

Unique Perspectives

Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the University of Missouri's School of Medicine | Volume 3, Issue 1

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Contributor's Notes:

Brought to you by the School of Medicine Faculty and Staff Diversity and Inclusion Committees. To be disseminated 5 times per year.

To submit diversity and inclusion news and events, please e-mail: folkertsa@health.missouri.edu and reevesks@health.missouri.edu

To learn more about the University of Missouri School of Medicine's diversity and inclusion efforts, click [here](#).

In the Spotlight: Laine Young-Walker, MD



Laine Young-Walker is the Chair in the Department of Psychiatry and Associate Dean for Student Programs in the SOM.

What is your definition of diversity and how do you encourage others to honor the uniqueness of each individual? How do you challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity and inclusion?

Diversity means variety. When discussing diversity, inclusivity is a natural part. Inclusion of people from different races, ethnicities, genders and sexual orientations is important. In order to be inclusive, we must recognize that each individual, and the insight they offer, is valuable. All voices matter and diversity in organizations leads to innovation and strength.

What approaches/strategies do you employ to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive and increasingly diverse in the student body and the Department of Psychiatry?

We have created a Diversity and Inclusion Committee that includes faculty, staff and residents. They host a variety of Diversity Grand Rounds and cultural highlights. In addition, the voice of everyone in the department is heard.

We have a strategic planning meeting monthly and discuss initiatives of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee at these meetings.

What have been your most successful accomplishments with respect to increasing diversity and inclusion in the student body and in the Department of Psychiatry?

For the past four years, the medical school has consistently had 16-18% of students underrepresented in medicine matriculating (per the AAMC definition). But, in addition to that, we have other measures of diversity within each class. There are increasing numbers of 1st generation college students, non-traditional students, students who identify as LGBTQIA+ and more.

What were some obstacles to promoting diversity in these areas?

An obstacle would be a lack of understanding of the value that comes with having a diverse medical school. The more diversity in the student population that exists, the clearer the value this brings becomes for everyone.



School of Medicine

University of Missouri

Office of Diversity & Inclusion



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Jill Kanaley, PhD
Interim Chair, Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology

Faculty Spotlight

According to the AAMC 2020 National Data, 21% of all School of Medicine Department Chair positions (interim and permanent) are occupied by women.

We are proud to share at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, 27% of Department Chair positions are occupied by women.

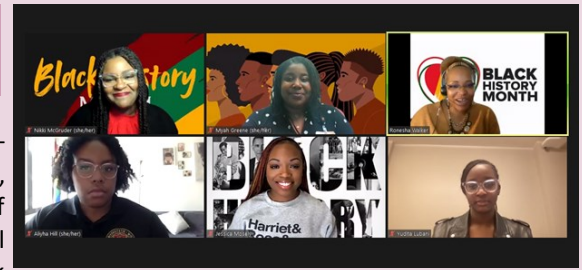
We appreciate their strong representation of women leadership in Academic Medicine.



Laura Henderson Kelley MD, MPH
Associate Dean for Diversity & Inclusion

Activity Highlights

Thoughtful Thursdays~ February's event began with a TEDMED Talk by Dorothy E. Roberts, J.D. titled, "[The Problem with Race-Based Medicine](#)". She says, "Race-based medicine is bad medicine, poor science and a false interpretation of humanity." A panel discussion followed with a recurring emphasis on how crucial representation in medical sciences is to people of color. For generations, Black communities have had a deep distrust in the medical system preventing them from living healthier lives. Social environments, finances, access to resources and stigma can all play into whether they seek care. Health systems must intentionally operate to encourage underrepresented groups to seek care by truly listening to the patient's needs, being transparent and offering a variety of treatment plans since some may be unattainable. One panelist said, "It's already a stretch to get us in the door. We are scared. Providers need to go above and beyond to show us they care because otherwise, we won't come back." Unlearning the trauma of the past and offering sensitivity training for providers by people of color are just two steps that can move us forward in closing the racial gaps existing in current health care practices.



Pictured left to right: Nikki McGruder, Aliyha Hill, Myah Greene, Jessica Mosely, Ronesha Walker and Yudita Lubani

Black Health and Wellness: A Collection of Historical Images

~ The State Historical Society of Missouri (SHSMO) and the University of Missouri Libraries launched an exhibit that featured photographs and artifacts from the SHSMO collections, highlighting both proud and shameful moments of Missouri history. A recipe for sweet potato donuts from Missouri-born agricultural scientist George Washington Carver honors his efforts to cultivate crops that were both nutritious and soil-replenishing. The comic "Food Facts and Fun" from 1974 helped bring nutrition information through stories of kids living in a predominantly Black, interracial neighborhood. Photographs of a 1942 blood drive show Black residents of St. Louis volunteering to give blood, though at the time the Red Cross segregated blood supplies by race. There are also items from the Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis which is featured in the *Brain Food* section of our newsletter this month. These items and more can be viewed in the colonnade on the main floor of Ellis Library through May 31, 2022.

WIMMS~ For February's *First Friday Empower Lunch*, the Women in Medicine and Medical Sciences (WIMMS) group presented a TED talk, "[Ditch the Drama- How to Live Happy in a Messy World](#)" by Cy Wakeman, best-selling author and leadership speaker. Ms. Wakeman begins by explaining how too many of us suffer from the stories we create out of situations and not the reality of them. She emphasized how much time and energy is wasted on gossip, venting and victim mentality in the workplace, about 2.5 hours per day or 816 hours per year from her estimates. To ditch your negative "low self" and self-reflect into our best "high self", she suggests we ask ourselves three important questions in each situation to end up on the happy side of life in the messy world we share.

A Sociomedical Autopsy of the Flint Water Crisis

~ A series of Black History Month events at MU included a presentation on February 16 by Dr. Jerel Ezell, assistant professor at Cornell University, on his research into the Flint, Michigan water crisis that took place between 2013 and 2016. He began with a brief history of how Flint's Black and middle-class population grew for decades with General Motors (GM) at the heart of "Vehicle City", and the overall role the company played in the water crisis. In just under two years, adverse health effects like hypertension, ADHD and emotional aggravations (including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia) would cause concern amongst the Flint community, mostly affecting Black and low-income families. Along with an emphasis on the vital importance of successful communication of public health information, the situation in Flint also put a spotlight on the entire nation's old, lead-infested pipes, including the roughly 330,000 lead-service lines needing to be replaced here in Missouri.

Give Me 5!



Colbert Nelson is a PGY-2 resident in the Dept. of Family and Community Medicine. To get to know Colbert better, we asked him these 5 questions:

1. If you could live anywhere or do anything, where or what would that be?

I would want to live abroad, potentially in Japan, and to be a chef.

2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?

Pecan pie for sweet. For savory, Nashville Hot chicken or Korean fried chicken come to mind, but any food is good food.

3. What is your favorite cultural/family tradition you celebrate every year?

I don't have any family traditions yet but I hope to create one in the future.

4. Tell us an interesting or fun fact about yourself.

I've had two bouts with pericarditis. One required a hospital stay with a pericardiocentesis.

5. If you could make one change in the world what would it be?

Currently, for the Covid-19 pandemic to be over. If Covid-19 was not an issue, it would simply be for everyone to treat each other with respect.

A Look Back...

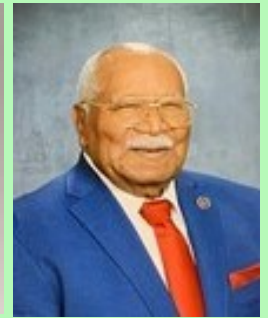
In honor of Black History Month, we take A Look Back at two men who paved the way for progress at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. Dr. Robert J. Smith and Dr. Freddie Lee Hayes were the first African Americans to earn a degree from the School of Medicine; Dr. Smith from the two-year program in 1953 and Dr. Hayes from the four-year program in 1958. The University of Missouri began admitting students of color in 1950.

Dr. Robert J. Smith was a native of Missouri. After finishing the two-year program at Mizzou, he completed his medical degree in 1955 at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. After graduation, he established a practice in Arkansas where he became the first board-certified African American surgeon in the state. Dr. Smith was known as an activist, co-founding the Southeast Arkansas Medical Network while promoting diversity in the health professions. Dr. Smith died in 2018 a proud Tiger. A quote from his son, Martin Smith, "He definitely represented his alma mater on his car, office wall and even his credit card".

Dr. Freddie Lee Hayes was also from Missouri, born and raised in Boone County, and attended Douglass High School. After graduating from Lincoln University and before coming to the University of Missouri for medical school, he joined the United States Marine Corp serving in the Korean War. He completed medical school in 1958 and moved to Fresno, California where he established a successful practice. Dr. Hayes maintained his ties to the University of Missouri staying active in the Missouri Alumni Association. Dr. Hayes recently passed away in October of 2021 at the age of 93.

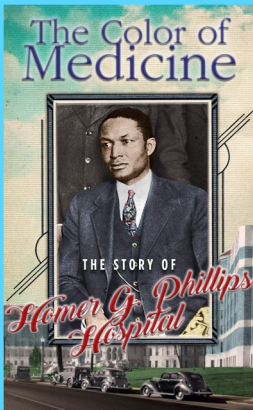
Dr. Robert J. Smith and Dr. Freddie Lee Hayes are pioneers. Their strength and tenacity helped pave the way for the diversity we see today in the School of Medicine student body. The entering class for 2021 has been the most diverse to date with a record 20% of the class self-identifying as members of an underrepresented minority and 42% identifying as an ethnic minority.

The path to change is not always straight, quick or easy but it is important to remember and respect where the path to change commenced. Drs. Smith and Hayes started this journey almost 70 years ago and their efforts were not in vain. We acknowledge them for their courage and determination.



Dr. Robert J. Smith and Dr. Freddie Lee Hayes

Brain Food



To boost America's economy and morale after the Great Depression in 1933, newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced The New Deal that included funding for 11 new hospital developments. One hospital development in discussion since 1923 would finally come to fruition and open in the thriving St. Louis community of "The Ville" in 1937. The hospital's namesake, Sedalia-born attorney and staunch social justice advocate, Homer G. Phillips, would not live to see his dream of the world-class

hospital open due to his tragic and unsolved murder in 1931. Praised to become one of the "greatest African American hospitals in the nation", the structurally breathtaking Homer G. Phillips Hospital quickly evolved as a premier destination for many aspiring Black physicians and nurses. Most medical and nursing schools at that time did not accept Black applicants. Excellence was the standard and the hospital's medical directors continually fought for the best of everything for their students. By 1961, the hospital had trained the largest number of Black doctors and nurses in the world. In what many believe was a racially motivated political ploy, the hospital's forced shutdown in August of 1979 resembled a military operation with police, helicopters, dogs and the National Guard on standby. Avoiding demolition in 2002, the building still stands and operates today as a full-service senior living community. View *The Color of Medicine: The Story of Homer G. Phillips Hospital* [here](#).

Calendar of Events

Upcoming events on campus and in the Columbia community



*WIMMS next *First Friday Empower Lunch* is, "[How Moms Shape the World](#)", by Anna Maliaka Tubbs on **March 4**, 12-1pm. On **April 8**, 12-1pm, "[The Full Power of Women's Speech](#)," by Priyanka Chopra. [Click here join the Zoom discussion](#) for each presentation.

*March is Women's History Month and the national theme is, "Providing Healing, Promoting Hope." The next *Thoughtful Thursdays* event will be, "Break the Bias", on **March 24**, 12-1pm hosted by MU Health Care's Women's Employee Resource Group. Zoom link coming in MU Health Today. Mark your calendars for the fourth Thursday of each month to join these important discussions.

*oSTEM stands for "Out in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics." It's a MU social and service group catering to LGBTQIA+ interested in STEM. Anyone interested in promoting diversity in STEM can join! [Zoom meetings](#) are **every other Tuesday, 7-8pm**. Contact agsthk@umsystem.edu for more info.

Disclaimer: Event dates and times are subject to change. Thank you!

Are you GAME for some Diversity and Inclusion trivia? Be the first to scan the code and submit your answers to win some Diversity and Inclusion Staff Committee items. Contest closes March 12. Winner will be contacted the week of March 14. Good luck!

