominately White institution? Again faith was contemplative. Then she spoke,

I don't know if I've thought about it often. I never wanted to work at a minority institution. I appreciate other students of color getting to see somebody that looks like them. I have often been the only Black professor that some students have ever had. So, I don't think much about working at my institution. I never asked myself whether I wanted to work for a predominantly White institution or an HBCU. My education had always been at majority White institutions. So I didn't have any aversion to it. I saw the benefit to being at predominantly White institutions, especially in a profession where African Americans are a tiny minority. To me, it is beneficial for that to be seen. Teaching at a predominantly White institution as an African American is beneficial to the students you teach. I believe students of color see you as an example of what can be achieved and White students who have not been taught by an African American woman faculty member gain a broader perspective as it relates to race and gender.

Like Faith, I have spent both my academic life and a portion of my professional life employed by a predominantly White institution. What I must admit is that the rules of engagement as a professional were not always clear. I had to find my way and become comfortable with being one among a few African American faculty members. Initially it was like groping around in the dark looking for the light switch that you expected to be on the wall but finding it on the floor. My motto during this time was, expect the unexpected.

I asked Faith what recommendations she would offer to other African American women faculty considering employment at her institution. Again, she was introspective. Then she began to speak,

I would say know your goals. I would say this to anybody coming into this institution if you want to stay here, if you want tenure here, you need to find yourself a mentor that can show how to protect your time and your agenda or plan to be successful. It's easy to become side-tracked. Black women are least likely to be tenured on any campus, so states the research. This holds true even when compared to Black men who usually have a tough time with everything.

For me the thing that has been most beneficial to me and perhaps with other people is to know who you are and what you stand for. Know what your non-negotiables are. Those things are easily shaped by environment. It's easy to fall into the pressures of what you think students want and what those above you want.

I remember, uniquely, even from people of color. Wanting me to do things in certain ways and that just wasn't my way. So you have to know what you

value, what you stand for, and stand on it. I came into my institution knowing that whatever you get you're going to have to look for, ask for because there may not be many people looking at you wanting to elevate you. So you will have to keep your eyes open, your ears open, and look for opportunities to broaden your skillset. That's what I would offer as recommendations to other African American faculty.

I was not mentored, not even by other people of color. I think people are busy doing what they are trying to do. I don't think there was any maliciousness. I just think people are busy and trying to put out their fires. I sought out a couple of people to talk to myself just to get an idea of the things regarding tenure and promotion because the university had no formal process. Also, there was no explicit mentoring by other people. Again, that's few and far between, to find already tenured African American faculty on campus. When I came to my institution, there were only two people that were both tenured and African American out of the entire faculty.

Also you are pulled and asked to do a lot of things. Maybe that's another suggestion for a person coming to a predominantly White institution. There being so few people of color, every committee, every search wants a diverse representation, and you'll be tapped to do everything. You have to know how to protect your time in that way. That may have been what was also happening to other people of color, you're being pulled in every direction in addition to the work you are required to do.



I asked Faith what she would say to the administrators, colleagues, and students at her institution regarding their role as it impacted her professional world. Again, she was reflective prior to speaking. She affirmed,

Most mission statements, at any academy, state something about diversity, educating students who have intercultural competence, and who are capable of working in the global market. If administrators are serious about that, then you know that includes diverse faculty on campus. So you have a plan to recruit, to support, and to retain diverse faculty on this campus? Is the plan on that done with enough authenticity that other administrators, your deans, and your cabinet members buy into, because that is not evident on my campus? I wouldn't say it is evident on many campuses of predominantly White institutions.

You can come up with 60 excuses if you want as to why people don't stay or don't come because I have heard those too. But my question would be, "Can you show evidence that you've done your due diligence to bring and retain a diverse faculty?" If you can honestly say that you have done your due diligence to attract, support, and retain faculty of color on this campus, which does not include reactive measures. Reactive measures that attempt to retain faculty of color when they have decided to leave the institution is not a plan, it is a reaction to the flight of faculty of color.

To my colleagues I would ask, "Have you honestly and privately self-evaluated your own biases and thoughts about people of color?" Whether you have or not, it will come out. Biases get institutionalized you can't help it. You can't help but say things that you think are complimentary when in actuality they

are an insult. I remember a colleague stopping me on my campus to ask me my name and to “compliment” on looking ethnic and regal. What was that about? What did she mean? Was she referring to my hair being in twists? Other African American colleagues have had other non-African American colleagues comment adversely about their dreadlocks.

In some people’s mind having a diverse department is not something that the administration or university should be bothered with. They don’t think it’s necessary to carry out the mission of the institution. I have questions for my colleagues. You don’t work with administrators each day. You work in departments and in programs. I would tell my colleagues to evaluate your surroundings, evaluate your own biases, and to question whether they create an environment where anyone would want to work, which includes people of color. Oftentimes we are the only one in our program, and you may think that is not a problem because you have never lived in a world where you are the minority. It can be isolating.

Lastly, I would ask them, “Have you recognized the perspective of others? Have you evaluated your own intercultural competence?” This would help you to think about the experiences of others and how you might impact their experience positively. If you have experienced certain things, you think about those things you have experienced when you arrive on campus. If you have not experienced those things, are you at least culturally competent enough to know that it might be the experience of those around you?

I don't have a lot that I would say to students because I think the way I carry out class says everything that I need to know. As they come in and try to figure out who they are and what they want to do, I establish out of the gate who I am and how we will interact. I don't think there is a unified message to all students. I think it is obvious to them after a short while that I am qualified, that I know what I am doing, and that they will respect that. I put those measures into place and they know and they quickly know that that's the case with me. There is not a whole lot beyond that. I don't struggle with interactions with students. There is a reason why African American faculty create the teacher-student formality more so than other colleagues, I think. Other non-African American faculty don't have to fight for students' respect and their recognition of you as faculty.

When Faith finished speaking, I told her an incident that occurred between me and a student at my institution. The incident occurred at the spring graduation ceremony. I was descending the stairs where faculty assembled to process into the ceremony when I was stopped by a student usher who prevented me from descending the stairs. I was dressed in regalia, yet the student was curt in his redirection of me to the student area. He said to me, "You can't be downstairs, downstairs is for faculty only." I replied, "I am not a student, I am faculty, and I know where I am going and where I should be!" The student did not acknowledge or apologize for his mistake, and he showed no remorse for the curt manner in which he spoke to me. In that moment my initial processing of the occurrence was that the student did not see me as someone that could be a faculty member. He automatically assumed I did not belong with faculty. Faith acknowledged my assessment of the situation and commented. "They do not understand the institutionalized racist

nature of what they do or say. It is so much a part of everyday life for some people. They don't even understand the injustice that's around them." Our last interview was ending, and I asked Faith to define success. She commented,

It used to be things. If I accomplish these things I saw myself as successful. But to be honest, now success for me is being comfortable with what I'm doing. At one point, if you'd asked me, it probably would have been certain things that I would have wanted to accomplish in scholarship, teaching, or service to see myself as successful. Now it is just being comfortable in what I am doing. When I'm enjoying what I'm doing, and I'm teaching, and I am teaching well. When I am doing the things that are on my plate and I am doing them well, and that I am appreciated and compensated accordingly then I feel at peace and accomplished in what I am doing.

I asked Faith that given her definition of success, if she felt as though she had achieved success, she stated the following.

Oh no! I think that I do them well, but I'm certainly not compensated accordingly. As far as appreciation goes, appreciation from an administrative standpoint, no. I think they are glad there is someone to do the work. But I do not think there is any authentic appreciation for what has been accomplished. When there is authentic appreciation, that's lived out in some way, there is something that comes out of it. Some act of appreciation. I think people are glad to have somebody to do the work.

I asked Faith if she has any final thoughts. Once again she pondered the question prior to answering. Then she had this to say,

I wonder when our universities will become serious about creating the kind of environment and the types of students that all of our mission statements say we want. One of my pet peeves is doing things for the sake of doing them. I just see that as a waste of energy and time. So much of what gets done these days in any venue, people do things to say, “We have this and our mission says this.” Live out your mission is what I would say. Take tangible, concrete steps to live out every aspect of your mission. Currently we are just talking, and we are very far from carrying out the stated mission.

Interview three concluded. We said our goodbyes and vowed to do a better job at keeping in touch with one another. I knew in that moment that we would be hard pressed to keep this vow. I knew our lives would continue to take us in diverging directions. However, what I knew for sure is that I had been in the presence of friends who cared about me and whom I too cared.

#### *Researcher Reflections regarding Faith*

Each drive to South Carolina to conduct the three interviews was uneventful. I took I-95 North until I arrived at the city where my friend lived. I drove to my friend’s home straightway without the usual meandering because I was lost or because I wanted to explore an interesting place I saw during my drive. I knew the directions to my friend’s home like the back of my hand. Although time passed since my last visit, I drove to her home in familiar territory.

Admittedly as stated at differing times during the interviews, this was a challenging series of interviews for me to accomplish. The difficulty had nothing to do with logistics. Faith and I continued to meet at our friend’s home in South Carolina. We

both chose to drive to South Carolina from our respective home states. What made this interview series difficult was the natural inclination of the participant to be private about and protective of her personal life and professional information. There were times during the interviews that I felt as though I was violating the unspoken rules that had guided our relationship. Faith and I have known each other for over 10 years; however, our relationship was not of a probative nature.

Over the years Faith and I held conversations with one another about our work, the institutions that employed us, our faith, family, and friends. However, our conversations were not prodding. I respected Faith's boundaries about her privacy. Yet during the interviews I needed information that only she could provide. So there were times when I nudged her. There were times when I pressed her to expound on something that she said. During some of these times, Faith responded favorably. During other times she was cautious.

This push and pull continued to be a tension of which I was aware during the interview series with Faith. How could I gather the required information needed and yet preserve Faith's desire to remain private? Were these two positions mutually exclusive, did one require the sacrifice of the other? Should I ignore the participant's need for my own? What came to mind was Clark Moustakas (1995), whose sage advice suggested, "Being-in," "Being-for," and Being-with" (pp. 82-84) the participants to build relationships. I concentrated on this advice and directed my full attention on Faith. The information would come forth. Where I perceived that I could, I probed. When I probed and Faith responded with signals of "do not go there," I backed away. Right or wrong, this is the dance that I performed during this series of interviews.

In the end, I concluded that it would have been a less stressful series of interviews if I had not had a pre-existing relationship with Faith. I could have remained neutral. I could have concentrated on asking the interview questions and receiving the answers only. My compassion for Faith's state of being may have gotten in the way of ascertaining the information I needed. I remained unsure. Could I have done a better job interviewing all participants? Absolutely!

*Setting for Shalom, Contemporary Portrait*

I saw Shalom at an annual event celebrating the achievements of faculty in higher education. I was introduced to her at the same event in a previous year. On this occasion, she was sitting alone reviewing a presentation that she would deliver during the program. I interrupted her to speak, I wanted to say hello and wish her well. I apologized for distracting her. She smiled and thanked me for taking the opportunity to speak to her. I was immediately moved by the fact that she did not mind being interrupted.

I took note of the aura of calm that emanated from her despite being surrounded by the festiveness of the meet and greet. I continued by sharing my research with her and asked if she would consider being a participant. Without hesitation she replied with a soft spoken, "Yes, I would love to." She gave me her contact information, and I told her I would reach out to her with the details of the research. I bid her farewell and watched as she returned her attention to reviewing the presentation. I walked away from Shalom and continued to meet and greet other colleagues who were in attendance.

I observed the peace and serenity that exuded from Shalom each time we saw each other at that annual event. I perceived that her quietude emanated from a place deep within her. The tranquility that radiated from this participant spread to everyone who

entered her presence. For this reason, I chose Shalom as her pseudonym. According to *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Strong, 2010) shalom is a Hebrew word that means “completeness, soundness, welfare, peace” (p. 1575).

Shalom is applicable to an internal sense of peace within the individual. Peace is a deeper place than calm. It can exist in the midst of chaos and calamity. Peace is independent of a state of happiness or circumstances beyond one's control.

Approximately one week after I saw Shalom I contacted her to arrange the interview series. We spoke at length about my research, and we set the day for the first interview. She gave me the address and directions to her home. After discussing the interview specifics, our conversation ended. We said our goodbyes and concluded the telephone call.

The drive to Shalom-hamlet, Georgia was not difficult; however, the drive took me through every small town between Savannah and Shalom-hamlet. Each small town melded into the next without distinction. Massive water towers emblazoned with the town's name announced each town, if there was any uncertainty about where you were, the town's city hall echoed the name embossed on the water towers.

There was something wholesome about Shalom-hamlet. Small shops lined the main street and what appeared to be high school students gathered in the parking lot of the local McDonald's. Driving through Shalom-hamlet was like driving backward through time. I continued the drive and turned into Shalom's subdivision. The main street intersected with the street on which Shalom lived. I found her home, parked in the driveway and took a moment to observe my surrounding.



The homes that lined the street were modern. Shalom mentioned during our conversation that the subdivision was new. The styles of the houses were varied, but followed a random pattern. There were both two-story and single-story homes, each with a distinctive element that separated it from the other houses. Shalom's home was white stucco accented by earth tones.

I made my way to her front door, rang the doorbell and was soon greeted by Shalom. She welcomed me into her home; it was absolutely beautifully laid out in an open concept. The living room, dining room, and kitchen could be viewed from the entryway. The décor included a deep brown leather sofa and matching chairs, the wood tones of the cabinetry in the kitchen reflected similar shades of brown. The internal walls were a soft white and the blinds that fronted the windows were open so that the sunshine illuminated each room.

I immediately became aware of the serenity that surrounded Shalom and that same serenity was reflected in her home. I also noticed the quietness of her home; it was not an eerie kind of quiet, but a quiet that welcomed you like the arms of a cherished relative. In that moment all I wanted to do was sit in the midst of the silence so that I could hear myself breathe.

*Shalom*

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

*John 14:27 (New International Version)*

*It Is Well With My Soul*  
*(Lyrics by Horatio Spafford)*

*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;*

*Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

*Refrain:  
It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

*My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

*For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:  
If Jordan above me shall roll,  
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life  
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.*

*But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,  
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;  
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!  
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!*

*And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.*

A story I read in a book or a magazine came to mind as I prepared to write the portrait of Shalom. I was thinking about her sitting alone when I saw her at the function we were both attending. She was sitting alone in the midst of the festivities and the merrymaking, and I noticed her sense of calm. I performed an exhaustive search of my personal library and came across the story again in the book, *The Power of God's Names* by Tony Evans (2014), renowned senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas.

One day two artists were requisitioned to paint a picture of peace. The one who painted the best picture would win \$250,000. As you can imagine, both painters attempted to paint the finest painting they could.

The first painter set to work by creating a serene portrait of a lake with the sun glistening off of it at just the right angle so that it sparkled across the top of the water. The purest blue shade lay across the top of the water, complementing the blue sky. The artist added a young girl skipping near the lake with a yellow balloon securely fastened to her wrist. Trees towered gracefully on one side of the lake with birds gathering in their tallest branches. After completing his painting, the painter leaned back and took a deep breath of satisfaction. In his mind, he had portrayed peace and was sure to win the prize.

The second artist had a very different idea in mind when he painted his image. In his painting the sky was pitch-black. Lightning zigzagged through the air in unpredictable movements. This painter also had water, but the waves in his painting roared as if they were somehow awakened from a terrible dream. Trees bent and bowed, singing in the wind. The painting looked more like a portrait of disaster.

But all the way down at the bottom on the left-hand side, just near the very edge of this horrific scene, a little bird stood on a rock. The little bird had its mouth open, singing a beautiful song. One faint light shone down on the bird as it sung in spite of the situation all around it.

The second painter won the competition. The judges chose him as the winner because he showed the truest manifestation of peace—a well-being that resonates from within despite what’s going on all around. (pp. 108-109)

The hymn *It Is Well with My Soul* (Spafford, 1873) also came to mind when I thought of Shalom. Since the beginning of her career in higher education Shalom never took summers off, however during this summer she gave herself permission not to work. She was gathering literature and collecting data for articles she was planning to write while on break. I selected this hymn to represent her. Despite the activity surrounding her at the event, regardless of her decision to take the summer off, yet work from home, Shalom remained peaceful in the midst of all of her activities.

The aforementioned Scripture, hymn, and story represent the embodiment of peace that emanated from Shalom. I knew Shalom’s life was not perfect, none of our lives are. However, I saw the opening lyrics of the hymn as a testament to her life. Being at peace doesn’t mean being calm when everything around you is calm. When all is calm we all should be at peace. Being at peace means you are at rest even when you are in the midst of a thunderstorm and everything else seems to be going wrong. Despite what turmoil was occurring in her life, she chose to be like the bird in the story, she chose to focus on what was good despite what was going on around her. I wanted nothing more than to explore the source of the peace that radiated from Shalom.

She stated that this was the first time that she had taken the summer off from teaching, yet the dining room table reflected the paper she was writing. Some of the resources she was using to write the paper lined the table. She invited me into the kitchen, offered me a drink, and motioned to me to take a seat at the elevated kitchen table. The

table was surrounded by four tall chairs that matched. We chatted for a while and then commenced the interview.

Shalom and I settled into a comfortable conversation immediately. I began her interview as I had every interview before hers. I asked about her childhood. A smile formed on her face as she began to share her childhood stories.

I was born in Shalom-hamlet, Georgia, but I left when I was 20 years old to take my first teaching position in Tennessee, I stayed there for 30 years. I taught at a prestigious middle school and after 30 years I began to pursue my dream about becoming a college professor. But we will get back to that story later.

I laughed because Shalom was being true to the teacher she was by following the directions given to her about the interview process. Prior to starting her interview series, I shared with her that we would be taking a journey through her childhood, young adult years, her professional life, and finally her life at the PWI where she was currently teaching. Remembering what I said, Shalom changed track and shared a story about her childhood.

Well my dad always said I was his serious daughter, the serious one. I tried climbing trees and running around the neighborhood, I tried going over to Mr. So-and-So's house picking pecans. I tried all of those fun things, but after a while I got scratches on my legs, and I said, "I don't know about all of this." My friends asked me, "What do you mean?" I replied, "I don't know if all of this running around is for me." I was in elementary school. I was maybe 11-ish or 12 years old. That same year, I discovered the public library. So I fell into going to the

public library every week and checking books out. I stopped climbing trees, and I just read, read, read.

I think my parents always knew I wanted to be a teacher. My parents never had to tell us to stop playing, come in the house, and do your homework. My sisters and I knew we needed to do our homework. I always enjoyed school, even in elementary school.

I saw my younger self in Shalom's younger self. I was never an athletic child. I too discovered books at an early age. Books were a way for me to explore other places. Books became my friends. Today, in the midst of e-readers, tablets, and computers, I still prefer a physical book. I find comfort in the texture of the paper, turning the pages, and denoting where I left off with a new book marker. I shared this with Shalom, and we both had a good laugh about how our young selves continued to dictate how we preferred to read with book in hand. Shalom continued by sharing another childhood story.

Once when I was in the third grade, I told my mom, I said, "Ms. So-and-So is coming to visit you. She replied, "What do you mean?" I commented, "She is coming because she said she is not happy with my progress in her class." So she came with my second grade teacher who had loved me to death. They both came to visit my mother. My mom asked, "What is going on with you young lady?" I said, "I just don't like her." My mom asked me what I meant by that statement. I told my mom the teacher was mean just because she could be. My mom sat me down and she said,

Let me tell you something young lady. It isn't about your liking a teacher. Whether you like her or not, she has something to teach you, and you want what

she has. You want it, and you need it. I could care less about your liking someone and today that's going to end. Education is important for all of my girls, and all of my girls are going to college, and you are going to do what you need to do.

I learned from that situation. I learned how to deal with people. I learned how to deal with people I can't stand and yet be pleasant. I learned to have a positive attitude and environment because I blocked all that personal stuff out.

The lesson that third grade Shalom learned continued to guide her life. She referred to this lesson again and again throughout the series of interviews. During this lesson, Shalom's mother taught her the valuable lesson of elevating education over feelings. During this same lesson, her mother taught her how to negotiate getting along with others you may find challenging. These were valuable life lessons. Shalom shared many lessons she learned from her mother.

I think I had the best mom in town. She was very nurturing and very much ahead of her times. She would say things to us using a stern voice, "Having babies is wonderful but what else can you do with your life?" I heard that a lot growing up. She said, "I want my girls to go to college. I want my girls to be self-sufficient." The bottom line is that she was the one who spouted positives at us all of the time.

She would say, "My girls are going to do great things. My girls are going to college." I remember being very, very, young when I was 6, 7, 8 years old and I said, "Mama what's college?" Before I knew the concept, I knew the word. She also talked to us about being a lady, how girls should behave, and other things too. She talked to us about sex. The lesson was, we don't have sex, and we have

sex when we are married. I know it's not like that these days. My mom just gave us a lot of positives.

If we did something we didn't need to do, she would tell us that we didn't do a good job of that or she would tell us that we messed up. However, that was always followed by her saying, "I still love you." My father would back her up. So, I really came from a very loving home where I was nurtured when I was sick, and corrected when I was wrong. My mother treated us like queens.

I never learned how to iron. I never learned how to fix greens. I never learned because she said, "If you don't want to do that you don't have to. All I want my girls to do is concentrate on school. That's your job." She was an inspiration to me. Her dream was always to be a head nurse, but she got married instead because she thought my dad was going into war. She did not go to nursing school, but she nursed everyone in the neighborhood. Anytime someone in the neighborhood was ill, she would visit them to see what she could do to make them better.

I just feel blessed. I feel like she gave me the confidence to believe that I didn't have to take or put up with the things I didn't want to put up with. Because she taught me to be self-sufficient, she made me strong, and she made me realize that I am very important, that I matter in this world. And that my actions and my behavior make a difference and that I could be a good teacher and that I could impact the lives of the students that I taught. She taught us these things at a very early age.



The bottom line is this; all we ever heard was being a lady, doing the right thing, following the rules, learning from others, watching their mistakes, why would you do the same thing? Just because so-and-so has done that, it doesn't mean that you need to do it or you see what happened to so-and-so don't you? Well guess what, that can happen to you too. She said, "Use common sense and don't be stupid." I can hear her voice sometimes. When I am about to make a mistake, I'll hear her say, "Alright, you better think this through, is this something you really want to live with?"

As a grown woman, I still hear her voice. She was that impactful. She is gone now. Mom is gone. I lost my mom and sister about 3 months apart. I can still hear their voices. It's been about 10 or 11 years now, but I still miss them every day but you learn to live with it.

I identified with the life lessons Shalom learned from her mother. I could also identify with the rules by which she was required to live. I especially identified with still being able to hear my mother's voice in my head. The stories Shalom shared about her mother were all too familiar. The resemblance of the words spoken by our mothers at different times and to different children were uncanny. The fact that her mother wanted to be a nurse and my mother was a nurse was also slightly strange. However, what was not eerie was the way our mothers' voices still echoed in our heads and their impact, which remained in our lives from our time with them.

Our attention and conversation shifted to Shalom's father. I wanted to know how he influenced Shalom's life. I wanted to know what kind of man, husband, and father he

was. Not for the sake of prying but for identifying and understanding the impression he made on her life. Shalom continued by sharing information about her father.

My father taught me so much. There were lessons on being practical, lessons on how to be firm when making decisions, how to say no with a smile; and to say what you mean and mean what you say. He taught me all of that. However, the other thing he taught me was the value of work. He would go to work when he was sick sometimes. He wouldn't miss work.

My mother used to say, "You are just like your dad." He would not tell you he was going to do something that he would not do. If I asked my dad for a new dress, he would say, "Let me think about it," and he would take the time and think. He would say, "I will let you know something in a couple of days." Occasionally he would say *yes* and then sometimes he would say *no*. I thank him for *no* because it is not as positive going down as *yes* is. He taught me how to take *no* as an answer and not allow it to destroy me. What he was saying in essence was life is not always going to give you what you want. That's the issue with kids today, they are used to hearing *yes* all of the time. They don't know how to deal with *no*. You have to learn that somewhere, you really do. I thank my father for that. He was stern in some ways; either he is going to do what you ask or he is not going to do it. Either way, he will tell you his position.

My dad was loyal; he was there, and he was present. We knew every day that we would have lunch money, and we were going to get clothes or whatever we needed. Every year at Christmastime we had Christmas coming out of the door. We would give away big bags of oranges to our neighbors sometimes. He

made sure certain things were always in place for us, I knew my mom was behind it all because she wanted us to have a good childhood, a memorable one.

I want to tell you a story about courage that I learned from my dad. There was a dog down the street from my house, his name was Blackie. I think he may have been a bulldog. What I remember most about that dog was his teeth. My dad bought me a bike for Christmas, and we had a corner store not very far from my house. One day he told me we were out of milk, he said to me, “Shalom, hop on your bike and go get a quart of milk. Don’t get a large one because I’m going to the grocery store later in the week.” I responded, “Dad, let’s talk about this for a minute, Blackie is down there at that corner house. I can’t go; he’s going to bite me.” My dad stated, “What? You are going to allow a little dog to stop you from going to the store to get what you need?” I said, “Yes sir.” He replied, “No, no, no. that’s not what you are going to do. You go get a stick and carry it with you, you look that dog in the eye, because dogs can smell fear, you hold that stick up with meaning and if he comes near you, hit him with the stick.” I continued to question and negotiate with my father. None of which worked. His last statement to me was, “Yes, you have to go. This is important.”

So I got on my bike and started riding down the street and low and behold Blackie starts coming toward me. So I held that stick up and said, “You better get away from me. If you don’t move, I’m going to hit you with my stick.” He started backing up. Long story short, I made it past Blackie. I went to the store, I bought the milk. On the way back, Blackie approached me again. I told him again, “You better back off of me or I’m going to hit you with my stick.” He did not bother

me. I went home and told my dad what happened. He said, “See, you don’t have to allow things to get in your way. You must find a way to deal with it.” I learned to face adversity because of this lesson. I tell the students I teach this story every year.

Taking a detour in the story about her father, she turned once again to a lesson taught by her mother. Shalom shared,

I want you girls to know you were loved, and you don’t have to survive in any kind of relationship or put up with a situation that is not good for you. You need to know you have parents; you can always come home. So I feel blessed even to this day when I think back because I am self-sufficient, and I do fine on my own. I am not hungering for people. There are times when I want to socialize and there are times when I don’t. In order to feel secure like that or to feel secure in a situation that is not up to my liking I can move on because I was taught to be secure in myself.

Shalom’s parents had a traditional marriage. Her mother was a homemaker who raised children and maintained the house. Her father was the “bread winner,” he worked outside of the home, and provided the financial support for his wife and children. Both of her parents graduated from high school but attained no college degree. Her father attended college for a short time; however, he was more interested in making a living, caring for his family, and serving his country as a member of the armed services.

In conversations that were not pertaining to the interview, Shalom mentioned that she was the eldest child among four children. I asked her to tell me about her siblings. Without hesitation she immediately spoke about growing up with her three sisters.

I played school when I was little. I was the oldest of four children, and I played school with my three sisters. I was always the teacher. They would say, “Why are you always the teacher?” I would reply, “Because I am the oldest.” I always responded with “Because I am the oldest.” When we were growing up, the question did not matter because the answer was always “Because I am the oldest.”

I feel blessed. I have three sisters that were English teachers. I’ve lost one but I still say three because she is still with me. One sister has a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia and the other sister is married with children. She has a Master’s degree. We understood one another. We all loved learning, and we could talk about any subject. At the same time we would keep each other in check if one of us was not making a good decision. We say to each other, “Hey are you sure about this? Are you sure you want to do this?” We talked about relationships, what works and what doesn’t work. In fact, I’m the one they call when things don’t go well. They asked me, “What do you think I need to do?” I retained this role for a number of years. When I turned 35 years old, I told my sisters, “One of you guys need to take the lead. I’m getting tired of giving advice.” That did not last long; birth order is with us forever. The responsibilities associated with being the oldest child don’t change.

I laughed when Shalom conveyed the story about her siblings. I am the younger of two children. My sister and I have surpassed the half-century mark, yet she still plays the older sister card. Like Shalom, my sister is a retired K-12 educator. She still instructs me on the decisions I make whether or not I solicit her advice, and she still says things

like, “You had better listen to me because I’m the oldest.” Shalom and I had a great laugh about older sisters.

Shalom and I turned our attention to her grammar school years. I wanted to know what kind of student she was. She had no problems recalling her years in grade school.

Ms. Charlotte was my first grade teacher. I had another really sweet teacher in the second grade, Ms. Worth, and Ms. Smith was my ninth grade teacher. I had those kinds of teachers who also encouraged me to become a teacher as well as my mother. I will never forget my seventh grade teacher, Ms. Scarborough. She was my English teacher. There was this little guy in class who had a crush on me. Ray was his name. I will never forget Ray to this day. One day we were in class and we were going over prepositions and conjunctions, Ray did not know what a preposition was. I wanted to say to him, “How can I like a boy who doesn’t even know what a preposition is. I can’t deal with that.”

While in grammar school Shalom set standards for herself. With the confidence instilled in her by her parents and her grade school teachers, she made the decision not to lower her standards by returning the interest of a grade school boy who did not know what a preposition was. The teaching profession was important to Shalom even as a grade school student. She set high standards for herself, which did not include re-teaching a lesson that should have been taught and learned. Shalom continued,

You know another thing is African-American teachers were very strong back in the day. They made an impact on you. Teaching meant everything to them. They thought of teaching as a very dignified profession. Not only did they teach us but,

they also trained us in professionalism. They were always very professional and, they dressed the part as well. Dressing for the part is important as well.

I identified with the statements Shalom made. I too had African American elementary school teachers who impacted my life in indelible ways. They were passionate about the subjects they taught. They taught professionalism through practice. They held their students to high standards and encouraged them to dream impossible dreams. They walked into the classroom prepared with the day's lesson and dressed for success.

Two of the teachers who taught me come to mind, Ms. Carol Venuto and Ms. Susan Lewis. I remember Ms. Venuto because she reminded me of my mother. She wore Youth Dew cologne by Estee Lauder. When she greeted her students at the door of the classroom, she made it a point to hug each and every one of them including me. Her cologne lingered in the air, and I could smell it on myself throughout the day. It gave me a sense of comfort and well-being. Ms. Venuto also taught me how to spell and encouraged me to become an avid reader of all subjects.

Ms. Lewis on the other hand appealed to my blossoming sense of fashion. She wore twin sweater sets everyday along with her pencil skirts and pumps. A string of pearls adorned her neck, and button pearl earrings glowed from each ear. Her style of dress was classic. She reminded me of the actress Diana Carroll. She encouraged me to excel in math and science at a time when college programs and careers in these subjects were situated in male-dominated professions.

Like Shalom certain teachers from my childhood left their imprimatur on my life. The African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," comes to mind. Like Shalom,

my elementary school teachers were elders in the village that reared me. Shalom continued to remember lessons learned from her mother. She interjected the following story,

There is one more thing my mother taught me, she taught me about respecting people just because they are people, not because of what they have or where they come from. Respect all people. Don't turn your nose up at anybody. Don't do that, because those same people sometimes have to come along and save your life. I tell my students this when they talk about teaching. I show them photographs I have taken over the years from my K-12 days. I tell them, this is the custodian at my school. This is the number one person at your school. Here is the school secretary; this is the number two person at your school. You need to make sure you have a good relationship with each of them.

I said to Shalom, "My sister, Renee said the same thing." She replied, "That's right."

There are certain people that control the building and you need to know who they are. You can walk in with a snooty attitude. You know that I-have-degrees kind of way. Sure you do, but you are still a human being and everybody deserves to be respected. We all have a story. These two individuals can also keep you informed, they know everything about what is going on in the building.

Everywhere I go I treat people with dignity, and I know it's saved me. I really do. I've been told, "Well you know, you look like you ought to be pretty snooty, but you really are a nice person." You can't do anything about the way



people think about you, but the bottom line is your behavior, you can control that.

I try to teach my students how to be good human beings.

I asked Shalom to share stories from any non-professional employment she engaged in as a teenager or young adult. She began by communicating the following account.

My dad wasn't crazy about us working. He wanted his girls to come home after school. When I attended at Shalom-hamlet State College, I had a music and art professor who knew that a shoe store in town needed someone to work. I was a senior in college, I told my parents that she would like for me to take the job. My mother told me to think about it. I got that little job because my mom said to my dad, "You know when she graduates, she will start working, and she hasn't really had a job. She will need to know how to come and go to and from work. It will be good experience for her." My dad asked, "How is she going to get home?" He actually hired a guy with a cab. He would pay him to pick me up from the shoe store every night.

I worked at that store for 7 or 8 months. When I worked there, I learned things like arriving early and being punctual. I would go to work extra early. I sold handbags. One morning I arrived early so that I could prepare the display for the handbags. The guy who owns the store was there when I arrived. Most folks who owned quite a bit in Shalom-hamlet have always been Jewish. They don't know about how things have changed. So he came in and saw me there. I was headed upstairs to the handbag department. He said to me, "We could use some dusting downstairs and some wiping out of those ashtrays." In my head I was

going, “Is he talking to me?” I turned and looked him in the face and said, “You have a maid for that.” I continued to walk upstairs. His statement to me made me a little tearful for me. In his mind he did not see a store clerk, he saw me only as a maid.

My mother and father sent me to school so I wouldn’t have to be a Black maid. There is nothing wrong with making a living as long as you are doing something honorable. If your job is dealing with children, cleaning houses, or teaching school, it is all honorable. The man who owned the store knew I was in college because he knew that person that recommended me for the job was one of his clients and was my professor. Despite this knowledge, in his eyes all he saw in me was a Black maid.

This interaction with the store owner made me stronger. It made me realize more and more how badly I needed to go to school. I completed my time there. That was the only job I had in college. My parents wanted us to concentrate on school. I didn’t wear fine clothes that some of my friends wore who had jobs, but I was fine. My mama looked at me and said, “That’s not important right now. You can buy clothes when you get that degree in your hand.”

Shalom continued to convey stories from her life experiences. Each story was accompanied by life lessons she received from her mother and father. Lessons learned in childhood continued to permeate every corner and crevice of her life. Each time she shared a story, a life lesson followed.

Shalom did not share stories from Shalom-hamlet high school nevertheless, she had experiences at Shalom-hamlet State College that she wanted to share. Those stories also came with life lessons.

I took speech and drama, and I took a lot of Shakespearian courses. I was also in the theater when I was in undergraduate school at Shalom-hamlet State College. I had a tremendous professor, his name was Dr. Smith. He was a legend in my hometown. I learned so much from Dr. Smith. He was a perfectionist. He taught me how to keep doing something until I got it right. He would make us practice our parts over and over and over again. He would critique our recitations and our performances. Under Dr. Smith's tutelage, I learned self-discipline. I learned how to practice my parts, recite it, and do it until I reached perfection in my performance.

When my students do oral presentations, they want to read over something once and then perform it in front of me. I share the story of Dr. Smith and the lessons I learned while in undergraduate school. I tell them, "People remember what you say when you talk to them." Much of who we become is formed from the people that we connect with, the people we spend time around. I encourage my students to spend time around people who will enhance their life, people who have attributes that you aspire to. Don't spend time with people who think less of the world or who think less of you, people with negative attitudes about living. If you spend time with these types of people, you will become like them.

Shalom received life lessons from each elder in her village. She learned lessons from her parents and her teachers. Not one to be selfish, Shalom shared these life lessons

with her students. She was now the elder of the village “raising” students to become professional educators. Shalom turned her attention to her first teaching appointment by returning to the story she initially began at the onset of the interview.

I finished college in 3 years by going year-round. So, at 20 years old, I started teaching in Tennessee. At 20 years old, I was very innocent in just about every way. I learned life lessons from teaching at a predominantly White middle school. I was oftentimes the only African American English teacher on the second floor. One lesson I learned while teaching at this school was how not to treat people. I was ostracized and othered by many of the teachers and administrators because I was making “waves.” I was teaching in a way that many of the other teachers were unaccustomed to. I also learned what to do if things were not turning out as they should. I learned to listen to myself and to leave that position. Lastly, this school taught me a thing called “getting a lawyer.” Situations at this school never elevated to the point that I needed an attorney, however, I kept this option open. Eventually, my colleagues got to know me and accepted my teaching style because my students were excelling.

I identified with Shalom’s story, when you are 20 years old, you do not have the maturity or skillset to operate in an environment where prejudice, bias, and racism abound. Shalom grew up in a loving and protective environment. The life lessons learned during her childhood did not include step-by-step instructions on how to overcome racist behaviors and treatments. Her parents did not send her into the world prepared to be an “outsider,” they elevated education. Her elementary teachers encouraged her to dream

big, her college professor taught her to be disciplined in her craft. None of them taught her to deal with professional sabotage. She continued with the following story,

It was during my second or third year of teaching that I started to get restless. I said, "It's time to go back to school and learn something new and something more." So I returned to school to get my Master's degree. I applied to and, was accepted by university that was located in the Western United States. The professors from this university were flown into the Deep South city where I was teaching Language Arts in a K-12 school. That is how I got my Master's degree. I graduated from my Master's program in spring 1978. I started doctoral studies in the fall of that same year. I graduated with a Ph.D. from a prestigious Tennessee university in 1983.

I remained in K-12 education for 30 years. In my thirtieth year, I started applying for teaching positions at colleges and universities. I told my principal that I was not going to be with him much longer. I told him that I was going to teach in a college setting. I said to him, "Teaching teachers is a dream of mine." No one believed me. They didn't think I was going to leave. I told them I was going to leave and would not return in the spring because I planned to have a job by then. I sent out applications, and I wanted the teachers and administrators at my school to know what I was doing.

Shalom kept her word. She did not return in the spring. She received a call from the department head of the university where she is currently teaching. This department head offered her an opportunity to interview for the open position in the Department of Education as an adjunct professor. She was asked to come to the campus for an interview.

I interviewed in October, 2003 and, was ultimately offered the position. I told the department head, "I could work here. I could be comfortable here in the College of Education." I left the interview and returned to Tennessee. I knew there were other candidates that applied for the position.

I was hired to serve in an adjunct position. I was teaching courses that they needed taught. I was there about one year when my department informed me that there was a full-time position open for an assistant professor. She told me that she wanted me to apply. I said to her, "I'm retired." I was not thinking about teaching full-time. I was working as a full-time adjunct, but the department head was talking about a full-time tenure track position. I told her I would think about it.

I spoke to my sister about the offer. She told me to make sure this was something that I wanted to do. She was teaching at an HBCU in the Deep South. I said to my sister, "I may not get this opportunity again. I am going to apply." I applied, and I prepared a colloquium for the interview. The other candidates were interviewing also. Eventually I was informed that I got the position.

Nonetheless, a colleague notified me that another African American professor spoke up for me during the search committee deliberations. When I spoke with the colleague who spoke up for me she stated, "Sometimes when it comes to choosing between them and us, they forget that we also bring attributes to the table." I retorted, "Not just attributes, we bring a different culture that needs to be a part of the campus of PWIs." The professional lesson for me was that given an opportunity to serve on a search committee we need to be a voice for qualified candidates of color.

Shalom remains employed by this PWI. Some individuals employed outside of higher education have the misconception that being a college professor is easy. Because of this delusion, I continued the interview by asking her to reconstruct an average day in her life as a college professor at her institution.

I'll share with you the past spring semester. Roughly I get up around 8:00 a.m., get coffee, sometimes I read a Bible verse or look at something like the news in the morning. I do that for about 30 minutes and then after that I get prepared for work.

Sometimes I pack my tote bag at night, even the car because I always have lots of papers that I carry home usually because I am grading projects or grading something that my students have submitted to me. I get to the office in about 30 to 35 minutes depending on the traffic. Class begins at 11:00 a.m. so I arrive on campus around 10:00 a.m.

The first thing I do once I get to the office is check and respond to emails. Then I retrieve my telephone calls and reply to my phone messages. That might take 30 to 45 minutes, maybe even one hour. By the time I get through calling this one, checking on that one, and making sure the students are where they need to be or setting an appointment to advise a Master's student, the time flies by.

What I've learned about this job is that activities that you think won't take much time always end up taking more time than you anticipated. There are always interruptions, you have to check a student's file, which you must retrieve from the front office, then the phone rings, or someone knocks on the door with a need.

When all of these activities subside, I may need to finish checking a few papers prior to the beginning of class. By this time, I prepare for the classroom.

I pack my grip (valise) making sure I have everything I need to teach class. Do I have the right handouts? I make sure I have the right textbook and the right syllabus for everything I need. This preparation takes another 30 minutes and then head to class. I am usually in class for an hour or two.

Once class is over, I head to my office again to check emails and telephone calls that occurred while I was in class. I check my calendar for committee meetings, department meetings, or anything else I am scheduled to attend. Sometimes I leave an email that I need to finish so I complete that.

As professors we serve on so many committees. There are committees for the department, the college, and the university. We donate our expertise to committees and boards in the community where the university is located as well as professional committees and boards. Sometimes serving on these committees and boards means holding the positions of chair or treasurer or secretary. It never ends.

At the same time I'm also working on a paper to make sure it is up to par. I am writing and rewriting sections of the paper. I bring my re-writes to the office and change things in the paper that I am not pleased with. I am also planning for conferences that I want to attend or those where I am going to present a paper. Creating scholarship cannot be forgotten, it is a necessary activity for tenure and promotion.



The tenets of being a university professor include teaching, service, and scholarship. None of these activities can be ignored. They all hold a position of primacy for a college professor. The life of a college professor is a delicate balancing act. But this is just one side of the equation, once the professional day is completed and the professor leaves campus; there are duties and assignments of family-life that also require attention.

I always promise my students I am going to get their assignments back to them in a timely manner. They complimented me on returning their assignment quickly. This requires that I wake early in the morning. I function better in the early morning hours. I like the quiet that morning brings. I am not a night person. I need 7 to 8 hours of sleep nightly. I don't function well with less.

When I first arrived at my current institution, I wrote three handbooks for student teachers. The president of the university asked me how I managed to write these handbooks, I replied that I usually work through the week as well as on the weekends. I work during the holidays and on Sundays. I rarely take off. I have been labeled a "worker bee" by my colleagues inside and outside of my college. But the bottom line is this; I realize that I have pride as an African American. I was told that I have to work harder, and I have to do more because they are looking for an excuse to rationalize my absence as a professor in higher education.

I do so much that sometimes I don't remember what I have accomplished over the course of the academic year. However, because we have to create an annual portfolio, which documents our teaching, service, and scholarship, I am

reminded of why I'm fatigued. That's when I really see what I have done and say, "It's no wonder that I'm tired, I guess I should be."

Many of our colleagues do not understand the "worker bee" phenomenon that Shalom and other African American female faculty members display. Because we are in positions that were not historically reserved for us, we have a tendency to be over achievers. We have a need to validate our reason for being in the academy. African Americans are reared under this belief. We must be better than average because to be mediocre is not an option.

Our White counterparts may have the luxury of being less productive, however, that is not a luxury we can afford. There is a different taxation required of us as African American faculty members. Faculty of color understand this taxation, however, many of our White colleagues perceive this taxation as specious. They adopt the belief that if it is not occurring with me, it must not be happening. They come to the table with this skepticism.

Shalom and I continued the interview by turning our attention to her relationship with colleagues within here department and across campus. I asked, "What can you tell me about your relationship with your colleagues? Without hesitation Shalom responded to my question.

Well I have found that you need to get along with people. There is a book titled, *How To Get Along With People You Can't Stand*. It reminded me that you need to figure out how to get along with people, even the ones that you don't care for.

Ultimately, they will have some impact on your future in the department. So I try

to be kind to people and I also try to go out of my way to make them feel good about themselves.

All of my life I have had to contend with people being envious of me, and I never could figure out why. I guess it's because I don't broadcast if I'm going through a difficult time. I always seem happy; everything is fine, but that's the pride that I was ingrained with growing up. I find that there are so many wounded adults. I also thought that because many of my colleagues had doctorates that they would be more secure.

When I taught at the premier middle school in Tennessee, there were six faculty members with doctorates. I was one of the youngest faculty members with a doctoral degree. There were also many faculty members with Master's degrees. When I got to the university setting I knew the majority of faculty members would have doctorates, and I was certain that there would be no insecure members of the faculty. But I soon found out that was not true.

I do believe that the way people are reared, where they come from, and the people they spend time with impact the way they are. I have learned to deal with all types of people. I have always been a people person. I enjoy people and I really don't see the color of their skin per se. I choose to see what they are all about, what are their values? Once you understand what a person's values are then you will know how to treat them and how to get along with them.

There are always those folk who want to be your friend for a reason; you have to figure out what that reason is. I guess I figure out what it is that people need, and I try to give that to them. I get along really well with people in my

department. If they step out of line or across a line with me that I don't approve of, I say to them, "I love you dearly but you stepped out of line. I'm still your friend." I do that, and I confront it directly.

Regarding my colleagues across campus, there are certain people in certain departments that have an air about them. Those in mathematics think they are gods because they know math. The ones who are in psychology, the assessment geeks they think they are gods too. Then there are the ones in the College of Ed, they are friendly for the most part, easy to get along with, but they are very particular. Teachers are meticulous people.

I understand where my colleagues are coming from. The thing I've learned from being in the academy is that you don't allow anybody to intimidate you or make you feel less than what you are. I was raised like that. My mom used to say,

Don't care about what other people have or where they come from. I promise you that they don't have your character. Don't you let anyone intimidate you or make you feel less than. They are not any better than you are; they just happen to have some things you may not have.

When I approach my colleagues, I approach them eye-to-eye, and I approach them with a certain amount of confidence. What I've learned about my university and people period is when people realize that they cannot intimidate you, they soon leave you alone.

Shalom's insight regarding her colleagues was enlightening. However, many people on her campus specifically and the academy of the United States in general adopt a different perspective when it comes to interacting with their colleagues. In my

experience, there is a tendency in the academy toward keeping both faculty and students in silos despite the surge regarding interdisciplinary education.

I do not believe this organizational separation is intentional on the part of administrators, faculty, or students. I believe faculty members and by default, the students they teach remain in silos out of convenience and constraints placed upon the time it takes to teach the professional or major content. The metaphor, “water seeks its own level,” comes to mind. Not so much a response to the physics of water, but figuratively meaning that people will seek others who have the same interests that they have. This is the reason that divisions in academe were created. It appears that higher education cannot move beyond its organizational history.

In the College of Health Professions where I teach, there is a concerted effort being adopted to have students from the different allied health professions interact with one another. In the academic setting they remain separated; however, their real world experiences in the clinical education environment require that they interact as team members. Once they graduate from the academic setting, their professional environments will not allow them to interact only with individuals in their discipline or area of expertise.

The conversation turned to Shalom’s relationship with her students. I watched as she became passionate, and I saw her face light up like a sunrise. She was eager to talk about this subject. Her mood was infectious; I listened with an attentive ear.

What I’ve learned since I have been at my university has not been guided by the student evaluations as much as it has been by knowing the right thing to do in my heart. I read the evaluations. There is one that I will never forget, it was very

biting. The student stated, “I didn’t learn anything in her classroom.” I said, “My classroom?” I’m always told by the students that I teach too much, and I do too much.

When I read student evaluations I always tell myself, when you read evaluations ask yourself, “What is it that I can use?” Anything that I cannot use I throw away, and I throw it out of my mind, out of my spirit. I try to use the students’ evaluations to help me. However, I also use my own good common sense. I pay attention to the student cues to figure out whether I am impacting them or to determine if they are not learning or understanding the concepts. I have to be patient because our students can catch on to technology in 2 minutes, but they don’t understand some basic concepts.

So when it comes to my students I tell them the first day of class, “I expect you to come to class, I expect you do the assignments to the best of your ability, I expect you to review the rubrics and determine how the assignments should be completed.” Finally, I tell them, “You will earn your grade; I will not give you anything.”

I give my students all of my contact information; I give them permission to email me and to call me on my cell phone. I give them permission to come by my office. There is no reason for my students to fail. I will always find the time for my students. Students know when you are sincere, when you care, and some of them have to leave me to find that out. Some of them see my sincerity when they are with me in my courses.

We have a different generation that we're teaching and some people have not adjusted. Some of them think that college and college students are the same as when they attended high school. That's just not so. You have to take time with your students. They catch on to technology really quickly; however, I tell them that the technology comes with responsibility, professionalism, and ethics. I talk a lot about ethical issues.

I teach a class that introduces students to the profession of teaching. These students have not yet been accepted to the college I teach in. They are majors in all of the other colleges and programs on campus. When I see them on campus they recognize me and speak. I feel comfortable enough with them to say to them whatever I need to say to them.

Shalom continues to have a passion about teaching student teachers how to teach. As a young girl, she identified and pursued the teaching profession with fervor. According to the majority of her students, she remains effective in conveying professional content, and exhibits an attitude of professionalism. She displays no signs of fatigue and, was not entertaining a second retirement. She is indeed a "worker bee" as many of her colleagues have stated.

One of the reasons I selected the topic of this dissertation was to identify the methods other African American women faculty members employed to successfully navigate the campus climate of PWIs. Shalom's counter-narrative was a wealth of information, and her attitude toward teaching was compelling. Her conversation with me concerning her students concluded our second interview.

I returned to her home for the final interview. I was eager to hear about her scholarly activities, and how she created time to accomplish these activities. Shalom was forthcoming in all subjects that we discussed. I knew she would provide me with insight, and a pragmatic method of achieving scholarly activities. She did not disappoint me. She began with the following insight.

I have an interest in trying to improve how we are preparing our teachers to teach. I write on the ways we can improve our preparatory programs and classes. In thinking about preparing my annual performance portfolio, I tend to select hot topics in education. For example, I wrote a paper recently with another professor, this time we focused on teacher attitudes toward total inclusion. Right now I am getting ready to work on a paper about assessments. I want to know if students really pay attention to rubrics. I am trying to find a response based on my classroom experiences. Another topic I am interested in is standards based education. I haven't written on that yet. I want to look at teachers' attitudes toward common core standards. As you can see, my topics are tied into the curriculum courses that I teach. I also want to research social media and the flipped classroom. Those are the topics I am choosing to write on this summer.

I did a presentation on differentiating instruction at a local professional conference. When the conference was over, a colleague at the conference volunteered to work with me on writing the paper. She wanted me to email her all of the research I performed for the presentation. I denied her request. I said to her, "No ma'am I don't do that." I attended a national conference where I



delivered the same presentation. Once the conference was over, I was asked to publish a paper on the topic.

That same paper on differentiating instruction was included in a book by another professor, a book of articles from Athens, Greece. I attended an international conference, and was asked to include a paper I wrote on total inclusion. There was a guy at the international conference that was from an organization in India working with people who are disabled. He asked if he could include my article in trying to build a case for including the disabled.

Publishing for African Americans is not easy, if you can work with someone that helps. I wrote for a while, and it took several years before something panned out for me. I have been very blessed. I've got some pretty good publications now. To get started, I went to a workshop on publications. During the workshop, they talked about the percentage of people who are actually able to publish in Phi Delta Kappa. The percentage was small.

The workshop presenters spoke about looking at state journals to publish in or joining writing groups. I've looked at those organizations, and I have been a part of those organizations. I prefer smaller groups; I like people to know my name. That becomes difficult when the group is large.

When I came to the university where I currently teach, there was no one to help me. No mentoring at all. I had to mentor myself. I had one professor that I worked with when I first came on board. I told her that I needed to get published and asked her to edit an article for me. She agreed, she was an English teacher

also. She said she would love to help and gave me some suggestions on where to get published. I have sense tried to help those that have come in after me.

Shalom displayed the same level of passion for her scholarly activities as she displayed for her students. When she spoke about articles she was writing or presentations she presented or was preparing to write or present, she was enthusiastic. Shalom possesses an inquisitive mind and a continued desire for improving her skills and knowledge.

Never one to rest on her laurels, she was planning to research topics she was interested in presenting and about which she wanted to write. During the conclusion of this segment of the interview, she offered to work with me stating, “Maybe we could work together too.” I replied with a fervent, “Absolutely!” I look forward to a time when I am free to work with Shalom. I don’t know what our subject matter will be; however, I anticipate a wonderful scholarly experience. I know that I can learn much from Shalom, and I am overjoyed that she invited me to partner with her.

We spent a brief period of time speaking about my dissertation, and the need to initiate and advance conversations regarding race and race relations on the campuses of PWIs. She mentioned that she had participated in a faculty group discussing race on her campus. She mentioned that she learned some phenomenal things while participating with that faculty group. She did not expound on the things she learned, and I did not press her. I wanted our time together to flow naturally. Our conversation returned to her scholarly activities. I asked about her institution’s influence on her scholarly subject matter. She shared the following information.

I get my topics from teaching, attending conferences, and keeping up with what's hot on the news in education. Every subject I have ever chosen has been something about teaching and the issues teacher educators are having. It's a topic I remain interested in. The university where I teach never comes to mind when I am thinking about topics I want to research. I focus solely on the topic and how I will use it to improve the classroom experience of my students.

I was envious of Shalom's scholarly freedom. When I began to write on race many of my colleagues at the university where I teach, colleagues who served with me on professional and community boards and colleagues that I asked to participate in my research, usually ended our communication with a warning, "Be careful writing about race and race relations, especially on your campus." They were all equally concerned about my advancement and promotion opportunities on campus, my professional reputation, and the labels that other colleagues would place upon me. I usually responded with a head nod acknowledging their concern or a placating, "I will be careful." These colleagues reinforced the information found in the scholarly discourse regarding the perils of researching the intersection of race and education.

I acknowledge my naivety, however, in my experience; my colleagues both African American and White avoid the subject of race with a vengeance. Others are suspiciously inquisitive about the identity of the participants in my study and their stories. I leave these colleagues with their questions without indulging their curiosity. The interview continued with me asking Shalom about her experiences as a woman at her institution. She stated,

Actually it depends on what department head you have. If you have a male department head, the women are sometimes pushed into the background, if you allow that. If you have a woman as a department head, naturally women are brought to the center. I will never forget the male department head we had. The men in the department would have a meeting before the department meeting. They would make decisions without our input. And of course we'd call them out on it. I know I did. I would do it in a nice way, but I would call them out.

With female administrators, pretty much the gender thing doesn't really matter. In my experience, she just wants people who are willing to work. I have usually had male administrators. For me they are easier to work with. When you have done something inappropriate or when you are getting fussed at, the males seem to fuss and then they are done with it. But females have a tendency to carry things on and on and on. They also seem to be a little revengeful. So I make sure I have a good relationship with the female in charge. In the end, you have to be true to yourself.

I asked Shalom about her experiences as an African American at her university, she had this to say,

As far as being an African American teacher, somehow, the students suspect that you will have lower expectations. But then your name gets around a little bit, and they say, "Oh no, she will make you work" The other thing is once they find out that you are African American, it's like ugh. Then they find out that you are organized and that you get things done and that you return phone calls and that you do handle business. If I have the opportunity, I also bring in a White

counterpart to join me in certain endeavors. [I asked Shalom to what was she referring when she mentioned “they.”] I mean the public, when they know Whites and Blacks are on board on something they more readily accept what is being offered or they choose to participate.

When asked about the intersection of race and gender that she represents, Shalom made the following statements,

Actually that has been advantageous for me. For example, they want African Americans on search committees; there are not many African Americans in the department where I am. The fact that I am African American and female works to my advantage because I can bring a perspective others can't bring. So I've learned to use that to my advantage.

As I have said to you before, I see value in committee work, and I see value in participating in projects with others as well. I believe in collaboration. I know its extra work, but it is a value. You learn so much. When I arrived on campus one of the first things I was asked to do was serve on the search committee that chose the current president of my university.

Being an African American female on campus really can serve as a very positive role if you use it wisely. When it is time for my annual review I have lots of things to share because I have been asked to do, and I participate. Saying yes allows you to meet colleagues from across campus.

As a group, African Americans don't take advantage of opportunities that are presented to us. I just left a meeting with a board that I sit on. I asked a colleague from my university to join me and to serve as a board member. She

agreed and we drove to the meeting together. This colleague is a Caucasian woman. This board is trying to pull African American members on board.

In my opinion, some African American educators are afraid to leave Shalom-hamlet. They haven't been anywhere else, and they are leery of the new experience. I often think what would have happened to me if I had not chosen to leave Shalom-hamlet. Leaving Shalom-hamlet was the best thing that I have done. Sometimes you need to escape from your comfort zones.

Without being asked, Shalom turned the conversation to tenure and promotion.

Her opening statement was emphatically stated,

“Tenure and promotion is hell. Don't let anyone fool you.” It's tough, but it's worth it because as you go through it you get a chance to see what you are really made of. You also learn to take advantage of opportunities as they are presented. I got involved with the community, I gave speeches at middle schools in the area, and I was asked to assist in selecting the Teacher of the Year. I got so many opportunities. God put things out there for me to do. I said yes to God and yes to the opportunity. I was also told that I needed to write and get published. When I arrived on my campus, I wrote three handbooks.

The worst thing that happened to me going through tenure and promotion was a student evaluation that wasn't so complimentary. The issue was that I was taking prescribed medication in front of the class. The student wrote that I wasn't professional. I told the students in class that I needed to take medication and turned my back and drank out of the bottle. I had forgotten my spoon. She spoke of my lack of professionalism because of the act of drinking from the bottle.

My department head at the time wanted to include this student's evaluation of me in my portfolio. He allowed me to see the comments and other things that he placed in my portfolio. I said to him, "Oh no, you will not place that in my promotion portfolio. You are going to take that out!" I had worked for 7 years, and he hadn't been there as long as I had. I made him take that comment out of my portfolio. Then of course my portfolio went through, and I was fine.

The rumor on my campus was that African Americans be careful. You get to the end and you get to promotion and they try to find things against you. That rumor was spreading all over my campus. I turned my promotion portfolio in early so that if something needed to be changed I could change it prior to the deadline.

My department head wanted that negative comment in my promotion portfolio to bring me down. I saw right through that. That's that White male thing rearing its ugly head. They still don't want to see us get ahead of them. I know that's crazy, but I understand that it happens. This is what I know for sure, God is going to look out for me. He is going to fix it. Whatever it is, it is happening for a reason.

Again, I marveled at Shalom's ability to choose the positive over the negative. She could have become disillusioned with the position that her department head took. She chose instead to take the highroad. She insisted that he extract the negative statement from her portfolio. Shalom recognized that this one negative statement was not an accurate reflection of her relationship with the students she taught.

African American women faculty members must acquire the essential skill of self-advocacy. Oftentimes we are not professionally nurtured or mentored leaving us vulnerable in a space that was identified as chilly (Gusa, 2010; Harley, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009) or hostile (Gusa, 2010; Harley, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009) by researchers who contributed to the scholarly discourse. Without the vital ability of self-advocacy the campuses of PWIs can become perilous to the professional lives of African American women faculty members.

I posed the following question to Shalom, “What recommendations would you give to other African American faculty women who desire to teach at a PWI?” I watched and waited for her as she contemplated her response. She uttered the following statement,

Well first of all not everybody can take a job at a PWI. That’s the first thing you have to understand. I was always around Whites, my parents were around Whites. I watched my mother interact with them. I asked her, “Mama, what do you say to them? What do you have in common with them?” She replied, “They are friendly just like us. We talk about family, we talk about raising children. Honey, they are just people like you and like me.”

I guess she was right. So I grew up and matured. I went to mostly White schools. I have been the only Black in many settings. I know that to get along with people you must find commonality. That’s the first thing I ask myself, “What do you have in common with this person?” Not color obviously, but common kinds of things you have and you connect on those levels.

You also need to be a friendly person. I am a friendly person. I do like people from different backgrounds, cultures, and environments. I like talking, I



like sharing, and I am very loquacious. I don't meet a stranger. The point I am making is those things will work for you. See Whites as just people and be friendly.

The other thing is you can't hate all White people because all White people didn't do anything to you. There are some Whites in our history who have committed some heinous acts, but the ones you work with haven't necessarily done anything to you. So you judge each individual based on their character, you can't judge the whole group by judging one person.

In my experience, I have learned that Whites don't like to be ostracized. African Americans, we live with that because that's who we are. We are used to people hating us because of the color of our skin even before we open our mouths. So we sort of live with that bias and prejudice. If I run into that, I say, "You don't like me and that's okay, I like me just fine." When that is the case we find other ways to maneuver.

You also need to communicate when you have been offended by one of them. Sometimes they do not know what they are doing or saying is offensive. I also know that sometimes they don't care. The bottom line is that you have to let them know what they have done so they won't do it or say it again. If they do, they are choosing to be that way and then you know how to deal with that individual.

Finally, it's not necessary to build friendships where you work. At PWIs you need to figure out what your job is at that institution and do it to the best of your ability. If you acquire friendships with our colleagues deal with them one-

on-one and don't attempt to befriend the whole group. Take on one at a time. The way you start is the way you finish. If you start strong, you will finish strong but you have got to be consistent.

Shalom ticked off the tools in her "How to survive as an African American faculty woman teaching at a PWI" toolbox with ease. Many of the lessons she shared were learned when she was teaching on a K-12 level. Other lessons she learned while teaching at her current PWI. She offered sage advice not just for surviving at a PWI; she offered advice for living a fulfilled life. I identified with many of Shalom's methods. I too have written a survival guide and assembled a tool kit that I carry daily as I navigate the halls of my PWI. I am ever vigilant in updating my guide and honing my tools so that they are always in working order.

My time with Shalom was coming to an end. I was both eager and melancholic. I was eager to have successfully completed another series of interviews while being simultaneously saddened by ending my time with Shalom. I noticed this odd duality as I asked her what she would tell administrators, colleagues, and students about the role each of these groups played in her professional life. Again, she pondered my question and then she began to speak,

Wow! That's pretty powerful. When I presented my latest portfolio, I said that I was one of a few African American voices from that campus. I also said that when I go places I can make a difference, probably because they are going to listen to me more because I am one of a few. Because I am one of a few I make a difference in the lives of those I teach. I ask myself, "Am I touching a life? Am I helping somebody else?" Ultimately, I know that you can't carry your riches with

you but your good name will go with you and will last forever. I tell my students, “A good teacher lives in the heart of their students forever.” I have a legacy that will never die, and that’s the opportunity that I have as an African American on the campus of my PWI. That’s what I would tell administrators. I know that I am an asset to the campus.

To my colleagues, I would say that I feel honored to be able to work with them as an African American, and that I’m going to be the teacher that I was meant to be since I was 7 years old. I’m going to stand up for my students; I’m going to do what needs to be done and will be a friend if you let me.

To my students, I would tell them that if you want to teach, teaching needs to be your love. You must care about people first, and then the subject matter. You need to know the subject matter that you teach. If you can’t deal with people you won’t be in the teaching profession for long. You must accept people where they are, and at the same time help to improve the status of that person. You improve their status through effective teaching, and by encouraging them every day. I try to motive my students by being an example and by presenting a positive attitude.

Shalom delivered these comments with such passion. She knows that she is an asset to her campus, the administrators, her colleagues, and her students. She serves and teaches at her university by example. She espouses positive interactions with everyone she relates to. On her campus she leads by example and through motivation. As my final question, I asked her what she defined as success and if she considered herself successful. She continued with the following statement,

Success for me is about loving what you do. That's the first thing and then it's about getting money for doing what you love. It's not about the money first. If you love what you do, you are going to do your best work. Success is about being able to touch the lives of the people that you meet. When you see them again, they say, "Hey, I remember you," or they say, "Thank you for helping me," or, "I love your enthusiasm." She paused and told me the following story.

One of my nephews just graduated from college. His family came to Shalom-hamlet for a visit. This was the first time that they saw my new home. He said to me, "Auntie, you know you are a very successful woman, you can tell that." I said, "Me, successful?" He replied, "Yes, you can look around your home and see success."

I don't really see myself as successful but I tell myself that I must be. There isn't anything in this world that I want for. There isn't anyone in this world that I want to be like. In other words, I like who I am, and I don't want to be like so-and-so. However, I do know there are people that I want to learn from because I continue to be a learner. So I guess I am successful. I'm doing what I love, and I know that it keeps me alive and it keeps me going. It gives me a reason to get up in the morning.

*Researcher Reflections regarding Shalom*

I left Shalom standing in the doorway of her home waving goodbye as I entered my car. I felt a sense of satisfaction having concluded the interview series. The melancholy I felt earlier on this day subsided. I identified the melancholy as the sadness I felt knowing that my time with Shalom was ending. She was open and honest in her

responses, and shared her life stories with ease and without hesitation. I reflected on the peace and serenity that exuded from Shalom. The atmosphere in her home mirrored that same serenity.

I drove away from her home and away from Shalom-hamlet. I watched as the water towers of the small towns passed in my rearview mirror. I reminisced about my time with Shalom. I witnessed her passion about teaching and teaching student teachers to teach others. Her passion was juxtaposed against the tranquility that radiated from her; she was indeed a contradiction of emotions.

Like Shalom, many of the environments I traversed after leaving home for college were predominantly White. As a 20-year-old who was away from home for the first time, Shalom was required to learn a lesson about interacting with others who were different. Not one to allow a challenge to hinder her, she dove headlong into crafting skills necessary for the environment in which she found herself.

She was adored by her parents, yet encouraged to be confident in who she was. She was also expected to excel in school and to take responsibility for her actions. As the eldest child, she was an example for her siblings and a source of counsel. All of the roles she played in her family contributed to the person I met in the embodiment of Shalom.

Professionally she transmitted passion, knowledge, and compassion to all of the students she taught. She encouraged them to teach from a position of love, love for the profession and love for the students. She inspired them to hone their teaching skills, to be confident with the content they were teaching, and to be prepared when they entered the classroom.

Shalom is a self-proclaimed life-long learner as evidenced by her continued pursuit of degrees and her inquisitive nature. It is her questioning nature that informs the scholarship she chooses to pursue. She has presented information to the local, state, national, and international professional communities. Given all that she has accomplished she remained humble.

I enjoyed the time I spent with Shalom. We vowed to keep in touch, and to collaborate on research once I finished my dissertation. I was appreciative of her giving nature. My time in reflection caused my drive time to diminish. When I awoke from this reverie, I was nearing the exit to my home. All I could say was, “time flies when you are having fun.”

## Chapter VI

### FAMILY PORTRAIT

*Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lack diligence; be fervent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality.*

*Romans 12: 9-13 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)*

*I Need You to Survive  
(Lyrics by Hezekiah Walker)*

*I need you,  
you need me,  
we're all a part of God's body.  
Stand with me,  
agree with me  
we're all a part of God's body.*

*It is His will that every need be supplied.  
You are important to me,  
I need you to survive.*

*I pray for you,  
you pray for me,  
I love you,  
I need you to survive.  
I won't harm you  
with words from my mouth,  
I love you,  
I need you to survive.*

*It is His will that every need be supplied.  
You are important to me,  
I need you to survive.*

Through my research I sought to bring the counter-narratives of six African American women faculty to the forefront in order that their muted voices might gain volume and be heard. The effect that their voices had on the institutions where they taught, served, and accomplished research or where they currently teach, serve, and perform research has not yet been birthed. During this post-election period when race, racism, isolationism, xenophobia, sexism, misogyny, and cultural intelligence and understanding or lack thereof has taken center stage, I wait with bated breath for the response of academe as a microcosm of the world. Will the academy reflect what is going on in the United States or will the occurrences in the United States serve as a Johari's window, revealing our blind spots or what it is that we do not know about ourselves and others?

The participants of my study and their experiences as African American women faculty at PWIs in the Deep South are as varied as the multi-hued skin tones of all African Americans. However, like these multi-hued skin tones that represent a population of people, the contextual singleness of their experiences interlaces to create a collective portrait or what I call a family portrait, an essence of the phenomena of being African American women faculty at PWIs in the Deep South.

I approached the writing of this chapter with the same inspiration I used to create the individual portraits found in the previous chapter. This chapter also begins with a selected Scripture and song that reflects what is to come. The chosen Scripture from Romans supports the search for *goodness* as found in Lawrence Lightfoot (1983). This Scripture not only implores us to search for goodness but to cling to what is good once goodness is found, I saw this as sage advice from a trusted source. The lyrics of the song



selection represent the collective voice of the participants. Each of them at some point during their interviews mentioned their support of me and their need for me to survive and thrive in an environment that oftentimes proves to be a challenge for African American women faculty. The participants of my study encouraged me and prayed for me. The Scripture and the lyrics of the song illustrate our connectedness to one another; they each give us hope in what oftentimes seems to be a hopeless situation. Although the participants did not know one another, they saw each other as parts of a collective whole, a family, *a part of God's body*. I interpreted this perspective from the participants as *goodness*.

Throughout this project, my primary research questions remained in the forefront of my thoughts. During the interview series with each participant, I constantly queried myself regarding if I was collecting data that would allow me to answer the research questions or if I needed to modify the questions to reflect the data I was obtaining. In the end, I chose to persist with the original research questions. I was open to the modification of the research questions if necessary. Maxwell (2013) encouraged the researcher to perform the “Jeopardy exercise” by asking what questions did I answer that may not have been part of my original question set (p. 85). I continue to employ this process. In this chapter I discussed the results of my study by returning to those research questions.

The first research question sought to capture the experiences of the participants as they intersected or not with race and racism. The second research question asked how the participants experienced and perceived campus climate at their 4-year PWIs in relationship to their teaching, service, and scholarship. The third research question asked about the stories the participants shared concerning themselves and their experiences with

campus climate that affected their professional, personal, and social identities. The final research question asked what was learned from the experiences and perceptions of the participants who successfully or unsuccessfully navigated their lives and the campus climate of 4-year PWIs in the Deep South.

The family portrait contains the answers to all of the research questions and describes the strategies the participants of my study used to navigate the campus climate at their respective PWIs in the Deep South. In some instances, these strategies were created and executed with military precision. In other examples, the strategies were stumbled upon. It matters not how the strategies were discovered and enacted. What is of significance is that the strategies employed by the participants served the participants well and assisted them in striving, surviving, and thriving at their places of employment.

The participants are not without faults. They are human beings capable of fallacy and given to imperfections. They did not present themselves as experts on the strategies other African American women faculty might use to navigate the campus climate of PWIs in the Deep South. The participants shared their counter-narratives as a cathartic exercise. They revealed their experiences to serve as examples to other African American woman faculty of what to do, what not to do, and the associated consequences of each of these actions. In the end, they saw themselves as successful because they survived or because they saw themselves thriving at their PWIs in the Deep South.

The themes of the family portrait emerged from a cross-case analysis of the individual portraits in this study. Each theme and its relationship to a specific participant is discussed. The strategy of cross-case analysis as employed by Lawrence Lightfoot (1983) in her qualitative study, *The Good High School*, compiled the portraits of the six

high schools. This same type of cross-case analysis was used to construct the themes of my study. Lawrence Lightfoot (1983) and Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) searched for goodness in the construction of a cross-case analysis.

Participant portraits and memos written during data collection and analysis were examined to commence the cross-case analysis of the data. Categories were assembled to form themes as discussed in the methods section. Notes identifying possible themes with notations concerning supporting words, stories, or illustrations in the portraits were written on sticky-notes. Transcribed text from interviews were highlighted, categorized according to theme, and taped to the wall in my home office. This process was vital in assisting me to think through potential themes that were used in the family portrait.

The experiences of each of the women in the study were different, yet there were several themes that emerged during data analysis that provided an understanding of how race and gender impacted the women's academic roles. Through repetitive refrains (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) found in each participant's counter-narrative and through careful examination, a cross-case analysis revealed the following four themes: the participant's reliance on God and the Scriptures to direct their lives; intersectionality is so complex, participants could not clearly identify interactions as racist or sexist, credit and job expectations are not the same for everyone; and establishing a working identity within the academy. Each theme is associated with a particular research question that guided this study. The connections between the research questions and the themes are found in the findings section of Chapter 7. The discussion of each theme is preceded by an analysis of the theme's significance to the professional and scholarly discourse, to the participants' experiences as an African American women faculty teaching at a PWI in the

Deep South, or to my observations as the researcher of this study. It is my view that these discussions will provide a lens through which the reader might gain an understanding of the meaning I attached to each theme. To illuminate the findings, each theme is accompanied by excerpts from the interviews with the participants.

#### Theme 1 - The Participant's Reliance on God and the Scriptures to direct their Lives

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Proverbs 3:5-8 (New King James Version)*

The significance attached to the relationship of African Americans to God and the Bible requires a look in the rearview mirror if you will, an investigation of the past. From the distant shores of the African continent through the Middle Passage and to their ultimate arrival in the "New World," Africans searched for relief and release from their captors. As a descendant of these enslaved individuals, I became curious about the significance of Christianity and the Bible to their lives and the lives of their offspring □ African Americans. Vincent L. Wimbush, Ph. D. (2012), internationally recognized scholar of religion asserted,

Almost from the beginning of their engagement with it, African Americans interpreted the Bible differently from those who introduced them to it, ironically and audaciously seeing in it, the most powerful of the ideological weapons used to legitimize their enslavement and disenfranchisement, a mirroring of themselves and their experiences, seeing in it the privileging of all of those like themselves who are the humiliated, the outcasts, and the powerless. It was seen as a sort of rhetorical paint brushing of their existence and a virtual manifesto for their redemption and triumph. So, for African Americas, to read Scripture is to read

darkness. By referring here to darkness, I do not mean to play the usual rhetorical-symbolization games that set up predictable but endless polarities and dualities. I mean here simply that African Americans' engagement of the Bible points to the Bible as that which both reflects and draws unto itself and engages and problematizes a certain complex order of existence associated with marginality, liminality, exile, pain, and trauma. (p. 17)

To the enslaved Africans, the Scriptures reflected their lives. It allowed them to hope in God. It gave them a sense of comfort that otherwise escaped them. The Scriptures speak to me today just as they spoke to my ancestors. Our struggles may be different, I am not under the threat of the lash or legally enslaved. However, the hope found in the Scriptures sustains me as it did my forefathers. Despite my free conditions, there remains, "a complex order of existence associated with marginality, liminality, exile, pain, and trauma" (Wimbush, 2012, p. 17), theirs at the hand of the slave master, mine as an African American woman faculty member employed by a PWI in the Deep South. The primacy of God, the Scriptures, and church attendance and participation was ingrained in each participant during her childhood. I perceived their trust, faith, and dependence on God as goodness (Lawrence Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005) and viewed this as a womanist position of "reconciling human life with the spiritual dimension" (Phillips, 2006, p. xx). The importance of God and the Scriptures in the lives of the participants of my study are found through their own words.

### *Shiphrah's Testimony*

During my interviews with Shiphrah, I witnessed her conceding to God. She did not take credit for her professional accomplishments, she continuously gave God recognition. Her belief was that all she achieved was because of her trust and faith in God. Throughout Shiphrah's interviews, regardless of the subject matter being discussed, Shiphrah spoke about God orchestrating her life. What follows is Shiphrah's statement attesting to her trust and faith in God.

When I was a kid in church, one time I remember a visiting evangelist said to my mother, "She is going to grow up to do some very special things. God has His hands on her, and she is going to do something very special. I remember that. My mother said, "Oh really;" and she was crying. And she was crying. I was a teenager when she said that. She said, "I just see it." I was scared at the time, not knowing what it would be. But thinking back, I have done some really special things, I really have, and God does have His hands on me.

### *Grace's Testimony*

Grace's relationship with God was born in her childhood home under the instruction of her parents. However, when she attended high school, the Christian Institute instructed her in Christian service. According to the mission of the Christian Institute, it was necessary to not only serve God, but she needed to serve humanity. She continued to serve throughout her life.

Christian Institute was basically Afro-American. The students were all Afro-American. But the teaching faculty was kind of mixed in the sense that a well-

known professor from another college and others on their faculty came out to teach us. Yes, all of our regular faculty members were college professors.

They had chapel every day. You were also expected to do work within the community. You were expected to go out into the sick. So we went to homes and visited the sick. This was a part of my high school experience. In addition to visiting the sick, we went to something we called the “poor house.” These were people who were struggling financially.

*Sophie’s Testimony*

During the interviews, Sophie commented on her belief in and reliance on God’s wisdom. Her daily practice was to accept the day that God gave her and to make the best of the gift of the day. Sophie attended church since her childhood. She remained active in church, often mentioning the work she was doing with and for the church of which she was currently a member.

Dr. Barnes was the only pharmacist in the Black community at that time. On Sundays, we’d leave church and go by there, and the older kids would have milkshakes and talk about stuff we weren’t interested in because we were youngsters.

I currently attend a predominantly White church. I get along well with all members of my church. I get involved with the community service projects and organizations that my church participates in. I don’t allow the fact that I am one of a few Black members get in the way of my service to God.



### *Tabitha's Testimony*

The biblical truth that Tabitha shared in the following passage of text guided her life and her life's actions. She approached decisions and life choices based on knowing who she was according to God's word. When confronted with difficulties, Tabitha would first search God's word for solutions. Not one to waver in her Christian beliefs, she was never disappointed in this approach to problem solving.

The Bible tells you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made and that God knitted us together in our mother's womb. When I was a kid, the old mothers of the church used to pray over my mom when she was pregnant with me. They prayed over her, and they prayed over me in her womb. I believe that whatever they prayed has had a great impact on who I am today. They did not have a lot of education; they didn't have fancy jobs, but these were praying women. They prayed safety; they prayed wisdom; they wanted me to be smart; they wanted me to be talented; they wanted me to serve God. They were instrumental in my life as I was growing up.

### *Faith's Testimony*

Although not mentioned during her interview series, I know Faith to be a God-fearing woman who along with her spouse is rearing their children in the reverence of God. She is an avid church attendee who is involved in service to God. She conducts her life using Christian principles.

### *Shalom's Testimony*

"This is what I know for sure, God is going to look out for me. He is going to fix it. Whatever it is, it is happening for a reason."



The simplicity of Shalom's testimony though short speaks volumes about her faith and trust in God. She chooses to look for the reason of the occurrences in her life. She wants to understand the lesson that God is teaching her. Proverbs 3:5-8, expresses each participant's reliance on God and the Scriptures to inspire and direct their lives. They are the embodiment of *trust in the Lord with all your heart*. As God-fearing women, they pray about everything. They seek God's will in their lives above their own. As mentioned prior, they are not perfect and did not position themselves as such. What they testified to was a belief that God has their best interest at heart and that he will work everything out in their lives for their good and His glory.

The reader of my dissertation may ask at this juncture, "How does this theme relate to the research questions designed to guide the structure of this qualitative study?" The significance attached to the need of the participant's reliance on God and the Scriptures to direct their lives required a return to the professional and scholarly discourse. When faced with the challenges of "alienation," "isolation," "marginality," and "invisibility" (Allison, 2008, p. 644; Orelus, 2013, pp. 4-5; Stanley, 2006a, p. 703), it is the invisibility that hurls African American women faculty into perceptions of being marginalized, isolated, and alienated within the walls of academe. How is it that a person can simultaneously be present and remain invisible? One can be physically present yet have their presence and voice ignored by others in the space. To cope with these perceptions, the participants of my study relied on a power and strength, which did not emanate from another human. The participants required a higher power, God's power to help them strive, survive, and thrive on the campuses of the PWIs in the Deep South where they were employed.

Theme 2-Intersectionality is so Complex, Participants could not Clearly Identify  
Interactions as Racist or Sexist

Race and gender sit at the pinnacle of my research. The title of this theme is indicative of the complexity of intersectionality. The Venn diagram suggests that all the social categories that represent an individual can be separated and only those parts that overlap contribute to intersectionality. This idea is overly simplistic. The totality of who we are cannot be determined by a moment in time. We are more than a snap shot. We are an amalgam of all who came before us, those through whom we came, and the world into which we were born. These work in conjunction to mold who we become. The participants of my study are all African American women employed by PWIs in the Deep South. This is the beginning and the end of what is common to each of them. The entirety of who they are contributed to this research and not one scintilla of who they are as individuals could be parsed and examined without considering the whole individual. However, the experiences of the African American women of this study, as evidenced by their counter-narratives, indicated that race and gender not only played a significant role in their academic careers, but sometimes seemed to operate independently. How race and gender intersected or not, depended largely upon the circumstance or interaction. When interacting with White male colleagues or administrators, it was difficult for the participant to determine if racism, sexism, or a combination was at play. Collins and Bilge (2016), spoke to the multifaceted components of intersectionality and described the phenomenon as,

. . . way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life

and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and themselves. (p. 4)

In a White male dominated society, African American women exist as the antithesis to the White male standard. This section explores how the participant's interactions with administrators, colleagues, or students on the campuses of the PWIs where they taught or continue to teach intersected or not with race and racism. When listening to the participants during interviews or during a review of the tape recordings, categorizing some of their interactions as overt racism was difficult.

Long gone are the days of public lynching, segregated lunch counters, and separate water fountains labeled "Whites only" or "Colored only," a time when racism was apparent. This overt racism has taken on a subtleness, a sophistication, if you will. Yes, there remains a remnant of blatantly manifested racism and racist acts that can be witnessed during the televised broadcasts of national media outlets. Yet, on the campuses of PWIs in the Deep South where the participants taught or continue to teach, some of the participant's interactions with administrators, colleagues, or students called into question the presence of racism and/or sexism. These interactions were not displayed as unconcealed acts of racism nor were deliberate racist remarks made. Yet, some of the

word choices used by administrators, colleagues, or students were coded messages for racism. Addressing these coded messages, Ian Haney Lopez (2014) affirmed,

I use “dog whistle politics” to mean, more narrowly, coded talk centered on race; while the term could encompass clandestine solicitations on a number of bases, here it refers to racial appeals . . . . Those blowing a racial dog whistle know full well that they would be broadly condemned if understood as appealing for racial solidarity among Whites . . . . Racial dog whistling involves three basic moves: a punch that jabs race into the conversation through thinly veiled reference to threatening non-Whites, a parry that slaps away charges for racial pandering, and finally a kick that savages the critic for opportunistically alleging racial victimization. (p. 4)

Lopez situated his conversation in the arena of politics, however, I use the term to describe the same occurrences happening on the campuses of American colleges and universities. These campuses are touted as bastions of high ideals. Yet, they simultaneously exist as microcosms of American society reflecting prevailing positive and negative traits. Pulled from the participants’ counter-narratives, the excerpts below represent their interaction with administrators, colleagues, or students.

*Shiphrah’s Dog Whistle Moment*

The position that had been mentioned to my husband was in remedial education that was open so I went and applied to that and when I applied to Shiphrahville PWI for a second time, the president of the university said to me, “Well young lady we are going to hire you, but I don’t want to see you downtown marching in any protests. I don’t want to see you out there in that civil rights stuff.

I don't want to see you out there in any of that." This was in 1972. That was the condition that he gave me.

Of course, my husband worked with the NAACP, his job was to bring Black doctors to Shiphrahville. He worked with the health committee. He was definitely into civil rights, and I was really into civil rights. I was militant. When I came to Shiphrahville I had a "fro" this big [Shiphrah stretched out her hands on either side of her head 5 inches to indicate how large her afro was]. When I went to Shiphrahville PWI, I straightened it out. I said, "I will change it for the time being." I got the job and then I changed it back. I didn't have the gigantic afro, but I started wearing it again.

#### *Grace's Dog Whistle Moment*

During this time, I was splitting my time between the library and the education department. I was not allowed out in the main area of the library. They wanted me to stay in the cataloging area. I would be devilish. I know they hadn't scheduled me out front but I would go out front by the circulation desk. One day the president of the university came over, as I was working, he said, "I just wanted to see what you looked like." There were a few men that I would say were always fearful about speaking. If you were on the elevator together and it's just the two of you and you're saying like hey, how are you doing or something like that? They wouldn't say anything. The women if you would speak to them at least you would get a response. I felt isolated. I really felt isolated. How I was being treated on the campus of Grace-land PWI reinforced the isolation I felt at St. Louis University. I was not allowed in the public areas of the library, I was not

spoken to by colleagues or students, and I was working in two different departments that did not want my presence. I felt really isolated.

I had done a lot of work for Grace-land PWI. I'm only one person. I was responsible for the library media minor, the library media major, and the library media certification. I was trying to prepare school library media specialists and trying to prepare those who were going on to graduate library school. I was doing all of that, but they never gave me the title of program director. Somehow or another I should have had it, but when they are speaking about the library and the library media program it was the [White] head librarian that got all of the credit.

*Sophie's Dog Whistle Moment*

I didn't have any issues as an African America. I had been exposed to Whites in other institutions where I was the only Black. I was very comfortable in that setting, and I had no problems with telling people that I was one of the nicest people I know; I don't know why anybody wouldn't like me. I would just candidly say that. I knew there were some faculty members who were uncomfortable with me but that was their problem, not mine. Many of the faculty members of my department had a problem with having and reporting to an African American leader. There were always tensions, and I knew there was real sabotage, and I'm saying it openly. I was the only Black person. There were no other Blacks except for a few part-time clinical instructors in my program. There was a Black faculty who taught in the baccalaureate program, however, she was not under me, we had a professional relationship. There were several other women who were not going to allow me to be beat up on. I would get messages

that would inform me when the little gimmicks and the little talks were going on so that I could deal with them and not be blind-sided.

*Tabitha's Dog Whistle Moment*

One of my White colleagues said that he was concerned about the way our African-American students talk. I said, "Besides the fact that they use African-American vernacular or what you call Ebonics. By the way, Ebonics is not a grammatically incorrect language; it is actually a specific dialect that is unique to African-Americans." I said, "You are not concerned with the White students in your class who say things like 'y'all' and 'thunk.' You are not concerned about them saying those types of things." His response, "Well, yes I am." So I started getting into all of these different conversations with them because I was the only one [Black faculty]. I was always the only one. In many situations in my department as well as in my college, I was the only one. Because I was the only one, I became unique in a whole bunch of different ways and so what I started doing was getting involved in activities on campus. Activities that I liked and activities where I felt I needed to be.

There was a committee called the Gender and Women's Advisory Council. I did not want to be on this committee, I knew this was all about second wave feminist agenda, and it was led by a senior faculty member who has an avid second wave feminist agenda. It was her way of feminism or nobody's way. So immediately she and I clashed big time. We clashed because I developed a class called Communication between the Genders. She went to the curriculum review committee to fight me because she didn't like the name. You cannot have

communication between the genders in her mind because gender is a binary. It's a social construct, I said, "Fine." She said, "Well, you should know the literature." I said, "I know my literature. When you look at a social construct you still have to look at the people who are a part of that community who see this as a reality. My students believe there is gender so I have to let them look and see if they will still believe it by the end of the course." There are biological differences between men and women. We have to acknowledge that. There are people who believe that there are psychological differences between men and women, and we have to acknowledge that. I have to meet my students where they are. I said, "This is a communication class, this is not a gender class."

*Faith's Dog Whistle Moment*

I don't even know how to define relationship. It can be as minimal as an interaction or the empirical definition of relationship. From my standpoint what I often try to establish is a clear-cut understanding that there is difference between a student and professor. I don't seek to be my students' friend. That is not what I am here for. I like a clear-cut distinction in the hierarchy.

As far as how they see me, I am often referred to as someone with high standards probably the toughest faculty in the program as far as rigor of the classes. One of the words that students use when referring to me is intimidating. I have asked the students that I do have or have had a personal relationship with to explain what that means. None of them can describe it. It's just a sense of, "She's not going to play around, and you are going to have to do what she asks you to do." I have asked to try to pin-point it and what has been described to me would



not fit my definition of intimidation. So, I am not sure, but the funny thing is they all say, “don’t change.” I have often asked the question because I often try to figure out what is it about me that makes me intimidating. When I walk into the room that’s often the students’ impression, upon appearance, they find me intimidating. I don’t get it. It may be that I am a no-nonsense kind of person.

*Shalom’s Dog Whistle Moment*

“Tenure and promotion is hell. Don’t let anyone fool you.” It’s tough, but it’s worth it because as you go through it you get a chance to see what you are really made of. You also learn to take advantage of opportunities as they are presented. I got involved with the community, I gave speeches at middle schools in the area, and I was asked to assist in selecting the Teacher of the Year. I got so many opportunities. God put things out there for me to do. I said yes to God and yes to the opportunity. I was also told that I needed to write and get published. When I arrived on my campus, I wrote three handbooks.

The worst thing that happened to me going through tenure and promotion was a [White] student evaluation that wasn’t so complimentary. The issue was that I was taking prescribed medication in front of the class. The student wrote that I wasn’t professional. I told the students in class that I needed to take medication and turned my back and drank out of the bottle. I had forgotten my spoon. She spoke of my lack of professionalism because of the act of drinking from the bottle.

My department head wanted that negative comment in my promotion portfolio to bring me down. I saw right through that. That’s that White male thing

rearing its ugly head. They still don't want to see us get ahead of them. I know that's crazy, but I understand that it happens. This is what I know for sure, God is going to look out for me. He is going to fix it. Whatever it is, it is happening for a reason. My department head at the time wanted to include this student's evaluation of me in my portfolio. He allowed me to see the comments and other things that he placed in my portfolio. I said to him, "Oh no, you will not place that in my promotion portfolio. You are going to take that out!" I had worked for 7 years and he hadn't been there as long as I had. I made him take that comment out of my portfolio. Then of course my portfolio went through and I was fine.

The rumor on my campus was that African Americans be careful. You get to the end and you get to promotion and they try to find things against you. That rumor was spreading all over my campus. I turned my promotion portfolio in early so that if something needed to be changed I could change it prior to the deadline.

Intersectionality is an analytic tool used by individuals choosing to understand and find solutions to difficulties and obstructions that prohibit access to inclusive and fair opportunities and environments enjoyed by the majority. American colleges and universities stand as ideal communities that would benefit from using intersectionality to gain an understanding of what is fair and inclusive to the individual inhabitants of the campus community. "The social divisions of class, race, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, sexuality, and ability are especially evident within higher education" (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 4). These topics and other subjects reflecting inclusion and equity remain salient in conversations on the campuses of American PWIs. Positions for Chief Diversity

Officers are regularly advertised in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. According to McMurtrie (2016), writing for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*,

Diversity has been a hot-button topic since federal desegregation efforts began more than 50 years ago. Yet efforts to increase their numbers of minority faculty, staff, and on campuses, create inclusive communities and incuse the curriculum with diverse perspectives have been met with limited success. (p. A4)

There seems to be an impetus for creating campus climates that embrace the diversity of the inhabitants and stakeholders of the campus community. However, the question remains unanswered, will American colleges and universities continue to reflect the country's intolerance of difference or will the academy serve as an example of the high ideals to which we aspire as a nation?

Theme 3 – Credit and Job Expectations are not the same for everyone

The long-established “holy trinity” of faculty activities in 4-year American colleges and universities ranked according to significance are teaching, scholarship, and service. However, there has been a disproportionate shift toward research (Backes-Gellner & Schlinghoff, 2010; Francis, Corbett, & Harris, 2012). Scholarship of faculty of color was often challenged by the academic community on the basis of ethnic-focused content (Holmes, 2008; Orelus, 2013; Stanley, 2006b), use of alternative [qualitative] research methods (Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006), and significance of their research findings, therefore adversely affecting their abilities to publish in highly regarded journals (Jackson-Weaver, Baker, Gillespie, Ramos, Belido, & Watts, 2010; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006). Many colleges and universities esteem student teaching evaluations as vital components of the evaluation of teaching for tenure and promotion. Administrators must

consider that the views articulated by students in the evaluation of African American women faculty may be influenced by students' bias regarding the race and gender of the faculty member (Delgado & Villalpando, 2002; Jackson-Weaver et al., 2010; McGowan, 2000; Stanley et al., 2003; Tusmith & Reddy, 2002; Vargas, 2002; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006).

Documented by the professional and scholarly discourse (Cooper, 2006; Guttierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Harley, 2008; Stanley, 2006a; Turner, 2002) the service activity of faculty members is a requirement. However, the extant literature from the professional community (Guttierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Jean-Marie & Lloyd-Jones, 2011) also documented that the amount of service rendered by African American women faculty is greater than that which is required of White male and female faculty. The inordinate amount of service performed by African American women faculty was deemed as invisible labor by June (2015). She defined invisible labor as,

the pressure faculty members of color feel to serve as role models, mentors, even surrogate parents to minority students, and to meet every institutional need for ethnic representation. Moreover, this invisible labor is exacerbated by a student population diversifying faster than the faculty.

The participants' counter-narratives on this subject echo the voices found in the professional and scholarly discourse.

*Shiphrah's Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service*

I got really good evaluations from most of my students. I always received really good evaluations, because I had real strict standards. I always maintained a

psychological distance between my students and me. I was always very careful about my interactions with them.

One of them said to me, “I have always gotten *As*” I replied, “That’s good but you are not going to get an *A*. This is a different level. Here is your record. I didn’t give you anything. This is what you earned. Here they are.” Another student burst into my office and went belligerent. I called the campus police on her. She came into my office screaming and hollering at me. I said, “Leave my office.” She replied, “I am not leaving your office. You gave me a grade, and I didn’t deserve that grade.” I said, “I gave you the grade you earned.” She answered, “I’m going to get my friend, and we are going to do this or that.” I stated, “I am going to call the campus police if you do not leave right now.” The campus police came and asked me, “What can I do, Dr. Shiphrah, what do you need?” They know me. White people see you there long enough they know you.

In preparation for creating the Bridge program, I interviewed paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, bus drivers, and I said, “If we got you into college and got you through college what would you need?” They told me, “We would need tutors”, “we need somebody to babysit”, and “we would need money to go to school because we would have to stop our jobs.” Everything they said they needed I put it into the grant. So, we got a grant from Dewitt Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund. It was almost a million dollars. They gave us a check upfront. The upfront money was unique. It was not really that structured. We could use the money as we wanted. We applied for and won an award from Harvard University. We went to D.C. and presented to the National Press Club,

and we won their top award. We won the top award out of 1,121 applicants. The pattern continued. The more notoriety we garnered, the more funding we received. The more funding, we received, the more Shiphrahville PWI was featured on a national level, and the greater the acceptance of our scholars at Shiphrahville PWI. We wrote federal grants and got more and more money; hundreds of thousands of dollars. This allowed us to perpetuate the program. The [Bridge] program went on for 14 years. We certified over 125 [Black] K-12 teachers.

*Grace's Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service*

Basically I think my relationship with students was good. I'm weighing this on the evaluations. I had positive experiences, and I had negative experiences with students. There were two Afro-American boys in my class. They have on red shoes and red hats. They are small in stature, but I tell you they made me want to cry. They gave me such a hard time while they were in my class. I asked another teacher who had them in class, "Do you have any problems with them?" She responded, "No, they are nice students." It made me wonder why they were giving me such a hard time. The other incident that I had was this Afro-American kid and there were about four White kids, and they had gotten together that they weren't going to do the assignments, and they had their grievance. They had put the Afro-American kid as the leader. So I called her in, and I said look, "they are putting you up as the leader. You're not completing your assignments but they are completing their work. They are going to pass, and you are not." So that was the end of that.

At one point I was working under the library. I started teaching the library science classes and so forth. So the librarian said, “Hey, you are full-time.” But he had put beside my time an asterisk. The asterisk meant that I was three-fourth time. You know in that day you signed your time sheet and turned it in. I never thought to look at it. So I actually had 4 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  years in as an employee instead of 5 years. So the next year I would have 5 full years in and then I got tenure.

When Grace-land PWI hired me, they hired me as assistant professor. After I had gotten my doctorate completed and doing that work and trying to maintain my classes, maintain a home and so forth, I just didn’t do more work for a higher rank, the rank of associate professor. I just didn’t have the energy. But a colleague said, “You do it. You do it. It’s not just for you. You are looking down the road for other folk.” So I did. I did my research. I researched what should be in the promotion documentation. I did not have any problems. I had been at Grace-land PWI for a long time; I had to prepare lots of packages highlighting my performance as a faculty member. I was promoted to associate professor.

*Sophie’s Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service*

One student wrote a letter to the State Board of Nursing (SBN). She informed them that I was not qualified, this student was Black. She further accused me of not knowing what I was doing. The Director of the SBN called me; she told me about the letter and informed me that she was going to send the letter to me. In the meantime, we found out there were other letters also. I went to the Vice-President of the University, and he assured me that they would investigate the issue. The student was identified and informed she was never to write another

letter to the SBN. This student did not go through the proper channels. She did not share the complaint with anyone in the department prior to sending the letter to the SBN. I was notified by a confidante that the student was encouraged to do this by a White faculty member in the department. I received this information but did not deal with it by confronting the individual.

I looked at the adult as a learner. I went through all of the learning theories, and what have you. I was well suited to deal with the adult learner. I knew how to counsel them. The results of my dissertation were that there was very little difference between the students in the traditional program, and the students in self-paced program. The students in the self-paced program were driven to succeed based on their desired goal to become a nurse.

In the beginning of my career as a college professor, I was a textbook reviewer. So I didn't spend too much time around that. Then some of those colleagues from across campus and I got together because we found that when we would write articles for our own journals, if your article subject was not the topic of that journal edition, your article would not be accepted. So we did a lot of article writing around non-traditional issues. We would write as partners, and we would write as individuals.

Another thing was that I served on the National League for Nursing Board. I was on the accreditation committee for that board. My work with that Board added to the scholarship. Those were the things I did because it was hard to even get an article published in the *American Journal of Nursing*. You needed to



know far in advance what the subject of the journal would be and write an article to fit a specific journal edition.

*Tabitha's Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service*

So a lot of the stuff that I do here is out of necessity for the students, and I'm not going to say it doesn't help to benefit me. It does, but then I have to take on whole new battles. I'm becoming known on campus and rumors get around, real or imagined about me being arrogant, me being cocky, me pushing my blackness in other people's faces. But on the other hand rumors also get around that if I'm on a committee I get the work done and that I have a very good relationship with students. Students like me. White students as well as Black students like me. I relate very well with male students.

For example, in my discipline we get credit for directing plays, that's scholarship. Well, I had directed two plays. Two of the people who had made my life a living hell ended up being on my first T and P committee. All of the stuff I did for service, they discounted when they read through my package. The guy who was the chair of the committee was from my college, but he didn't know anything about me. He spent one hour with me talking about what I do so he thought he knew what I did. They [the coven] took over the entire T and P process.

When I read the notes that came back from that [tenure and promotion committee], it described my service as being satisfactory, as being stuff that I would normally do; it implied that because I was Black I would obviously be involved in those things. The second thing, for scholarship they didn't count any

of my plays that I directed as scholarship. The book that I was writing, getting the book contract and having the book and stuff [was not seen as scholarship]; I had another book that had already been published, but it wasn't peer reviewed. The book I was writing had a publisher, but they decided that it wasn't relevant because the topic was again something that dealt with my Blackness so they marginalized my scholarship. They downgraded my service.

When I got the letter that talked about the vote, they voted for me to have tenure, just barely. They didn't vote for me to be promoted. When I got that letter we were having graduation and I went back to look at my mailbox. I looked in my mailbox and read the letter, and I just cried. I said, "I cannot believe this." My boss immediately fired off a letter to the President. I fired off a letter to the President that talked about how they demeaned my scholarship, and I said that this place is racist. This is a climate of racism in that you do not respect the work of scholars of color. They voted down a lot of people. They messed up a lot of people's stuff. They had to change the way they do tenure now because of those women. They changed the whole board in my college. It took another Provost to get here before I got my promotion.

I went through hell. To me it was kind of embarrassing in a way because I didn't get promoted. Other people that I went up with at the same time were getting promoted. I said, "I'm just as smart as they are, just as talented as they are. They are not running me out of here. I'm going to fight this; I'm going to make my being tenured, their living hell, which I did." So when I got my promotion, I didn't make a big deal about it. I knew I was going to get it. I said, "Now I'm

going to pursue being a full professor. I am not leaving here until I make full professor because you cheated me out of one thing, you ain't going to cheat me out of anything else.”

*Faith's Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service*

I have students that are not in my program that I advise, students that are interested in my program. I talk with these students and that always goes well. That is always positive; students usually walk away having said, “You have been very helpful.” Oftentimes comparing it to what they have gotten in other majors or other disciplines, I feel like that is very helpful to them. I have seen some of my colleagues take advisement as something else on the list, something else to do, and I think it should be more personal for that student. I think it should be credible, not just something fatiguing to me. They come, and they don't know, and they have such great need.

I like teaching about things that I am very interested in. I really like my profession. I was intrigued with it from the moment I got into it. I like sharing that information. I like helping students understand the information, and the importance of it. If there is anything that I do not like about teaching it has to do with those things that have nothing to do with directly teaching in the classroom. They have nothing to do with content or learning per se. Personality issues that you have to deal with, co-worker issues sometimes, but it's probably now more student issues than co-worker issue, issues with millennial students.

My scholarship has almost been nonexistent until the last couple of years. Getting into academia causes a lot of things to come to a grinding halt. I heard

people talking about that and encouraging me to protect my time. I am now trying to make more of a priority to make scholarship out of the things that I do daily since that's so much of what we do. The institution requires scholarship but they do not have a mechanism in place for it to be accomplished. So in the last couple of years I have been conscience of thinking about what scholarship I can make of the things I am currently doing. You can do presentations or you can publish manuscripts. However, initially there seemed to be very little support to assist faculty in getting those types of things done.

*Shalom's Thoughts on Teaching, Scholarship, and Service*

I always promise my students I am going to get their assignments back to them in a timely manner. They complimented me on returning their assignment quickly. This requires that I wake early in the morning. I function better in the early morning hours. I like the quiet that morning brings. I am not a night person. I need 7-8 hours of sleep nightly. I don't function well with less.

When I first arrived at my current institution, I wrote three handbooks for student teachers. The president of the university asked me how I managed to write these handbooks, I replied that I usually work through the week as well as on the weekends. I work during the holidays and on Sundays. I rarely take off. I have been labeled a "worker bee" by my colleagues inside and outside of my college. But the bottom line is this; I realize that I have pride as an African American. I was told that I have to work harder, and I have to do more because they are looking for an excuse to rationalize my absence as a professor in higher education.

I do so much that sometimes I don't remember what I have accomplished over the course of the academic year. However, because we have to create an annual portfolio, which documents our teaching, service, and scholarship, I am reminded of why I'm fatigued. That's when I really see what I have done and say, "It's no wonder that I'm tired, I guess I should be."

According to demographic projections by the U.S. Census Bureau (2016b), Whites will become the numerical minority in 2060, when the nation will become a majority-minority country. Given this projection, society and culture in the U.S. are in constant flux toward this new normal. It stands to reason that as the American population shifts toward an increase in citizens of color, the student population on the campuses of American colleges and universities will also reflect this change in demographics.

Faculty of color possess a variety of scholarly and academic perspectives that are crucial to the functioning of public universities in a pluralistic society. In light of the significant demographic changes brought about by the new immigration and dramatic increase in students of Color in institutions of higher education the very viability of academe may depend on its ability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body and American population. (Turner, 2002, p. 2)

#### Theme 4 – Establishing a Working Identity within the Academy

In part, Carbado and Gulati (2013) purported working identity as referring to “the perceived choices people make about their self-presentation (the racially associated ways of being) and to the perceived identity that emerges from those choices (how Black we determine a person to be)” (p. 1). This is a partial definition of working identity. The complete definition can be found in Appendix A.

Everyone works their identity. We all have a need to fit in. However, the existence of negative racial stereotypes increases those pressures and makes the work of fitting in more challenging for African Americans. Admittedly, African Americans are not the only racial minority that experiences this difficulty. However, African Americans are the only minority group brought to the United States of America against their will as enslaved individuals. The relationship between African Americans and America remains racially charged and contentious. Race is not the only social category that is associated with working identity. All social categories employ a working identity to fit in with the normative standard of the White male. Women must contend with working their identities according to the degree of femininity or lack of femininity they portray. However, for purposes of my study I chose to focus on the intersection of African American women.

*Shiphrah's Working Identity: Money, money, money, money, money!*

I just didn't deal with those people who I knew didn't like me or were racist or something. I tried not to deal with those kinds of people. As the Bridge scholars went through the different programs, I would advise them to the right faculty. We didn't deal with bad faculty members. Then I received the top awards from the students, the faculty, and the community. I got an award from the university system. Once you get national attention you have more opportunities. I got an award from the Board of Regents then I got the state's Professor of the Year Award. Once I started getting those awards people stopped bothering me and began to respect me. This occurred because I was dealing on a level they hadn't even gotten to yet. The main question was "will you be getting an Ed. D.

or a Ph.D.?” I got a Ph.D., which was more preferred at the university level than was an Ed. D. When they found out I was getting a Ph.D., I was okay.

During this time I knew that male faculty members were in dominant positions. They were all department heads. There were a few women who were department heads. The advantage of my being a department head was that I had two positives; I was Black and female. So it behooved the university to promote more Blacks and women or Hispanics and women. That was an advantage, and they did it because it was to their advantage, not because they wanted to do it. I became known as an African American. She stated, “That’s Shiphrah, oh yeah, she’s the Black faculty member over there.” That was my major identity. I was the only one, the only Black department head and the only Black professor in education. Because I was the only one they needed to make sure people knew that I was Black. I served on committees because they needed a Black person on the committee. I advised a larger number of students than other faculty did. I had my regularly assigned students plus I had Black students who came to me because I was Black, and they needed to talk to somebody Black because they had a Black issue. They weren’t necessarily my students or my advisees. [Shiphrah then asked rhetorically,] “What is it like being the only one? It means that you have to do more than everybody else because you are the only one.”

Shiphrah’s working identity was not limited to the copious amounts of money she secured for the creation of the Bridge program. Her grant writing and fund-raising skills were in the area of her professional life where she could escape the scrutiny of being an African American female and all of the stereotypes that accompany this intersection. She

recognized a need in the community of Shiphrahville and crafted a plan to meet that need.

She also understood that Shiphrahville PWI needed to be convinced that the Bridge program was necessary. Interest convergence theory (Bell, 1980), which holds that Whites will support minority rights only when it's in their interest as well, was at play. Through grants, other funding, and national notoriety, Shiphrah identified for Shiphrahville PWI how the Bridge program would benefit the university. She was granted permission by the administration of Shiphrahville PWI to create the Bridge program. Shiphrah's triumph in creating the Bridge program reminded me of the comment from her undergraduate interviewer. The interviewer wrote, "She wants to help her race." Through the Bridge program Shiphrah helped the African American paraprofessionals in Shiphrahville to attain professional status by becoming K-12 teachers.

*Grace's Working Identity: You Catch More Flies with Sugar than You do with . . .*

The new director of the library and I have an appointment with the department head of education. The library director walks me over to the education department head and makes a formal introduction, although I knew the guy. The education department head said, "If I had a choice, I wouldn't take you." He tells me that so I said to myself, okay I'm going to make you eat those words. That was my attitude.

The department head of education is going to show me where my office is. It was like a work room. There was a sink and a couple of tables. Going back to the librarian, I think he feels very bad about it [the statement by the department head]. He is trying to reassure me. He says, "It is going to work out. Give it some



time.” When I finally move to the education department, there is another Black faculty member there in the office that I will be using. So then I think he realized all of a sudden he is putting Blacks together. When I return for the third time, I have a different office, a regular office. But then I think, how am I going to get him?

I got me a briefcase; my husband bought me a briefcase. I would take my things in a briefcase. I said to myself, I’m going to look professional. Then I said I am going to sit next to him at the faculty meetings. He is carrying on the meeting and so forth like that and he would make nasty jokes, now he is sitting here and I am sitting here so I didn’t laugh at his jokes. I said to myself this is going to ingratiate me with him or not. But then I noticed that after a while he didn’t tell anymore nasty jokes.

Things were beginning to soften up. During student registration, I would sit next to him. Then he got this thing where he would come in early to see if I was there. I said alright he is coming in early, and I came in earlier to insure that I was there before he was. I would make sure that he saw me. Then if he gave us some type of report to complete he would come the next day to pick up the report. So when he would come and ask for it I would reach down in my pad and pull it out. Well he soon stopped that and then it looked like we were becoming friends.

When he would have a problem, he would come to me and talk to me about his problem. His problems were either personal about his wife or about his son or whatever. He would have somebody to listen. So we really became friends and then during the summer, I was off in the summer, I was reading the paper and

I was reading the death notices and there he was. Yes, he had died. He was mowing his son's lawn and had a heart attack.

The initial rejection that Grace felt from the education department head was her normal treatment on the campus of Grace-land PWI. Colleagues from across campus responded to Grace and the other African American faculty women in the same manner. Rejection and isolation became Grace's norm. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, she crafted a plan that would solidify the promise she made to herself, "I'm going to make you eat those words." She accomplished her goal; she became the confidante of the education department head. Forged as a self-imposed challenge, the friendship she forged with the education department head morphed into a mutual friendship proving you do catch more flies with sugar than you do . . . .

*Sophie's Working Identity: Racial Comforting and Partial Strategic Passing*

*Racial Comforting*, as defined by Carbado and Gulati (2013), "Occurs when outsiders work their identities to make insiders feel comfortable with their outsider status" (p. 26). Additionally, they describe *Strategic Passing* as, "a phenomenon in which an Outsider fools Insiders into believing that the Outsider is one of the Insiders" (p. 29). Finally, *Partial Passing* as in Sophie's working identity, describes "How a person might partially pass in two ways: distancing herself from the Outsider group or embracing the Insider group" (p. 29).

The kids who came behind me all started talking about "Whitie" and other stuff, and I questioned them, "Where did you get that from?" My age group didn't do that, probably because we knew that we were not allowed to be loud and vocal. We knew the stores we could shop in. We knew the places we could go, and we

pretty much accepted that. During all of my growing up years, I wanted to be a nurse because of Nurse Davis. She came to our schools and administered our shots and checked on us. She was very attractive, probably a little bit fairer than I am.

My relationships and interactions with colleges outside of my department was a different story. Those relationships were wonderful; I never had any problems there. People enjoyed talking to me and what have you. I had excellent relationships with faculty from other departments. I was a part of welcoming the faculty of new disciplines, and new programs of study that were coming to campus.

I have always been the only one, the only Black person. I went to a university in Massachusetts to take a course in enterstomial nursing. I was the only Black nurse in the whole bunch that decided to be an ostomy nurse. So it really didn't hit me that I was the only one. I cannot remember any time at any point where I really concentrated on thinking about it. When I went to the community college to teach, I was the only Black that taught in the nursing program. I have always been the only one. When we moved into a neighborhood, we were the only Blacks. I ran for the school committee, I was the only Black on the school committee. Some people have problems, and some don't. I just didn't have any issues being the only Black. I have always known who I am. I am a poor Black gal who grew up in and came out of Virginia. I have known that for years. When I do encounter issues with being Black, I just dealt with it. I would say, "Excuse me, or am I hearing you correctly? How do you mean that?" I wouldn't

put them down. I wouldn't get sassy even though in the back of my throat I could spit out a few things. I responded like that because I had been through it all already.

I think people need to put themselves in my shoes, and learn to behave the way I do. See, one of the things you didn't ask me was about culture shock. That was the biggest hurdle that I had to deal with. People have preconceived notions of who you are, and what you know, and what you are about. So I wish they would understand that the world is bigger than they are, and that there are people who are bigger and wiser than they are, and that not every symbol is an accurate symbol. Just Because I am Black doesn't mean I am like every other Black that they know. I try to pass that on. I would keep it at that.

Being born and reared in the segregated South during the late 30's and early 40's required skills for survival. Sophie grew up during a time when African Americans were to be seen and not heard. She developed skills that allowed her to navigate her community and the world beyond Virginia. Instead of elevating her racial identity, Sophie continued to educate herself, ultimately earning a doctorate in 1988. The survival skills that she learned in Virginia and Massachusetts followed her into professional life.

*Tabitha's Working Identity: Providing Discomfort*

Some Outsiders may work their identities to create discomfort. The Outsider may choose to emphasize his or her Outsider Status in a way that makes Insiders uncomfortable. The Outsider may, for example, consistently point out instances of unfairness against Outsiders. (Carbado & Gulati, 2013, p. 33)

Her skin tone is the color of dark roasted coffee. I now know her to be no nonsense, intense, strong, and intelligent beyond my imaginings. Her attire is most often Afrocentric and her hair is in its natural state. I know her as unpretentious, a “what you see is what you get” kind of woman. She is unimpressed by the window dressing of others. She is caring and compassionate. There is warmth to her that she displays in intimate conversations among those with whom she is close.

The year 1968 had been troubling for Negroes. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been killed in April. But in August of that same year, James Brown came up with the song, “Say it loud, I’m Black and I’m proud.” And people would say, “Oh, it’s just a song.” But that song was my metamorphosis. It let me know that being Black was okay, and I was going to get through it. That summer when he came out with that song, I don’t think I ever called myself Negro after that or colored. Seattle’s central area, where all of the Black people lived changed. Everyone started wearing the afros and bright colors.

People on campus wonder why I wear Afrocentric outfits, part of that stems from then, the time period, 1968. It makes people remember the culture that we have. That’s something that is still in me, the pride of my Blackness. Sometimes I get mad at some of my colleagues of color because they forget where they come from.

So I had to start fighting to get [communications] journals in, fighting the whole time. People who think they know what they are doing are telling you that you are wrong. I was 48 years old when I got here. I’m like first of all you are not going to talk to me [disrespectfully] like you talk to these 30-something-year-old

kids who are just glad to be here because they just got their Ph.D. in hand. I said, “I may have gotten my Ph.D. in 2003, but I have lived this. I have all of these years of military experience so I have been a leader. I have done everything that I need to do. I KNOW what I’m talking about.” [Tabitha spoke passionately and emphatically as she recalled this conversation of the past.]

So it bothered them that I was confident in my abilities. So [to them, senior faculty], I became the “cocky, angry, race-driven Black woman.” One because on campus, I wear African prints, Afrocentric attire, because I’m proud of my heritage. And after 15 years of wearing blue uniforms, you bet I’m going to bring some color in there. So I began to express who I was and that bothered them. [It bothered them] because Black students started seeing that and they were intrigued. I’d get evaluations that said, “You are the first Black professor I had; I’m getting ready to graduate.”

Tabitha embraced her role as a provider of discomfort. I perceive this is space she intentionally chooses to inhabit. She serves as a constant reminder to her campus-at-large that the positive attributes of educational attainment, knowledge, confidence, and ethnic pride are also found in shades of Blackness. In my opinion as the researcher of this study, these attributes are oftentimes misinterpreted on the campuses of PWIs as too Black, cocky, angry, and race-driven.

*Faith’s Working Identity: Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say,  
and Let the Chips Fall Where They May*

Well, there are just differences in women period. The things that the world and the academy value in men, straightforwardness and directness, are never

valued in women. I often use the comparison between Martha Stewart and Donald Trump. He was viewed as a true businessman, and she would be an expletive, the “B” word for doing the same thing. For them being direct, having high standards, being driven, and being task masters, they would be characterized differently. I think that is no different in the academy. People in the world and in academia say they value transparency, openness, and honesty. Instead, what should be said is they value those things as long as it does not inconvenience them. As long as it does not make me feel uncomfortable, as long as your truth is something that I want to hear.

When you are a woman who is very upfront and direct, you are labeled in a way that men are not. If you happen to be a woman of color, especially an African American woman, there is the persona, the urban myth of the angry Black woman. So any time you speak with any directness and confidence, somehow you’re angry, confrontational, and too assertive rather than being direct and transparent as your male counterparts are often seen.

*Shalom’s Working Identity: The Worker Bee Syndrome*

I always promise my students I am going to get their assignments back to them in a timely manner. They complimented me on returning their assignments quickly. This requires that I wake early in the morning. I function better in the early morning hours. I like the quiet that morning brings. I am not a night person. I need 7-8 hours of sleep nightly. I don’t function well with less.

When I first arrived at my current institution, I wrote three handbooks for student teachers. The president of the university asked me how I managed to write

these handbooks, I replied that I usually work through the week as well as on the weekends. I work during the holidays and on Sundays. I rarely take off. I have been labeled a “worker bee” by my colleagues inside and outside of my college. But the bottom line is this; I realize that I have pride as an African American. I was told that I have to work harder, and I have to do more because they are looking for an excuse to rationalize my absence as a professor in higher education.

I do so much that sometimes I don’t remember what I have accomplished over the course of the academic year. However, because we have to create an annual portfolio, which documents our teaching, service, and scholarship, I am reminded of why I’m fatigued. That’s when I really see what I have done and say, “It’s no wonder that I’m tired, I guess I should be.”

The themes of the family portrait represent the lens through which each of the six participants viewed the campus climate, and their administrators, colleagues, and students on the campuses of the PWIs where they taught. Like lenses of prescription glasses, what each participant observed had everything to do with their prescribed lenses. There were similarities and there were also dissonant observations among the participants. The participants responded to what they viewed based on the ethos of how they were reared, what they learned during all phases of aging and their life experiences. The answer to research question four, what can be learned from the experiences and perceptions of these six African American women faculty are found in the upcoming Discussion section under the heading of participant recommendations to current, new, and aspiring African American women faculty.



## CHAPTER VII: THE LAST WORD

### Discussion

All of the textbooks assigned to classes that I took during my elementary, middle, and high school years, presented American history from the vantage point of the majoritarian population of the United States. There is an African proverb that states, “Until the story of the hunt is told from the perspective of the lion, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” American history has been spoken, written, recorded, and glorified by individuals in power. James Baldwin famed American novelist and social critic (1965), commented on this subject during an interview in a special issue of *Ebony* magazine.

People who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become incapable of seeing or changing themselves, or the world. This is the place in which it seems to me, most white Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly, aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the resulting personal incoherence. (pp. 47-48)

Much of the discussion in the professional and scholarly discourse (Griffin, 2012; Holmes, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009) is concentrated on the underrepresentation, disadvantages, discrimination, isolation, and additional forms of othering, which African American women faculty teaching at PWIs encounter. What is oftentimes omitted from

the discussion is the opposing pole of privilege and overrepresentation of White faculty. Scoffing the failure to recognize the systemic advantages offered to the majority racial group, Tim Wise (2005) pointedly stated, there can be no “up” without a “down,” an “in” without an “out,” a “bottom” without a “top.”

In this study, I scratched the surface of the privilege and overrepresentation of the dominant racial group on the campuses of PWIs in the Deep South. However, the discussion needs to be expanded if we are to completely understand how White faculty benefit from institutional racism notwithstanding whether they are cognizant of or reinforce racist attitudes, policies, or practices. Supporting this statement, Jayakumar et al., 2009 stated a finding from their national study,

Results from this national study of full-time faculty indicate that not only does a negative racial climate impede job satisfaction for faculty of color, but conversely, a negative racial climate is also associated with greater retention of White faculty. Together these findings highlight the notion that racial hierarchy and advantage can be perpetuated without malicious intent. (p. 555)

There is much that can be learned about the role of race and gender in the academic paths of African American women by attending to their voices projected through counter-narratives. Contrary to the belief that America has become a post-racial (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013), race neutral (Lawrence, 1987), colorblind (Banks, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2003), and colormute (Pollock, 2004) society, CRT authors purported that people of color encounter race and racism daily (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). This position is confirmed in the professional and scholarly discourse. Race and racism remain

an endemic issue in America (Lopez, 2014; Wise, 2009) despite President Obama, a Black man served as leader of the free world.

The African American women in this study experienced overt and covert racism and sexism. They were diminished, dismissed, disregarded, and maltreated because of who they are. The counter-narratives of the participants in this study indicate that issues of race and gender played a major role in shaping their academic experience.

Nevertheless, they persisted in a climate that was injurious. The academic experiences of these women indicated that race was the most salient factor that shaped many of the professional experiences of the participants. Inspired by their Proverbs 3:5-8 (the text of this Scripture is found in the introduction of Theme1) moment they marshalled their intestinal fortitude and discovered the ways and means by which they could strive, survive, and thrive at PWIs in the Deep South.

### Findings

The findings of my research as presented in the individual and family portraits confirmed previous research performed on the subject matter of African American women faculty employed by PWIs found in the extant literature. I narrowed the scope of my research by focusing on PWIs in the Deep South. My interpretation of these findings suggests that the climate of the Deep South institutions where each of the six participants were employed did not differ from that of other PWIs throughout the United States. The climates of American PWIs in general require that African American women faculty contend with personal, professional, and institutional racism in many of their encounters with administrators, colleagues, and students. This finding emphasizes the significance of race in the experience of African American faculty in general and African American

faculty women specifically on the campuses of colleges and universities in the United States. Additionally these findings emphasize the need for intentional efforts on the part of American college and university administrators to create policies, procedures, and practices that support equity, inclusion, and diversity.

Specifically, research question one spoke to the experiences of each of the six participants in terms of whether or not their experiences intersected or not with race and racism. In response to this question and addressed in theme two, the participants described through their individual portraits personal racism and encounters with administrators, colleagues, and students that I perceived were microaggressions or snubs that appeared on the surface to be minor or insignificant but when viewed in totality had a lasting and debilitating effect. The participants recounted racially charged interactions with their colleagues regarding the style and/or state of their hair, their sartorial choices, and what their racial identity meant in terms of their roles at the institution. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to the mounting evidence in the literature regarding the microaggressions that African American faculty and other *faculty of color* face (Solórzano, 1998).

When the participants represented by the historical portraits entered their respective PWIs, institutional racism presented itself in the few numbers of African American faculty being offered positions. According to the literature (Aguirre, 2000; Bradley, 2005; Evans, 2007, Jayakumar et al., 2009) the reduced number of African American faculty hires was blamed on the few number of African American faculty who were academically prepared to enter the academy. Oftentimes, the participants were the only African Americans or one of a few African American faculty in the professorate or

in their departments. The participants represented by the contemporary portraits reflect little change in this finding. These observations remain consistent with the demographic data presented by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, and National Center for Education Statistics Fast Facts (2016), which demonstrated minor institutional commitment to increasing the number of African American faculty members. Thereby solidifying observations in the professional and scholarly discourse that highlight the underrepresentation of African American faculty (Stanley, 2006a; Turner & Myers, 2000).

Experiences with personal, professional, and institutional racism can be interpreted as negative, hostile, or chilly campus environments promoting dissatisfaction among African American faculty. This dissatisfaction is often abated by leaving an institution or by leaving academia. The response to research question two, regarding the participants' perceptions of campus climate in relationship to their teaching, service and scholarship was addressed in their individual portraits and was also found in the content of theme three, credit and job expectations are not the same for everyone. Fortunately for me, the participants of this study remained at their institutions and discovered niches of survival that contributed to their employment longevity despite their perception of a hostile or chilly campus environment. All participants of this study carved out an existence on their campuses that contributed to their survival. Whether garnering monies from various sources along with national notoriety for the institution, choosing to concentrate on educating their students, creating new programs of study, or providing discomfort, each participant found a way to exist without compromising herself.

Theme four addressed the question posed in research question three concerning the stories the participants shared regarding their professional, personal, and social identities. Stated earlier in this paper and found in the professional and scholarly discourse the negotiation of identity is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon, yet the identities of African American women faculty and other faculty of color were often viewed simplistically by the majoritarian members of the campus in terms of demographic characteristics (marbley, et al., 2011; Stanley, 2006b).

The following section contains the participants' recommendations and addresses research question four, what can we learn from the experiences and perceptions of these six participants. What was learned from these six African American women came in the form of a list of survival strategies that I titled in short the *Ten Commandments*. The survival strategies are addressed to African American women faculty currently employed, newly employed, or contemplating employment at a PWI. These recommendations do not represent an exhaustive list, they do however, represent the voices of the six participants of this study and may provide insight for others who may face similar circumstances. Each commandment was created based on the participants' recommendation found in their individual portraits.

Participant Recommendations to African American Women Currently Employed, Newly  
Employed, or Contemplating Employment at a PWI

*Survival Strategies: The Ten Commandments for African American Women Faculty*

*Teaching, Serving, and Performing Research at PWIs in the Deep South*

This study represents the voices of six African American faculty women employed by PWIs in the Deep South. It does not pretend to represent the voices of all

African American women in all academic spaces. While the counter-narratives of the participants support the extant literature, it does not explain the experiences of all women in similar settings. Nonetheless, as the researcher, I believe the information gained from the counter-narratives of the participants is invaluable in that it gives voice to a population of academicians who continue to struggle with inequity, injustice, racism, and sexism in the setting of American higher education in the twenty-first century. The following lessons learned while sitting at tables with the participants are presented here as recommendations to African American women faculty. I present them as the strategies of survival.

*Commandment 1: Survey Your Surroundings*

African American women must become fully aware of the academic environment and campus climate prior to the inception of employment. During the interview process or the campus visit take the opportunity to interview as well as be interviewed. It is important to ascertain if the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is a marketing ploy or an actual commitment supported by policies, procedures, training, and actions taken by the stakeholders of college or university. Inquire as to if there are college or university sanctioned minority faculty organizations and ask to speak with the membership as part of the interview process. Speak with minority students while on campus. Assess their perception of the campus climate or comfort level of members of each group.

*Commandment 2: Negotiate, Negotiate, Negotiate*

Negotiate position, negotiate presence, and negotiate prosperity. Negotiate position speaks to a clear and concise plan and procedure for tenure and promotion by

ascertaining what the institution considers valuable for tenure and promotion. The extant literature (Cooper, 2006; Guttierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Harley, 2008; Stanley, 2006a; Turner, 2002) illustrated that faculty of color spent copious amounts of their time and energy in service to higher education through advising minority and non-minority students, committee work, and search committee work—a situation four of my participants experienced as well. Negotiate presence addresses becoming full participants in academic departments, colleges, the university-at-large and the surrounding community. This need not be a formal process, however, the prospective employee should assess the measures taken or the resources provided by the search committee or other administrative representatives to assure the individual fits into the academy and the surrounding community. These measures or resources might include a map of the city, a list of retailers, pharmacies, churches, sororities and fraternities, and popular eateries of the local population. Negotiate prosperity speaks to self-evaluation of the talents that you as the prospective employee bring to the institution. Appraise the worth of your contributions to the university and negotiate a salary commensurate with your experience, accomplishments, and talents.

*Commandment 3: Be Authentic: Identify and Name Yourself*

As mentioned earlier in this project, Stanley (2006a) gathered the narratives of faculty of color. These faculty reported they were often identified by the majority culture on campus as the social categories they represented (gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and socioeconomic status). The narratives of these women as recorded by Stanley (2006a), further intimated that they were not given the opportunity to define their own identities in the environment of the academy. It is



imperative African American women faculty introduce themselves to the academy and self-identify so there is no confusion regarding how they should be referred to and addressed. We are more than our social categories and possess greater depth than what can be seen on the surface. We come to the academic table with a rich history, academically prepared, and a wealth of experience outside of and within the academy.

*Commandment 4: Establish Your Voice*

We bring to our work a critical self-consciousness about our positionality, defined as it is by race, gender, class, and ideology. The position or place we are assigned on the margins of the academy informs but does not determine the positions or stances we take. (Wall, 1989, p. 1)

Whether a new employee or an established employee of the academy, be silenced no more by members of the academy who choose volume of voice over substance of what is being uttered. Be silenced no more by those who would demean and consider unimportant the words that you speak in open forum or in classrooms. Be silenced no more by those who would debase your research because it is based on race, gender, and/or class, topics not considered mainstream research desired by A-list journals. Elevate the volume of your voice, elevate your arguments, and elevate the relevance of your research.

*Commandment 5: Mentoring, Networking, and Research Support*

The professional and scholarly discourse (Harley, 2008; Holmes, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006b; Tuitt et al., 2009; Wong, 2011; Yenika-Agbaw & Hildago-de Jesus, 2011) is replete with examples of the need for mentors for African American women faculty. However, formal networks to establish these professional

mentor-mentee relationships are virtually non-existent on the campuses of PWIs. Mentors do not need to be a minority or female; however, it is important that they be aware of the politics of difference. Therefore, it is necessary for African American women faculty to seek likeminded faculty as mentors (inside or outside of their discipline or the academy) and/or to establish or become part of a network of faculty who are willing to serve as a support system for the research agendas of the members of the network.

*Commandment 6: Get Involved and be Mindful not to become the Token Black*

Seek opportunities for exposure. Make yourself known. Because African American women are few in number, there is a tendency for the majority to view these women as spokes persons for all Blacks instead of seeing them as individuals with other qualifications. Oftentimes the academy wants them to serve in the capacity of being an expert on all things Black or to serve in the capacity of solving problems or handling situations having to do with racial difficulty. It seems the most helpful place for this to be addressed is from the administrative level. If however, these issues are not addressed from the top, consider educating those making the request by, stating your individual opinion about the situation or seeking assistance from the Office of Multicultural Affairs or the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity if it exists on the campus. Additionally, there is often no reward for this extra work, in fact, this service may be discounted during the tenure and promotion process. African American faculty women should seek opportunities of service that support their tenure and promotion success and that do not detract from the time allotted for research.

*Commandment 7: Produce Excellence Always*

Yes, it is exhausting to constantly prove the worth of your presence and place in the academy. Yet, not to do so, propagates the marginalization, alienation, and isolation so many African American women faculty report in the literature (Griffin, 2012; Holmes, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009). African American women faculty should inquire regarding how the academy defines excellence or “exceeds expectations,” and then go about the work of achieving this distinction. Produce excellence in teaching as evidenced not only by student evaluations, but produce excellence in teaching by reporting classroom or programmatic outcomes. Produce excellence in service by documenting requests for service from administrators and the academic community and presenting these requests in the creation of the tenure and promotion portfolio. Produce excellence in research by establishing a research agenda that supports tenure and promotion success. Publish, speak, write grants, and push your research agenda. Assist the academy in understanding the politics of difference if your research includes race, gender, class, or other social categories.

*Commandment 8: Self-promote Without Arrogance*

In general, African American women are not good at self-promotion (Cheeks, 2018; Schwartz, Mosharafa, & Lenise Wallace, 2016).). We tend to wait for others to acknowledge our contributions, accomplishments, talents, skills, and academic achievements. However, this recognition may be long in coming or it may not come at all. African American women must become accustomed to publicizing their professional triumphs without feelings of conceit or self-aggrandizement. This self-advocacy goes a

long way in proving to the academic community that African American women faculty possess the ability to produce credible research.

*Commandment 9: Seek “Aunt” Girls Outside of the Academy*

Compliments, encouragement, and confidence-building rarely come from within the academic environment. African American women faculty should rely on family, friends, or spiritual communities to fill the void created by members of the academic environment. Furthermore, these external communities can sound the alarm and warn the faculty member when work begins to supersede self or community.

*Commandment 10: Self-care, the Balance within the Selfish-Selfless Continuum*

The academy is oftentimes a fatiguing environment for African American women faculty. To overcome the exhaustion created by the demands of teaching, service, and scholarship, it is necessary for African American women faculty to identify or create ways in which they step away from the pressures of the academy to rest, reflect, and refresh. Many of us think it is selfish to take time for ourselves. We instead continue to push forward in selfless ways to meet the needs of others (students, colleagues, and administrators). Conversely, within this selfish-selfless continuum is a place of balance, called self-care. Self-care requires that we remove ourselves from the source of fatigue and engage in activities that promote self-renewal. Once the self has healed from the wounds of selfless acts, we can reenter the academic environment with renewed spirit, mind, and body.

The participants of my study not only had recommendations to African American women faculty currently employed, newly employed, or entertaining employment at a PWI they also had recommendations to the administration of PWIs in the Deep South and

across the United States. There was no arrogance in their voices or thoughts as they contemplated recommendations made to the administration of PWIs. The participants were sharing experiences from their professional lives and years of experience as an African American women faculty employed by a PWI in the Deep South. The suggested recommendations are policies, practices, and procedures that would have positively contributed to their employment if they were in place. The suggestions from the participants are found in the next section.

#### Participant Recommendations to the Administration of PWIs in the Deep South

I was reminded through my reading of the professional and scholarly discourse that the counter-narratives, perceptions, and realities of African American women faculty employed by PWIs has been discussed *ad infinitum*. My research concentrated on African American women faculty employed by PWIs in the Deep South specifically. In my research I found no dissonant cords in opposition to those stated in the extant literature. Despite the longevity of the discussion, we must continue the conversation in earnest. To remain silent renders the voices expressed through the counter-narratives of these six African American women faculty of no importance. To remain silent gives consent to continue along the same path that has marginalized, isolated, and debased African American women in American society and on the campuses of PWIs. Therefore, we must continue the conversation. As noted by Singleton and Hays (2008), any conversation about race rarely ends with closure. Yet, the conversations are worth having. According to demographic projections by the U.S. Census Bureau (2016b), Whites will become the numerical minority in 2060, when the nation becomes a majority-minority country. Given this projection, society and culture in the U.S. are in constant shift toward this new

normal. The prediction validates the need for further examination and conversation regarding the subject of race.

Each portrait of a participant presented in this study provided insight regarding the individual's perspectives and experiences on the campuses of the PWIs that employed or continue to employ them. From each of these portraits, I believe the need for specific policies, procedures, and practices can be gleaned. Funding is an issue in many public universities, opportunities for grant writing and other forms of revenue production could be offered to assist with identifying resources necessary to build new or enlarge existing program offerings. Identifying and garnering funding resources is the method used by Shiphrah to acquire funds for the new Bridge program she created. To address the isolation she experienced, Grace voiced, there is a need to create newly offered programs of study to address the expanding knowledge base or needs of a specific discipline. The tasks associated with program expansion would necessitate an alliance with other faculty and professions on and off campus to create this new offering. To address the challenges associated with performing research, Sophie addressed collaboration with colleagues within and without her specific discipline. Formal writing collaboratives could be established with release time for on-campus collaboration with the goal of article submission or grant submission to a professional journal or organization. To address the inequities and biases she experienced and witnessed, Tabitha, chose to get involved in campus organizations that determined university policies and procedures effecting faculty, staff, and students. To concentrate on perceptions of injustice, inequity, and bias an anonymous reporting process could be established for campus constituents outside of the EEOC and sexual assault genre. Faith's concerns revolved around her perception of

the university's lack of commitment to issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity. To allay these concerns, a diversity officer reporting directly to the president of the university and a committee of committed faculty, staff, and students could be created with specific quarterly and annual outcomes addressing issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity. Lastly, to address the issues associated with tenure and promotion raised by Shalom, blinded tenure and promotion portfolios could be submitted to the tenure and promotion committee to reduce or eliminate bias in the process. These policy suggestions may provide a value-added starting point which could contribute to warming the temperature of the campus that is perceived as chilly by some faculty, staff, and students of color.

#### Limitations of the Study

As with any study, this research had several limitations. The overarching limitation relates to sample size. This study was not meant to create generalizations that could be extended to the African American faculty women population at all PWIs within the United States. My study was meant to be an examination of the experiences of these six participants only. Initially I wanted a larger sample size, however, challenges with identifying African American faculty women employed by PWIs in the Deep South who were willing to share their narratives proved to be a daunting task. The preservation of anonymity was the stated concern of other potential participants. While I am extremely pleased with the counter-narratives and courage displayed by the participants of my study, I would have preferred a larger sample of participants. The portraits I crafted from their counter-narratives provided ample material for my analysis and presentation of the findings of this study. A second limitation was my decision to limit the geographical locations of the PWIs for my study. Because I am an African American woman faculty

member at a PWI in the Deep South, I was interested in this specific area of the country and the information I could gain from other African American women faculty to assist me in my current position. Though their experiences, recommendations, and guidance were valuable for the purpose of my study, their responses may not reflect the experiences of other African American women faculty working at PWIs in other geographical regions within the United States.

### Implications of the Study

To discuss the implications, a return to the premise of this study is necessary. The previously stated premise is race and racism are endemic in U.S. society and on the campuses of PWIs as a microcosm of U.S. society. Much of what African American women face and are subjected to in society is mirrored on the campuses of the PWIs where they teach. Moreover, WIP affects the experiences of African American women faculty as they conduct their professional lives through teaching, scholarship, and service. Review of the professional and scholarly discourse (Stanley, 2006a) substantiated the need for the research of this study. The goal of this study was to unearth the effective strategies that African American women faculty used to navigate the climate of the campuses where they were employed or where they are currently employed.

The first and greatest implication for the study is a need for increased knowledge, understanding, and dialogue among the administrators and faculty on the campuses of PWIs regarding the ways in which WIP affects the lives of African American women faculty. If a goal of PWIs is to recruit, retain, and promote African American faculty at-large and African American women faculty specifically, administrators, hiring managers, and search committee members must understand the needs of African American faculty



being recruited. It is not enough to get the faculty member hired, there must be support for this faculty member to be grafted into their specific departments, colleges, universities and the communities where these institutions exist.

Secondly, to retain the recruited African American faculty member, a formalized mentor program should be implemented on the campuses of PWIs for all faculty and specifically for African American faculty. This mentorship program could be centered on subject specific research. The research of those African American faculty members who choose to research ethnic issues, race, racism, and other social justice subjects should be viewed, critiqued, and respected as are other topics of research. As previously stated, research on diversity issues are oftentimes discounted or devalued in the tenure and promotion process (Harley, 2008; Holmes, 2008; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006a; Wong, 2011; Yenika-Agbaw & Hildago-de Jesus, 2011). Additionally, the journals that publish diversity issues are often not widely respected or accepted by the majoritarian mainstream at PWIs (Allison, 2008; Gregory, 2002; Jackson-Weaver et al., 2010). A list of acceptable journals and publications should be made public so that there is clarity and transparency in the research, publishing, and tenure and promotion process. Lastly, the methods used in the research of African American faculty are oftentimes qualitative in nature, whereas, the editors of many “respected” journals often find quantitative methods more acceptable (Gregory, 2002). However, in the last 18 years, qualitative research methods have had a larger presence and place (Alasuutari, 2008; Shuval, Harker, Roudsari, Groce, Mills, Sidiqqi, & Shachak, 2011).

When considering tenure and promotion of African American faculty members, the copious amounts of service rendered to the institution (Britton, 2017; Cooper, 2006;

Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Harley, 2008; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Stanley, 2006a; Turner & Myers, 2000) must be considered and valued equally to requirements of teaching and research. According to the professional and scholarly literature, African American professors sit on more committees than their White colleagues for the purpose of bringing diversity to those committees (Allison, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000). Also, African American women faculty members serve as mentors and advisors to African American students. This service activity represents a huge hidden work load that is often unrewarded in the tenure and promotion process (Tuitt et al., 2009).

Finally, the campus support must be extended to the community where the university is situated. Once the work day is complete, measures to assist the faculty member in navigating the community would be helpful. The basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter are obvious needs of the new faculty member. These needs are met through national food and clothing stores. Shelter can be achieved through the contracting of a local realtor. However, there are specific needs for hair care, church preference, and organizations catering to the African American community and experience. This aspect of assisting the African American faculty with fitting in could be accomplished by creating a resource booklet about the community and local goods and services. If a goal of PWIs is to retain the recruited African American faculty member, their personal and social needs must also be addressed.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

Given the limitations of this study as they relate to participant selection, a similar study conducted with a larger sample size might yield a different outcome. The study could also be replicated by conducting this study with a population of African American

male faculty, this would add a different dimension and dynamic to the research. Value would be added to this study by extending the research to include PWIs in the Northern United States. Colleges and universities that have stable and or increasing recruitment and retention rates among African American faculty could be conducted with the addition of querying the administrators and faculty of these institutions regarding the policies, practices, and procedures that are in place that contribute to the recruitment and retention success associated with the hiring of African American faculty can serve as a model for other PWIs that are not experiencing the same successes. Moreover, the subject of African American female faculty employed by Historically Black Colleges and Universities represents an area of research that necessitates investigation because of the lack of information on this subject in the scholarly discourse. Performing a quantitative study or adding quantitative data using surveys might identify data not captured by this qualitative study. Performing a research study at a women's PWI would lend itself to a different perspective that might expand or deepen the extant literature on African American women faculty teaching at PWIs. Finally, as the academic landscape and demographics of student populations on the campus of American college and university becomes more brown and black (Cook, 2015; McGill, 2015) an in-depth review and identification of university policies, procedures, and practices that consciously or unconsciously bias African American and other faculty of color might bring transparency to issues of recruitment and retention of all faculty and students of color.

### Conclusion

The literature is replete with information on the experiences of African American women faculty on the campuses of PWIs. What has not received adequate attention are

the strategies they employ as survival techniques. My research expanded the existent research by exploring the strategies these six African American women faculty used while striving, surviving, and thriving at PWIs in the Deep South. There remains much to learn about the survival strategies of African American women faculty on the campuses of PWIs. If the goal of university administrators and colleagues of African American women faculty is to adopt a passive approach, they should continue to watch as does the country, the sustained inequity and injustice of this population. If the goal is to engage in efforts to understand the experiences of African American women faculty, additional research is needed regarding the citizenry of these faculty members on the campuses of PWIs and in the United States at-large. Cornell West (1993), author of *Race Matters* stated,

Race is the most explosive issue in American life precisely because it forces us to confront the tragic facts of poverty and paranoia, despair and distrust. In short, a candid examination of race matters takes us to the core of American democracy. And the degree to which race matters in the plight and predicament of fellow citizens is a crucial measure of whether we can keep alive the best of this democratic experiment we call America. (p. 10)

As stated when I identified the goals of my research, I wanted to investigate, illuminate, and document the experiences of African American women faculty members employed by 4-year PWIs in the Deep South. I wanted this data to be the springboard to open campus dialogues about issues of diversity. The achievement of these goals will be determined in the future, until such time, I am intellectually contented with releasing the counter-narratives of the six participants of my research through this dissertation.

## BENEDICTION: THE FINAL BLESSING

I have not given up on hope; however, I have chosen to place hope on the back burner. I have instead chosen to embrace my experience in this academic space over the hope I have for this academic space. I have chosen this position because I am chronically fatigued, the kind of fatigue that cannot be satisfied by a restful sleep. I have been in the battle for equality, acknowledgement, and acceptance of my Black skin and my Black intellect far too long in a space that sees only what I can contribute in response to its needs. I have had enough. I have had enough of a space that takes the much I have in exchange for the very little it chooses to offer in return. As if in a bad relationship I have had enough. Enough of being loyal to a system that in return has told me repeatedly that I must leave in order to gain what is due me for a job performed in excellence. I have had enough. I have had enough of applying the poultice of understanding to the wounds you refuse to acknowledge. I have had enough. I have had enough of applying bandages to hemorrhaging wounds inflicted by you. I have indeed had enough.

I defended my proposal for dissertation in fall 2014. On the day of the defense I came prepared to defend as if I were going on trial. The pages of my copy of the proposal were tabbed, the margins were annotated, and I highlighted areas of the proposal I wanted to emphasize. I arrived early, notified the administrative assistant of my presence, and waited for Dr. Richard Schmertzling. He exited his office and escorted me to a conference room. I placed bound copies of my proposal around the conference room table anticipating the arrival of my committee members. Noting the tabbed margins of my proposal copy and correctly interpreting the set-up of the room, Dr. Schmertzling stated, “We are not going to review your proposal page by page that would take all day. What I

want you to do is speak to the tensions you identified while writing your proposal.” I was dumbfounded. I came prepared for battle but was being asked to identify areas of stress or conflict. The committee members assembled, Dr. Schmertzing introduced me to the members, and shared with the committee that he wanted me to speak to the tensions I acknowledged during proposal writing.

I shared three tensions that plagued me while writing. First, I shared that an earworm, the lyrics to *We are Family*, a song by Sister Sledge, an American vocal group of the 70s continuously played in my head. Indicating the connectedness, I felt to the participants despite that I had not identified them. The second tension was my need to speak for the participants instead of allowing them to speak for themselves. Lastly, I shared with the committee the greatest tension of all, I stated, “I have an overwhelming need to tell the academy to go straight to hell!” In response, a pregnant pause filled the room. I knew I had gone too far. I held my breath, I could not believe what bubbled up from my subconscious and exploded from my mouth. Suddenly, without warning, a committee member enthusiastically responded, “Me too!” The tension in the room abated and my proposal defense continued.

I wrote the abovementioned passage about hope in November 2014, months before I began searching for the participants of my research on African American women faculty employed by PWIs in the Deep South. During this time, my duties and assignments at the PWI where I taught were overwhelming me. I was teaching all the content in my program of study, supervising all the associated labs, advising junior and senior students in my program, and advising students preparing to apply to my program. During this time, I also sat on 20 committees that allowed me to serve the community, the

university, the college, the department, and my professional organizations, all while enrolled in 6 hours of dissertation writing. Something had to give. What I know for sure, if you are good at what you do, you will be generously rewarded by being given yet more to do. I wanted nothing more from the academy. During an email conversation with Dr. Lorraine Schmertzing, she encouraged me to reduce the content that was on my employment plate so that I could concentrate on my dissertation. I took her sage advice to heart, I found and used my “no!”

### My Damascene Conversion

I successfully concluded coursework for the doctorate in higher education in fall 2013. I wrote and defended the proposal for this study in fall 2014. I began searching for participants in January 2015. Data collection and analysis commenced in February 2015. The interviews with participants concluded in August 2015 while the data analysis continued. Review of the Interview Record in Appendix F chronicles the interview schedule of each participant. What began as a process executed in anger, morphed into a complete change of thought and heart regarding how I viewed the academy. My initial thoughts regarding the collection of the participants’ stories led me to believe that I would find other African American women not unlike myself who were injured and othered by the academy, a cynical band of comrades-in-arms. However, what I found was a group of survivors who eked out an existence despite the unfavorable conditions they endured as African American women faculty employed by PWIs in the Deep South. Theme 1 - The Participant’s Reliance on God and the Scriptures to direct their Lives found in Chapter 6 of this dissertation identified the means used by each of the participants that allowed them to cope with the chilly environment in which they found

themselves. They all relied on a belief in God and His ability to deliver them from hopelessness and adversity. According to the research conducted by Mattis, Fontenot, Hatcher-Kay, Grayman, and Beale, 2004, which explored the association between early and current organizational religiosity, subjective religiosity, and spirituality, positive and negative perceived relationship with God, and dispositional optimism and pessimism among a sample of 307 African Americans, the researchers acknowledged,

African Americans have cultivated particular traditions of Biblical interpretation that metaphorically link Black oppression to the oppression suffered by Biblical Israel. In this interpretative scheme, God is seen as the ultimate ally of the oppressed. Moreover, the lives of the Biblical figures are read as testaments to God's power to transform the destinies of those who have been forced to endure adversity and injustice. In sum, African American theological traditions endeavor to reinforce in believers a conviction that struggles are not without meaning and that God has the power to achieve extraordinary things even in the lives of those who are oppressed and marginalize. (p. 191)

Additionally, the U. S. Religious Landscape Survey, conducted in 2007 by the Pew's Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life situated the research of Mattis et al., 2004 with the following findings,

The U. S. is considered a highly religious nation, African-Americans are markedly more religious on a variety of measures than the U. S. population as a whole, including level of affiliation with a religion, attendance at religious services, frequency of prayer and religion's importance in life. Compared with other racial and ethnic groups, African Americans are among those most likely to



report a formal religious affiliation, with fully 87% of African Americans describing themselves as belonging to one religious group or another.

The aforementioned research affirmed the participants' position on the reliance on God and the Scriptures to direct their lives. Like the participants of this study, I too rely on God and the Scriptures to set the course and plan of my life. It was during the interviews with the participants that I noticed a transformation in my attitude. While listening to the counter-narrative of each participant and witnessing her care and concern for me, I came to understand that exerting energy on being angry with the academy was a lesson in futility. I am not sure of the exact month, date, day of the week, or hour of the day, but I recognized a change in myself. The anger that existed during my proposal defense subsided and the anxiety that had taken up residence in my abdomen lessened. Like Paul, I experienced a Damascene conversion. According to Acts, chapter 9 found in New Testament of the Bible, an event while on the road to Damascus, led Paul the Apostle, to cease persecuting early Christians and to become not only a follower of Jesus Christ, but a preacher and teacher of Christianity.

In hindsight, I realized my healing occurred while sitting at conference room tables, dining room tables, and kitchen tables with the participants. My healing occurred while I repeatedly listened to the recordings of the interviews searching for nuances not conveyed by the transcripts. Like flowing water slowly eroding stone, my conversion took place over time. Retrospectively, the evidence of my Damascene conversion was displayed as the title of my dissertation continued to change. Unwittingly, I was experiencing my conversion. Initially, the title was, *And Still I Rise*, taken from the title of a poem by poet laureate, Maya Angelou (1978). *Still I Rise*, a testament to the

audacity, tenacity, and perseverance of African Americans in general and African American women specifically. As I spoke with, listened to, and recorded the counter-narratives of the participants, the title was modified to reflect what I was experiencing, I was *Bearing Witness* to their living testimonies. I was bearing witness to their survival despite oppressive employment conditions or treatment by colleagues. I toyed with yet another title change, *Catharsis*. While speaking with my college roommate and sharing with her how my research and writing was progressing, I shared that writing was serving as a purge of sorts. Finally, I came to the rest on the title, *A Balm in Gilead*, a biblical anodyne known as the universal cure for all ailments. Without negating or minimizing my experiences, listening to the counter-narratives of the participants placed my story in perspective. Like Paul the Apostle, my damascene conversion concluded with spiritual rebirth and renewal.

I am eternally grateful for the willingness of the participants to share their stories, to feed me spiritually, physically, and professionally, and to remind me that I am birthed from a lineage of strong, unyielding African American women who include Harriet Tubman, Mary McLeod Bethune, Mae Carol Jemison, my mother-in-law, Adele Nall Lee, Shiphrah, Grace, Sophie, Tabitha, Faith, and Shalom, the participants of this research, and last but not least, Retha Mahone Bornett, my mother whose voice continues to echo in my head stating, “Rochelle, never ever quit.”

Identity  
(Rochelle Bornett Lee, 2016)

From the lightest latte to the richest dark espresso  
We are a multi-hued rainbow of sepia tones  
Sun-kissed beauty  
A myriad of God-given talents and abilities

We are  
Body and Soul  
Mind and Spirit  
Depth and Breadth

We are  
Seen and Unseen  
Known and Unknown  
Ethereal and Terra firma

We are  
The Day and the Night  
Water and Air  
Fire and Ice

We are  
Definition and Mystery  
Refined and Raw  
Bound and Boundless

We are  
Represented and Misrepresented  
Understood and Misunderstood  
Polar Opposites and the Continuum

We are  
Mothers, Other mothers  
Play mothers, God mothers  
And  
Motherless

We are  
Sisters,  
Friends and Sister-friends  
Spouses  
Spouseless and Significant others

We are  
Nameless and Named  
Misnamed and Renamed  
And finally  
Self-named

We are  
Present  
Not absent  
And

We demand to be recognized in the fullness of who we are!

## References

- Aguirre, A. L. Jr. (2000). *Women and Minority Faculty in the Academic Workplace: Recruitment, Retention, and Academic Culture*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Rep. no. 27-6. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Alasauutari, M. (2008). The rise and relevance of qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 13, 139-155.  
doi.org/10.1080/13645570902966056
- Allison, D. C. (2008). Free to be me?: Black professors, White institutions. *Journal of Black Studies*, 38, 641-662. doi.org/10.1177/0021934706289175
- Angelou, M. (n. d. a). *There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/mayaangelo133956.html>
- Angelou, M. (n. d. b). *People will forget*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/5934-i-ve-learned-that-people-will-forget-what-you-said-people>.
- Angelou, M. (1978) Still I Rise. Retrieved from  
<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/still-i-rise>
- Antonio, A. L. (2002). Faculty of color reconsidered: Reassessing contributions to scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education*, 73, 582-602.  
doi:10.1353/jhe.2002.0043
- Backes-Gellner, U. & Schlingoff, A. (2010). Career incentives and 'Publish or Perish' in German and U. S. universities. *European Education*, 42, 26-52. doi: 10.2753/EUE 1056-4934420302

- Baldwin, J. (1965, August). The White man's guilt. *Ebony*, (Special Issue), 47-48.
- Banks, R. R. (2009). Beyond colorblindness: Neo-racialism and the future of race and law scholarship. *Harvard Black Letter Law Journal*, 25, 41-56.
- Baxley, T. P. (2012). Navigating as an African-American female scholar: Catalysts and barriers in predominantly White institutions. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 4(1), 47-64.
- Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2002). A womanist experience of caring: Understanding the pedagogy of exemplary Black women teachers. *The Urban Review*, 34, 71-86.
- Bell, D. (1980). Brown v. board of education and the interest convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93, 518-533.
- Bell, D. (1987). *And We are not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bernard, W. T., Issari, S., Moriah, J., Njiwaji, M. Ogan, P., & Tolliver A. (2012). Othermothering in the academy: Using maternal advocacy for institutional change. *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement*, 3, 103-120
- Berry, T. R., & Mizelle, N. D. (Eds.). (2006). *From Oppression to Grace: Women of Color and their Dilemmas within the Academy*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Black, T., Helgeland, B., & Van Rellim, T. (Producers), & Helgeland, B. (Director). (2001). *A Knight's Tale* [Motion Picture]. United States: Escape Artists.

- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, (Third edition). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bradley, C. (2005). The career experiences of African-American women faculty: Implications for counselor education programs. *College Student Journal*, 39, 518-527.
- Britton, D. M. (2017). Beyond the chilly climate: The salience of gender in women's academic careers. *Gender & Society*, 31, 5-27. doi: 10.1177/0891243216681494
- Brown, K., & Jackson, D. D. (2013). The history and conceptual elements of critical race theory. In M. Lynn & A. D. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Carbado, D. W., & Gulati, M. (2013). *Acting White: Rethinking Race in "Post-Racial" America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Case, K. I. (1997). African American othermothering in the urban elementary school. *The Urban Review*, 29, 25-39 doi.org/10.1023/A:1024645710209
- Chapman, T. K. (2005). Expressions of "voice" in portraiture. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11, 27-51. doi: 10.1177/1077800404270840
- Chapman, T. K. (2007). Interrogating classroom relationships and events: Using portraiture and critical race theory in education research. *Educational Researcher*, 36(3), 156-162. doi: 10.3102/0013189X07301437
- Cheeks, M. (2018, March). How Black women describe navigating race and gender in the workplace. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from

<https://hbr.org/2018/03/how-black-women-describe-navigating-race-and-gender-in-the-workplace>

Chisholm, T. (1923). *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Co.

Retrieved from <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/19>

Classic TV Database (2006). Good Times. Retrieved from <http://www.classic-tv.com/shows/good-times>

Classic TV Database (2008). All in the Family. Retrieved from <http://www.classic-tv.com/shows/all-in-the-family>

Collins, M. (1992). *Ordinary Children, Extraordinary Teachers*. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads.

Collins, P. H. (2009). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality*. Malden, MA: Polity.

Cook, L. (2015, January 28). U. S. education: Still separate and unequal. *U. S. News and World Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/01/28/us-education-still-separate-and-unequal>

Coontz, S. (2011, May 8). *When we hated mom*. *New York Times*. p. WK8.

Cooper, T. L. (2006). *The Sista' Network: African-American Women Faculty Successfully Negotiating the Road to Tenure*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, Inc.

Criminal Justice Information Service Division. (2012). *Uniform Crime Report*. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.



Retrieved from [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2012/topic-pages/incidents-and-offences/incidentsandoffenses\\_final](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2012/topic-pages/incidents-and-offences/incidentsandoffenses_final)

- Cutts, Q. M., Love, B. L., & Davis, C. L. (2012). Being uprooted: Autobiographical reflections of learning in the [new] south. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 28, 57-72.
- Davis, D. J., Chaney, C., Edwards, L., Thompson-Rogers, G. K., & Gines, K. T. (2011 2010). Academe as an extreme sport: Black women, faculty development, and networking. *Negro Educational Review*, 62-63, 167-187.
- DeFrancisco, V. P. & Palczweski, C. H. (2014). *Gender in Communication: A Critical Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, Inc.
- Delgado, B. D., & Villalpando, O. (2002). Apartheid of knowledge in academia: The struggle over the “legitimate” knowledge of faculty of color. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 35, 169-180. doi: 10.1080/10665680290175185
- Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. *Michigan Law Review*, 87, 2441-2443. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1577362>
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2013) Discerning critical moments. In M. Lynn & D. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. pp. 23-33. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folks*. New York: Cambridge

- Edwards, B., & Rodgers, N. (1979). We are family [Recorded by Sister Sledge]. On *We are Family* [Record] New York, New York: Atlantic Records.
- Elgar, E. (1901). Pomp and circumstance military marches: March no. 1 in D major. Worcestershire, England: Boosey.
- Ellison, R. (1995). *Invisible Man*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Espino, M. M. (2012). Seeking the “truth” in the stories we tell: The role of critical race epistemology in higher education research. *The Review of Higher Education*, 36, 31-67. doi: 10.1353/rhe.2012.0048
- Evans, T. (2014). *The Power of God’s Names*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.
- Evans, S. Y. (2007). *Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850-1954: An Intellectual History*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
- Francis, R. W., Corbett, L. J., & Harris, J. (2012). The American professoriate: A status check of factors and perceptions. *World Journal of Education*, 2, 32-38. doi.org/10.5430/wje.v2n6p32
- Freeman, A. D. (1978). Legitimizing racial discrimination through antidiscrimination law: A critical review of Supreme Court doctrine. *Minnesota Law Review* 62(6), 1049-1119.
- Gause, C. P. (2011). *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Education: A Voice from the Margins*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publisher.
- Getty, K. & Getty, K. (2012). The Perfect Wisdom of our God. On *Hymns for the Christian Life* [CD]. Nashville, TN: Getty Music Label.
- Glenn, C. L. (2012). Stepping in and out: Examining the way anticipatory career socialization impacts identity negotiations of African American women in

- academia. In G. Gutierrez y Muhs , Y. F. Niemann, C. G. Gonzalez, & A. P. Harris (Eds.), *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (pp. 133-141). Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Graham, D. A. (2017, July 13). Why do republicans suddenly hate college so much? *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from [www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/why-do-republicans-suddenly-hate-colleges-so-much/533130/?utm\\_source=atfb](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/why-do-republicans-suddenly-hate-colleges-so-much/533130/?utm_source=atfb)
- Gregory, S. T. (2002). Creating our own success: A bird's-eye view of the journey towards tenure from one African-American faculty woman's perspective. In M. Taylor-Archer & S. Smith (Eds.), *Our Stories: The Experiences of Black Professionals on Predominantly White Campuses*. Cincinnati, OH: The John D. O'Bryant National Think Tank for Black Professionals in Higher Education on Predominantly White Campuses.
- Griffin, R. A. (2012). In the salon: Black female faculty 'talking back' to the academy. *Women & Language*, 35, 75-79. Retrieved from EBSCOhost Research Databases
- Gross, N. (2016, May 20). Professors are overwhelmingly liberal. Do universities need to change hiring practices? *LA Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-gross-academia-conservatives-iring-20160520-snap-story.html>
- Gutierrez y Muhs, G., Niemann, Y. F., Gonzalez, C. G., & Harris, A. P. (Eds.). (2012). *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.

- Gusa, D. L. (2010). White institutional presence: The impact of whiteness on campus climate. *Harvard Educational Review, 80*, Winter.  
doi.org/10.17763/haer.80.4.p5j483825u110002
- Harley, D. A. (2008). Maids of academe: African-American women faculty at predominantly white institutions. *Journal of African American Studies, 12*, 19-36.  
doi: 10.1007/s12111007-9030-5
- Harlow, R. (2003). "Race doesn't matter, but . . .": The effect of race on professors' experiences and emotional management in the undergraduate college classroom. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 66*, 348-363. doi:10.2307/1519834
- Harris, A. P., & Gonzalez, C. G. (2012). Introduction. In G. Guitierrez y Muhs, Y. F. Niemann, C. G. Gonzalez, & A.P. Harris (Eds.) *Presumed Incompetent: Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Harris, T. M. (2012). Flying solo: Negotiating the matrix of racism and sexism in higher education. *Women & Language, 35*(2), 103-107. Retrieved from EBSCOhost Research Databases
- Harrison, F. V. (2012). Racism in the academy: Toward a multi-methodological agenda for anthropological engagement. (CRRRA Report). Retrieved from [http://www.aaanet.org/cmtes/commissions/upload/crr\\_reportfull.pdf](http://www.aaanet.org/cmtes/commissions/upload/crr_reportfull.pdf)
- Harris-Perry, M. V. (2011). *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Henderson, T. L., Hunter, A. G., & Hildreth, G. J. (2010). Outsiders within the academy: Strategies for resistance and mentoring African American women. *Michigan Family Review, 14*, 28-41 doi 10.3998/mfr.4919087.0014.105
- Hendrix, K. G. (Ed.). (2007). *Neither White nor Male: Female Faculty of Color*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Herbert, S. S. (2012). What have you done for me lately?: Black female faculty and 'talking back' to the tenure process at PWIs. *Women & Language, 35*(2), 99-102. Retrieved from EBSCOhost Research Databases
- Hine, D. C., Hine, W. C., & Harrold, S. (2012). *African Americans: A Concise History*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Hirshfield, L. E., & Joseph, T. D. (2012). 'We need a woman, we need a black woman': Gender, race, and identity taxation in the academy. *Gender and Education, 24*, 213-227. doi; 10.1080/09540253.2011.606208
- History.com Staff (Producer). (2010). *The 1970s*. [Video]. Retrieved from <http://www.history.com/topics/1970s>
- Hobbel, N., & Chapman, T. K. (2009). Beyond the sole category of race: Using CRT intersectional framework to map identity projects. *Journal of Critical Theorizing, 25*, 7689. Retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/921778/Beyond\\_the\\_sole\\_category\\_of\\_race\\_Usi\\_a\\_CRT\\_itersectional\\_framework\\_to\\_map\\_identity\\_projects](http://www.academia.edu/921778/Beyond_the_sole_category_of_race_Usi_a_CRT_itersectional_framework_to_map_identity_projects)
- Holmes, S. L. (2008). Narrated voices of African-American women in academe. *Journal of Thought, 43*(3/4), 101-124. Retrieved from

[https://orb.binghamton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=student\\_a\\_fairs\\_fac](https://orb.binghamton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=student_a_fairs_fac)

hooks, b. (1981). *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

hooks, b. (1989). *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Howard, T. C. (2010). *Why Race and Culture matter in schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Classrooms*. New York, NY: Teacher College Press.

Hudson-Weems, C. (1989). Cultural and agenda conflicts in academia: Critical issues for Africana women's studies. In L. Phillips (Ed.). *The Womanist Reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hudson-Weems, C. (2000). Africana Womanism: An Overview. In D. P. Aldridge & C. Young (Eds.), *Out of the Revolution: The Development of Africana Studies*. (pp.205-217). New York, NY: Lexington Books.

Hurston, Z. N. (1942). *Dust Tracks on the Road: An Autobiography*. New York, N.Y.: Harper Collins.

Hurtado, S., Milem, J., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen, w. (1999). *Enacting Diverse Learning Environments: Improving the Climate for Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, Volume 26, No. 8. Washington, D. C.: The George Washington University, The Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Ikemoto, L. C. (2000). Traces of the master narrative in the story of African American/Korean American conflict: How we constructed "Los Angeles." In R.

- Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Jackson-Weaver, K., Baker, E. B., Gillespie, M. C., Ramos Bellido, C. G., & Watts, A. W. (2010). Recruiting the next generation of the professoriate. *Peer Review*, 12, 11-14. Retrieved from ProQuest.
- Jain, D., & Turner, C. (2011 & 2012). Purple is to lavender: Womanism, resistance, and the politics of naming. *The Negro Educational Review*, 62 & 63, (1-4), 67-88. Retrieved from The Negro Educational Review
- Jaschik, S. (2018, February 5). Liberal Indoctrination? Not so Much. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/02/05/research-suggests-colleges-broaden-students-political-views>
- Jayakumar, U. M., Howard, T. C., Allen, W. R., & Han, J. C. (2009). Racial privilege in the professoriate: An exploration of campus climate, retention, and satisfaction. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80, 538-563. Retrieved from ERIC
- Jean-Marie, G., & Lloyd-Jones, B. (Eds.). (2011). *Women of Color in Higher Education: Turbulent Past, Promising Future*. UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- June, A. W. (2015, November 08). The invisible labor of minority faculty. *Current Issues, Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/>
- Kupenda, A. M. (2012). Facing down the spooks. In G. Gutierrez y Muhs , Y. F. Niemann, C. G. Gonzalez, & A. P. Harris (Eds.), *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (pp. 20-28). Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.

- Knudsen, S. V. (2006). "Intersectionality – A theoretical inspiration in the analysis of minority cultures and identities in textbooks. In E. Bruillard,, M. Horsley, B. Amotsbakken et al. (Eds.), *Caught in the Web or Lost in the Textbook*, 8<sup>th</sup> IARTEM conference on learning and educational media, held in Caen in October 2005, Utrecht, The Netherlands: International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media (IARTEM), pp. 61–76,
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Racialized discourse and ethnic epistemologies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. pp. 257-278. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). Just what is critical race theory and what’s it doing in a nice field like education? In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*. pp. 17-36. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ladson, Billings, G. (2013). Critical race theory—What it is not! In M. Lynn & D. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education*. pp. 34-47. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Laird, M. (1972). Equal opportunity and race relations in the Department of Defense. *Commander’s Digest*, 12.2, (May, 18), pp. 1-2
- Lawrence, C. R. III (1987). The id, the ego, and equal protection clause: Reckoning with unconscious racism. *Stanford Law Review*, 39(2), 317-388. *Stanford Law*.  
doi:10.2307/1228797



- Lawrence, C. R., Matsuda, M. J., Delgado, R., & Crenshaw, K. W. (1993). *Words that Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Lawrence Lightfoot, S. (1983). *The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture*. United States: Basic Books.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2005). Reflections on portraiture: A dialogue between art and science. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(1), 3-15. doi: 10.1177/1077800404270955
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Davis, J. H. (1997). *The Art and Science of Portraiture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lazos, S. R. (2012). Are student teaching evaluations holding back women and minorities?: The Perils of “doing” gender and race in the classroom. In G. Gutierrez y Muhs, Y. F. Niemann, C. G. Gonzalez, & A. P. Harris, (Eds.), *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (pp. 165-185). Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Lee, R. B. (2016). *Identity*. Unpublished poem.
- Lopez, I. H. (2014). *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals have Reinvented Racism & Wrecked the Middle Class*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press.
- marbley, a. f., Wong, A., Santos-Hatchett, S. L., Pratt, C., & Jaddo, L. (2011). Women faculty of color: Voices, gender, and the expression of our multiple identities within academia. *Advancing Women in Leadership*, 31,166-174. Retrieved from [http://advancingwomen.com/awl/awl\\_wprdress/](http://advancingwomen.com/awl/awl_wprdress/)

- marbley, a. f., Rouson, L., Li, J., Huang, S., & Taylor, C. M. (2015). Black faculty negotiating the microaggressions in scholarship. In F. Bonner II., a. f. marbley, F. Tuitt, P. A. Robinson, , R. M. Banda, & R. L. Hughes (Eds.), *Black Faculty in the Academy: Counter-narratives for Negotiating Identity and Achieving Career Success* (pp.55-66). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Marx, S. (2006). *Revealing the Invisible: Confronting Passive Racism in Teacher Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Mattis, J. S., Fontenot, D. L., Hatcher-Kay, C. A., Grayman, N. A. & Beal, R. L. (2004). Religiosity, optimism, and pessimism among African American. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 30, 187-207. doi: 10.1177/0095798403260730
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- McDoo, H. P., & McDoo, J. L. (2011). Dynamics of African American fathers' roles. *Michigan Family Review*. 3(1), pp. 7-15.
- McCray, E. D. (2011). Womanist's work: The experiences of Black women scholars in education at predominantly White institutions. In G. Jean-Marie & B. Lloyd Jones, (Eds.), *Women of Color in Higher Education: Turbulent Past, Promising Future* (pp. 99-125). UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- McGill, A. (2015, November 23). The missing Black students at elite American universities. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/black-college-student-ody/417189/>

- McGowan, J. M. (2000). Multicultural teaching: African-American faculty classroom teaching experiences in predominantly White colleges and universities. *Multicultural Education*, 8(2), 19-22.
- McMurtrie, B. (2016, May 20). How do you create a diversity agenda? *Diversity in Academe, Chronicle of Higher Education*. pp. A4-A6
- Merriam, S. B. and Associates (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Mills, C. (1997). *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Montecinos, C. (1995). Culture as an ongoing dialogue: Implications for multicultural teacher education. In C. Sleeter & P. McLaren (Eds.), *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference* (pp. 269-308). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Morris, J. E., & Monroe, C. R. (2009). Why study the U.S. South? The nexus of race and place in investigating Black student achievement. *Educational Researcher*, 38, 21-36, doi: 10.3102/0013189X08328876
- Moustakas, C. (1995). *Being-in, Being-for, Being-with*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Newton, J. (1779). *Amazing Grace* [earliest recording by Original Sacred Harp Choir]. On New Great Britain [78 RPB]. Chicago, IL: The Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company.

- Ogunyemi, C. O. (1985). Womanism: The dynamics of the contemporary Black female novel in English. In L. Phillips (Ed.). *The Womanist Reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Orelus, P. W. (2013). The institutional cost of being a professor of color: Unveiling microaggression, racial [in]visibility, and racial profiling through the lens of critical race theory. *Current Issues in Education*, 16(2), 1-11. Retrieved from <http://cie.asu.edu/ojs/index.php/cieatasu/article/view/1001>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Peshkin, A. (1991). *The Color of Strangers, the Color of Friends: The Play of Ethnicity in School and Community*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life. (2009, January 30). A religious portrait of African-Americans. Washington, D. C. Retrieved from <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/01/30/a-religious-portrait-of-african-americans/>
- Phillips, L. (Ed). (2006). *The Womanist Reader*. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Plessy v. Ferguson, 163, U.S. 537 (1896). Retrieved from <https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/94508/plessy-v-ferguson/>
- Pollock, M. (2004). *Colormute: Race Talk Dilemmas in an American School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Pugh, S. (1969). May the work I've done speak for me [Recorded by the Consolers]. On *May the work I've done speak for me* [Record] Nashville, Tennessee: Nashboro Records. (1977)

- Rankin, S., & Reason, R. (2008). Transformational tapestry model: A comprehensive approach to transforming campus climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 1*, 262-274, doi: 10.1037a0014018
- Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason & Rigor: How Conceptual Frameworks Guide Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Rouse, M., & Haughn, M. (2014, April 15). Millennials (Generation Y) [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/millennials-millennial-generation>
- Sadao, K. C. (2003). Living in two worlds: Success and bicultural faculty of color. *Review of Higher Education, 26*, 397-418. doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2003.0034
- Schwartz, J., Mosharafa, E., & Lenise Wallace, S. (2016). Women of color in academia and the influence of religious culture on self-promotion: A collaborative autoethnography. *Review of European Studies, 8*, 85-93. doi: 10.5539/res.v8n2p85.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Shuval, k., Harker, K., Roudsari, B., Groce, N. E., Mills, B., Sidiqqi, Z., & Shachak, A. (2011). Is qualitative research second class science? A quantitative longitudinal examination of qualitative research in medical journals. *PLoS ONE 6*, 1-6. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0016937
- Singleton, G. E., & Hays, C. (2008). Beginning courageous conversations about race. In M. Pollock (Ed.), *Every Day Anti-Racism: Getting Real about Race in School* (pp. 18-23). New York, NY: The New Press.

- Singleton, G. E., & Linton, C. W. (2005). *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Smith, D. G. (2011). The diversity imperative. In P. G. Altbach, P. J. Gumport, & R. O. Berdahl (Eds.), *American Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century: Social, Political, and Economic Challenges* (pp. 465-490). Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Smitherman, G. (1977). *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State UP.
- Solórazano, D. G. (1998). Critical Race Theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 11(1), 121-136. doi:10.1080/095183998236926
- Solórazano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race method: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 8, 23-44. doi:10.1177/107780040200800103
- Spafford, H. G. (1873). *It Is Well With My Soul*. Rome, PA: Bliss, P. P. Retrieved from <https://www.spaffordhymn.com/>
- Spencer, K. (1971). *I'd Be Willing Lord to Run All The Way*. Ashland, OH: Kevin Spencer Publishing. Retrieved from <http://www.kevinspencermusic.com/Lyrics/IdBeWillingLordToRunAllTheWay.pdf>

- Stanley, C. A. (2006a). Coloring the academic landscape: Faculty of color breaking the silence in predominantly White colleges and universities. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43, 701-736. Retrieved from JSTOR
- Stanley, C. A. (Ed.). (2006b). *Faculty of Color: Teaching in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.
- Stanley, C. A., Porter, M. E., Simpson, N. J., & Ouellett, M. L. (2003). A case study of the teaching experiences of African-American faculty at two predominantly research universities. *Journal of Excellence in College Teaching*, 14(1), 151-178. Retrieved from Google Scholar
- Strong, J., II, (2010). *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. New York, NY: Nelson Thomas Inc.
- Sue, D. W. (2010). *Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Sue, D. W., Rivera, D. P., Watkins, N. L., Kim, R. H., Kim, S., & Williams, C. D. (2011). Racial dialogues: Challenges faculty of color face in the classroom. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 17, 331-340. doi: 10.1037/a0024190
- Tate, C. (2002, September 7). Busing in Seattle: A well-intentioned failure. Retrieved from <http://www.historylink.org/File/3939>.
- Taylor, E. (2009). The foundations of critical race theory in education: An introduction. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. (2008). *Moving beyond access: College access for low-income, first-generation students*. Washington, D C: Author.
- Thomas, G. D., & Hollenshead, C. (2001). Resisting from the margins: The coping strategies of Black women and other women of color faculty members at a research university. *Journal of Negro Education, 70*, 166-175.
- Thompson, C. Q. (2008). Recruitment, retention, and mentoring faculty of color: The chronicle continues. *New Directions in Higher Education, 143*, Fall 2008, 47-54.
- Trotter, J. W. (2004). Impact of the Great Depression on African Americans. In R. S. McElvaine (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Great Depression* (Vol. 1, pp. 8-17). New York: Macmillan Reference USA. Retrieved from <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3404500017/UHIC?u=sand55832&xid=c d29dd4>
- [Truth, S.]. [ca.1851]. *Ain't I a woman?* Speech delivered Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio. Modern History Sourcebook. Retrieved from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.asp>
- Tuitt, F., Hanna, M., Martinez, L. M., Salazar, M. C., & Griffin, R. (2009). Teaching in the line of fire: Faculty of color in the academy. *Thought & Action, Fall*, 65-74. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/TA09LineofFire.pdf>
- Tuitt, F., & Bonner II, F. A. (2015). Introduction. In F. A. Bonner II, A. F. marbley, F. Tuitt, P. A. Robinson, R. M. Banda, & R. L. Hughes (Eds.), *Black Faculty in the Academy: Counter-narratives for Negotiating Identity and Achieving Career Success*. (p.1) New York, NY: Routledge.



- Turner, C. S. V. (2002). Women of color in academe: Living with multiple marginality. *Journal of Higher Education, 73*(1), 74-94.  
[doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2002.11777131](https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2002.11777131)
- Turner, C. S. V. (2003). Incorporation and marginalization in the academy: From border toward center for faculty of color? *Journal of Black Studies, 24*, 112-125.  
[doi.org/10.1177/0021934703253689](https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934703253689)
- Turner, C. S. V., & Myers, S. L. Jr. (2000). *Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Tusmith, B., & Reddy, M. T. (Eds.). (2002). *Race in the College Classroom: Pedagogy and Politics*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- U. S. Census Bureau (2016a). QuickFacts. Retrieved from  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045216>
- U. S. Census Bureau (2016b). FAQs. Retrieved from  
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj/about/faq.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). Table 315.80: Full-time and Part-time Faculty and Instructional Staff in Degree-granting Postsecondary Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, and Program area: Fall 1998 and fall 2003 Retrieved from  
[http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14\\_315.80.asp?current=yes](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_315.80.asp?current=yes)
- U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Fast Facts: Race/ethnicity of college faculty Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>

- Vargas, L. (Ed.). (2002). *Women Faculty of Color in the White Classroom*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Walker, A. (1983). *In Search of our Mother's Garden*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Walker, H. (2002). I need you to survive. [Recorded by Hezekiah Walker and The Love Fellowship Crusade Choir]. *On Family affair II-Live at Radio City Music Hall*. [CD] New York, NY: Verity Records.
- Wall, C. A. (1989). *Changing our own Words*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP
- Wallace, S. L, Moore, S. E., Wilson, L. L., & Hart, B. G. (2012). African American women in the academy: Quelling the myth of presumed incompetent. In G. Gutierrez y Muhs, Y. F. Niemann, C. G. Gonzalez, & A. P. Harris (Eds.), *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (pp. 421-438). Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- West, C. (1993). *Race Matters*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Williamson, M. (2009). *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Wimbush, V. L. (2012). Introduction: Reading darkness, reading Scriptures. In V. Wimbush (Ed.), *African Americans and the Bible: Sacred Texts and Social Textures* (pp. 1-43). Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Winfrey, O. (Producer). (2011). *Maya Angelou: Power of words*. [Video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PXdacSqvcA>
- Wise, T. (2005, February 18). White like me: Reflections on race from a privileged son. Speech presented to Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles, CA.

- Wise, T. (2009). *Between Barack and a Hard Place: Racism and White Denial in the Age of Obama*. San Francisco, CA: City Light Books.
- Wong, K. L. (2011). Faculty women of color: The critical nexus of race and gender. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 4, 199-211. doi: 10.1037/a0024630
- Wood, J. L. (2008). Faculty of color in academe: What 20 years of literature tells us. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 3, 139-168. doi: 10.1037/a0012837
- Yenika-Agbaw, V., & Hildago-de Jesus, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Race, Women of Color, and the State University System: Critical Reflections*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc.
- Yoshinaga-Itano, C. (2006). Institutional barriers and myths to recruitment and retention of faculty of color: An administrator's perspective. In C. A. Stanley (Ed.), *Faculty of Color: Teaching in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.
- Zack, N. (1998). *Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: The Big Questions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Appendix A:  
Definition of Terms

## Appendix A

### Definition of Terms

**Amen:** Amen is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *amen*, meaning it is so; so be it (used after a prayer, creed, or other formal statement to express solemn ratification or agreement). The verb form occurs more than one hundred times in the Old Testament and means to take care, to be faithful, reliable or established, or to believe someone or something (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

**Bear witness:** To give written or oral testimony; to be evidence or proof; to provide evidence for; to give testimony in court; to inform or impart knowledge of some fact, state of affairs, or event; to declare or state emphatically and authoritatively; to vouch or to give personal assurance (Cambridge dictionary online, 2015).

**Campus climate:** Campus climate illustrates the manner in which campus life is perceived by the inhabitants of the campus. Climate is considered as the current attitudes, behaviors, habits, decisions, practices, and policies that make up campus life. Moreover, campus climate also encompasses the standards, of faculty, staff, administration, and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999; Rankin & Reason, 2008).

**Catharsis:** To rid, clear, or free of whatever is impure or undesirable; cleanse; purify; the purging of the emotions or relieving of emotional tensions, especially through certain kinds of art, as tragedy or music.

**Counter-narratives:** Counter-narratives or counter-stories (the terms are used interchangeably throughout the professional and scholarly discourse) are those counter-narratives or stories relayed by individuals who are socially marginalized. They serve two

purposes. First, counter-narratives serve as sources of existence and endurance and sources of political and cultural resistance for socially marginalized individuals and groups (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Secondly, counter-stories can be interpreted as a form of “talking back” (hooks, 1989, p. 9) . . . a means by which marginalized groups can speak truth to power . . . and move from silence and marginalization to speech and liberation (hooks, 1989).

**Damascene Conversion:** Derived from the conversion of St. Paul to Christianity on the road to Damascus found in Acts 9, we get the metaphorical reference to the "Road to Damascus" that has come to refer to a sudden or radical conversion of thought or a change of heart or mind even in matters outside of a Christian context. Used as a reference to an important moment of insight, typically one that leads to a dramatic transformation of attitude or belief.

**Diversity:** I used Smith’s (2011) definition of diversity which includes, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, and disability.

**First-generation:** status is defined by neither parent having earned a bachelor’s degree. First-generation status includes students whose parents may have some college, postsecondary certificates, or associate’s degrees, but not bachelor’s degrees. This is the definition of first-generation status used by the Federal TRIO programs. (The Pell Institute, 2008)

**Intersectionality (Intersectional Theory):** The study of overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination. The theory suggests that—and seeks to examine how—various biological, social and cultural categories such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, religion, caste, age,

nationality and other sectarian axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels. (DeFrancisco & Palczewski, 2014, p. 9).

Intersectionality holds that the classical conceptualizations of oppression within society such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and belief-based bigotry do not act independently of each other. Instead, these forms of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination. (Knudsen, 2006, p. 61-76).

**Master-narrative (majoritarian story) in Critical Race Theory:** A very narrow depiction of what it means to be Mexican-American, African-American, White, and so on...A master-narrative essentializes and wipes out the complexities and richness of a group's cultural life...A monovocal account will engender not only stereotyping but also choices that result in representations in which fellow members of a group represented cannot recognize themselves (Montecinos, 1995, pp.293-294).

“Master-narrative describes White supremacy's prescriptive, conflict-constructing power, which deploys exclusionary concepts of race and privilege in ways that maintain intergroup conflict” (Ikemoto, 2000, p. 302)

**Monoculturalism:** The expectation that all individuals conform to one “scholarly” worldview, which stems from the beliefs in the superiority and normalcy of White culture. (Gusa, 2010, p. 475)

**Predominantly White Institutions (PWI):** the term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment. (Encyclopedia of African American Education)

**Racism:** “Global White supremacy and is itself a political system, a particular power structure of formal and informal rule, privilege, socioeconomic advantages, and wealth and power opportunities” (Mills, 1997, p. 3)

**Selah:** A Hebrew word whose meaning is uncertain; various interpretations include: (1) a musical notation, (2) pause for silence, (3) a signal for worshipers to fall prostrate on the ground, (4) a term for worshipers to call out, and (5) a word meaning forever (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

**Successfully navigate the campus climate:** In this dissertation, I define success as garnering tenure, attaining promotion at the level of associate or full professor, and longevity in the academy of 5 or more years.

**The Deep South:** Refers to the states that joined in protecting racial slavery in the United States of America by 1860. They include the states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and Florida, the seven states that formed the original Confederate States of America (Hine, Hine, and Harrold, 2012; Morris & Monroe, 2009).

**White ascendancy:** Refers to “thinking and behavior that arise from White mainstream authority and advantage, which in turn are generated from Whiteness’s historical position of power and domination” (Gusa, 2010, p. 472).

**White blindness:** “A racial ideology that obscures and protects White identity and White privilege. Based on the principle of colorblindness, which positions equality in an ideology where the race of a person is immaterial to any decision-making process.” (Gusa, 2010, p. 477)

**White estrangement:** “The distancing of Whites physically and socially from people of color” (Gusa, 2010, p. 478).



**White Institutional Presence (WIP):** Customary ideologies and practices rooted in the institution's design and the organization of its environment and activities. WIP is founded upon four characteristics: White ascendancy, monoculturalism, White blindness, and White estrangement. In the context of WIP, PWIs are products of human decisions where Whiteness is positioned as normative and its educational practices as neutral (Gusa, 2010, pp. 466-467).

**Whiteness:** In this dissertation proposal whiteness is defined as "An amalgamation of qualities including the cultures, histories, experiences, discourses, and privileges shared by Whites" (Marx, 2006, p. 6).

**White supremacy:** The unnamed global political system that has profoundly shaped the modern world. Despite its pervasiveness and impact, most standard textbooks, about philosophy, political science, history, and education rarely mention this domination. This omission is not accidental. White supremacy is the background against which other systems are defined (Mills, 1997, p. 3).

**Working Identity:** Working identity is constituted by a range of racially associated ways of being, including how one dresses, speaks, styles one's hair; one's professional and social affiliations; who one marries or dates; one's politics and views about race; where one lives . . . . Working Identity refers both to the perceived choices people make about their self-presentation (the racially associated ways of being listed above) and to the perceived identity that emerges from those choices (how black we determine a person to be (Carbado & Gulati, 2013, p. 1).

Appendix B:  
IRB Approval and Exemption form

Appendix B

IRB Approval and Exemption Form



***Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
for the Protection of Human Research Participants***

**PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT**

---

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-03105-2014

INVESTIGATOR: Rochelle Bornett Lee

PROJECT TITLE: **And Still I Rise: Bridging Art and Science to Investigate and Illuminate the Lived Experiences of African American Women Faculty at Predominantly White Institutions in Georgia**

---

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:**

This research protocol is **exempt** from Institutional Review Board oversight under Exemption Category(ies) :2. You may begin your study immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator ([irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu)) before continuing your research.

---

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:**

Although not a requirement for exemption, the following suggestions are offered by the IRB Administrator to enhance the protection of participants and/or strengthen the research proposal:

**NONE**

If this box is checked, please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at [irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu) to ensure an updated record of your exemption.

---

*Elizabeth W. Olphie* 9/8/14

**Thank you for submitting an IRB application.**

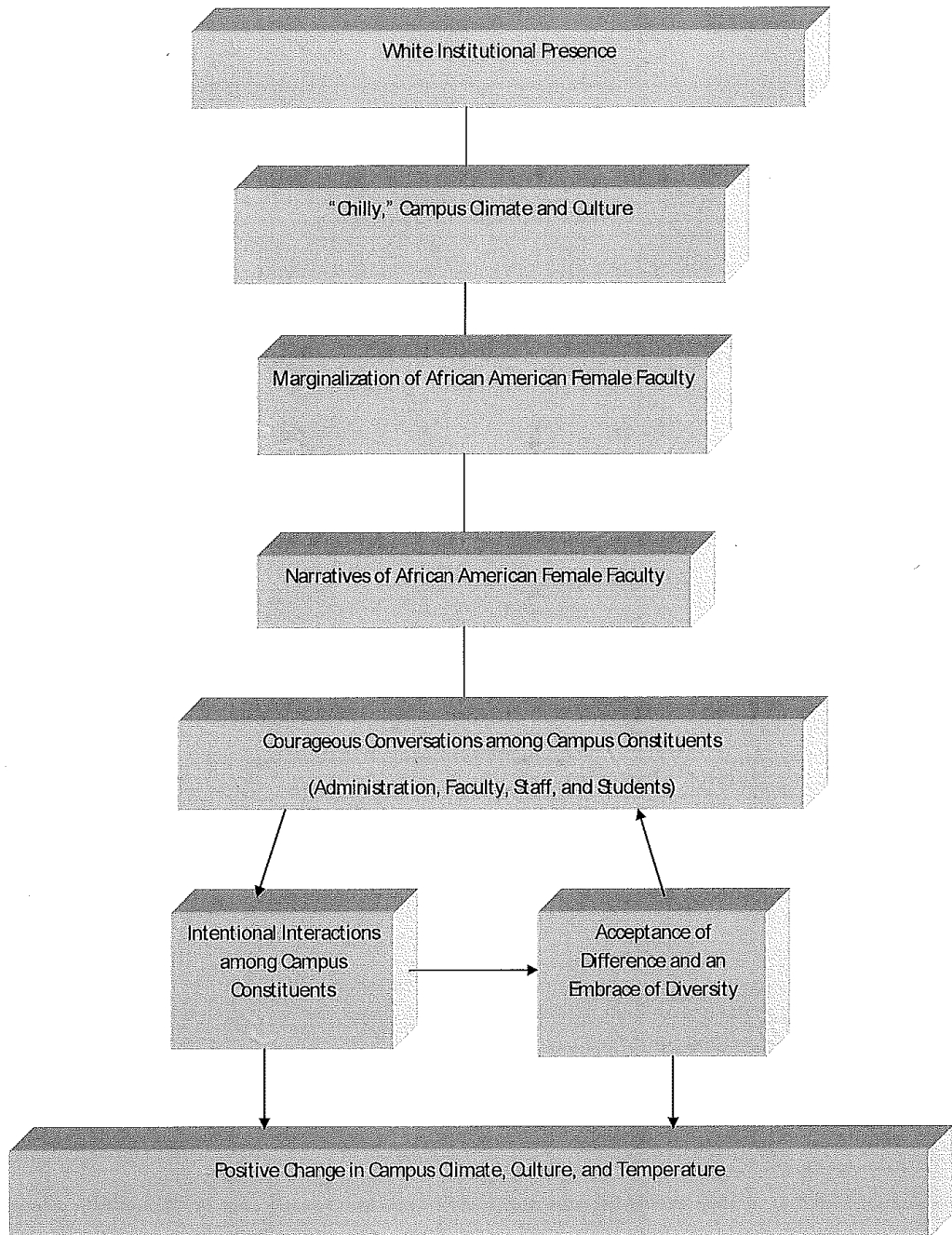
Elizabeth W. Olphie, IRB Administrator Date

**Please direct questions to [irb@valdosta.edu](mailto:irb@valdosta.edu) or 229-259-5045.**

Revised: 12.13.12

Appendix C  
Initial Conceptual Framework

Appendix C:  
Initial Conceptual Framework



Appendix D:  
Invitation Requesting Participation in the Study

## Appendix D

### Invitation Requesting Participation in the Study

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Good (morning, afternoon, or evening). I am Rochelle Bornett Lee, a doctoral student in Valdosta State University's Educational Leadership Program. The subject of my dissertation research is African American women faculty at predominantly White institutions in Georgia. I was given your name and contact information by \_\_\_\_\_, she (or he) thought that you might be interested in participating in my study.

This is an invitation for you to participate in this study and/or refer others to me who may want to participate in this study. As you may well know, recent years have brought an increase in scholarship regarding the experiences of African American women faculty employed by PWIs. However, what is sparsely represented in this scholarly discourse is the representation of the voices from African American women at PWIs in the southeastern region of the United States and in Georgia.

The purpose of this study is twofold; first, I want to explore how African American women faculty members employed by predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in Georgia make meaning of their experiences at the institutions of higher learning where they are employed. Secondly, I want to discover the strategies they use to successfully (garnering tenure and promotion and longevity within the academy) navigate the campus racial climate of their respective institutions of higher education. The research and literature review required as the footing necessary to conduct this specific research has highlighted and revealed the impact that White institutional presence (WIP) has on the experiences of African American women faculty employed by PWIs.

I know you are a very busy woman and I want to honor your schedule as well as do justice to this very important topic. I plan to conduct three 90-minute, one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. We can meet at a destination of your choosing. I want this process to be as easy as possible for you. I would like to audio tape the interviews that I conduct with you so I can accurately record your responses. I will destroy all tape recordings at the conclusion of my research. Additionally, I will ask you to read my representation of you and your stories to be sure you are being accurately represented in a way that would not compromise your identity. Furthermore, you and the university where you are employed will be assigned a pseudonym to insure your anonymity.

I would love to have you take part in this important work on African American women academics. If you are willing to be a research participant, please respond to this email stating your desire to participate in my study. If you feel you cannot take part in this study, please feel free to pass on this information to any other African American woman faculty member at a PWI in Georgia.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I appreciate your help in making my study fruitful and look forward to meeting and working with you,

Rochelle Bornett Lee



Appendix E:  
Interview Guide

## Appendix E

### Interview Guide

#### **Interview 1(90-minutes)-Focus on life history**

1. Tell me about yourself.

Where were you born?

Tell me about how you grew up, what stories do your family members tell about you as a child?

2. Tell me about your family background.

What was your mother like?

What was your father like?

How many siblings do you have?

What was your relationship with them like growing up?

What is your birth order in your immediate family?

3. Tell me about your growing up experiences.

What stories do you remember about your childhood?

What life lessons did you learn as a child?

4. What have been your employment experiences?

What work did you do as a teenager or college student?

What can you tell me about the first job you ever had?

Where did you work prior to coming to your current institution?

#### **Interview 2 (90-minutes)-The details of your professional experience**

1. Tell me about your background in higher education.

2. What influenced your decision to accept employment at the institution where you teach?
3. How would you describe/ reconstruct an average day in your life as an employee at your institution beginning from the time you wake in the morning until you return to sleep at night?
4. What can you tell about your relationships with your colleagues?  
  
What can you tell about your relationships with your colleagues in the department where you work?  
  
What can you tell about your relationships with your colleagues that are on your campus that are not members of your department?
5. What can you tell me about your relationships with your students?  
  
What can you tell me about your relationships with your students in the classes that you teach?  
  
What can you tell me about your relationships with students that you do not teach?
6. What can you tell me about the subject matter of your scholarly activities?
7. How has being at your institution influenced your research and/or scholarly activities?

**Interview 3 (90-minutes)-Continued details of your professional experience**

1. What has been your experience as a woman at your institution?
2. What has been your experience as an African American at your institution?
3. What has been your experience with gender and race within your institution?
4. How has the road through tenure and promotion played out for you?

5. Given what you have shared and reconstructed in these interviews, how do you see your future or where do you see yourself going in the future?
6. What does it mean to you to be an African American woman faculty member employed by a predominantly White institution?
7. What would you like to tell administrators, colleagues, or students about their role in your world?
8. What recommendations and/or strategies would you offer to other African American women faculty considering employment at your institution?
9. What would you like to tell administrators, colleagues, or students about their role in your world?

Appendix F:  
Participant Interview Record

Appendix F

Participant Interview Record

| Participant's Pseudonym | Participant's Rank          | Years of Service | Interview Number | Date of Interview  | Interview Length |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Shiphrah                | Tenured Professor           | 32 Retired       | 1                | May 26, 2015       | 122 mins 33 secs |
|                         |                             |                  | 2                | June 4, 2015       | 110 mins 33 secs |
|                         |                             |                  | 3                | June 25, 2015      | 134 mins 9 secs  |
| Grace                   | Tenured Associate Professor | 40 Retired       | 1                | July 31, 2015      | 129 mins 32 secs |
|                         |                             |                  | 2                | August 28, 2015    | 149 mins 34 secs |
|                         |                             |                  | 3                | September 25, 2015 | 145 mins 46 secs |
| Sophie                  | Tenured Professor           | 27 Retired       | 1                | June 2, 2015       | 113 mins 53 secs |
|                         |                             |                  | 2                | June 23, 2015      | 88 mins 57 secs  |
|                         |                             |                  | 3                | June 26, 2015      | 97 mins 46 secs  |
| Tabitha                 | Tenured Associate Professor | 11               | 1                | February 6, 2015   | 88 mins 22 secs  |
|                         |                             |                  | 2                | April 10, 2015     | 161 mins 6 secs  |
|                         |                             |                  | 3                | May 5, 2015        | 75 mins 25 secs  |
| Faith                   | Tenured Associate Professor | 11               | 1                | February 20, 2015  | 63 mins 30 secs  |
|                         |                             |                  | 2                | May 5, 2015        | 50 mins 39 secs  |
|                         |                             |                  | 3                | May 14, 2015       | 85 mins 35 secs  |
| Shalom                  | Tenured Associate Professor | 14               | 1                | May 22, 2015       | 92 mins 11 secs  |
|                         |                             |                  | 2                | May 28, 2015       | 85 mins 42 secs  |
|                         |                             |                  | 3                | June 1, 2015       | 86 mins 28 secs  |

Appendix G:  
Sample Participant Response

## Appendix G

### Sample Participant Response

Tabitha huh? I kind of like that. I didn't see too many things to change in what you wrote about me. Here are a couple though.

I spent the first 10 years of my life in Seattle and I do consider it my home town.

I went to Israel but I didn't speak there.

Other than that I truly truly loved it. It was weird reading about myself and someone's assessment of me. The thing about my office was funny. I usually don't have people in my office because there's so much paper around on my desk. I hate the fact that my square desk is a barrier between me and the people who come in my office. Sometimes when students come in the office I sit in my rocking chair to remove the barrier. But in our case I chose the round table because I felt it wasn't a barrier and that it would afford me privacy from my phone ringing etc..

I love that old hymn and I have been looking for the words for it forever. I am keeping it:

I hope your visit to Tabithaland wasn't too bad. Thanks for making me sound kind of cool. :) Blessings. I know you are still working on your dissertation but you are almost done. Remember that. That's the most important thing!!!! If there is anything else I can do to help let me know. Namaste.