



**BLACK
MEN'S BRAIN
HEALTH**

2025 FOURTH ANNUAL

**BLACK MEN'S
BRAIN HEALTH
CONFERENCE**

Increasing the Representation of
Black Men in Alzheimer's Disease
and Dementia Research

February 4-5, 2025
Hosted by Xavier University of
Louisiana - New Orleans, LA

**BLACK
MEN'S BRAIN
HEALTH**

Table of Contents

1	Greetings
2	Welcome
3-5	Meeting Agenda Day One
6-8	Meeting Agenda Day Two
9-10	Conference Location (Map & Floor Plan)
11-13	Principal Investigators
14-32	Featured Speaker (Day 1 and 2)
33	Sports Spotlight Series
34	Emerging Scholars Leadership Team
35-37	Emerging Scholars Program - Cohort III
38-46	Emerging Scholars Program - Cohort IV
47	Special Thanks
48	Like, Share, and Follow (Social Media)
49	Sponsors - Thank you!
50	Thank You

Greetings

Dear Conference Attendee,

On behalf of the Black Men's Brain Health (BMBH) team, we sincerely thank you for your meaningful participation in the 4th annual BMBH conference, hosted at Xavier University of Louisiana on February 4- 5, 2025. We are elated and proud as this event is the first time we are bringing our programming to an HBCU!

Your attendance and engagement is integral to the success of this event, and we are so grateful to have you join us. The thoughtful conversations, shared insights, and collaborative energy from individuals like you are helping to advance our mission of promoting comprehensive research on brain health and dementia among Black men. We have endeavored over the past few years to continue to widen our network and to engage our members in the important conversations around brain health in our communities.

We hope you take the opportunity to connect with our Emerging Scholars, an exceptional group of academics representing diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Their dedication to advancing knowledge in brain health is inspiring, and we are confident that your interactions with them fostered valuable exchange and collaboration.

As we grow our network of team members and volunteers, we invite you to share your thoughts, reflections, and ideas with us. Your input is essential as we work together to confront and eliminate disparities in health outcomes in our communities.

Please stay engaged with us through social media, email, or phone—we invite you to share your thoughts, reflections, and ideas with us as the conference progresses. We genuinely value your feedback and ideas; your input is essential as we work together to confront and eliminate disparities in health outcomes for our people.

We are excited to continue building on the momentum from this year's conference and to celebrate the successes and progress it inspires. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to advancing health equity, and we look forward to collaborating with you in the future.

Respectfully,

Drs. Carrillo, Rivera-Mindt, and Turner
Co-Principal Investigators

The Black Men's Brain Health Initiative

Welcome



Dear Black Men's Brain Health Participant,

A SINCERE thank you for joining us at the fourth annual Black Men's Brain Health (BMBH) conference in New Orleans. This event could not happen with you - your intelligence, insights, and kindness.

As the conference coordinator, I extend a sincere welcome to you as we deliver a conference that uniquely convenes a diverse group of caring professionals at Xavier University of Louisiana. A proud institution that has continued its tradition of developing leaders and integrating service activities as a key ingredient for healthy citizenship. We also applaud your being a trailblazer in the following ways:

- Establishing the first-ever varsity-level co-ed rowing program at an HBCU
- Reviving the esteemed Opera program to receive world-class instruction and produce renowned performers as in the past
- Being named a Fulbright HBCU Institutional Leader for 2024 by the U.S. State Department. This declaration recognizes Xavier's engagement with the Fulbright Program, the U.S. government's flagship international academic exchange program
- Ranked in the top 5 for the best value (College Factual 2020 Rankings) programs in biological and biomedical sciences, general biology, physical sciences, and chemistry!

Our planning team has worked hard and smart over the past year tweaking our model based on lessons learned from an amazing conference in Las Vegas (UNLV). With the ongoing support of leadership at the Alzheimer's Association, and National Institutes of Health - Aging, a seed has now blossomed. Our "start-up" is drawing attention and financial support from a diverse range of individuals and institutions. We are committed to serving all populations, and we start with a very vulnerable population: Black men. We are blessed that so many others agree and have joined in to create a bridge for collaboration, deliverables, and discussion by athletes, community leaders, health-related professionals, researchers, and sport administrators.

Please help us increase awareness of this conference and our work together. Feel free to tag us in your social media marketing.

@BrainHealth4Men #BMBH2025 #BlackMensBrainHealth

Also, please be informed that the Men's Brain Health Initiative includes this unique conference and so much more! We are hoping that you will read this program and download our event app, UBMe, to engage with others during the conference and learn more about our BMBH Emerging Scholars, partners and sponsors. We are very thankful to ADNI (Alzheimer's Disease and Neuroimaging Initiative), Eisai, Harmony Biosciences, and Links2Equity and encourage you to gain insight on their incredible work to develop and deliver treatments for rare neurological diseases.

If there is anything we can do to assist you in your research and engagement beyond the conference, please let us know. Our goal is to create a strong network for this very important cause of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia research. Please introduce yourself to someone you don't know, tell your story, and your why. One of my most important goals is for YOU to connect with other professionals. I am hopeful that you will enjoy the strategies and research presented during the day. And of course, the fellowship at the evening social mixers will prayerfully begin new trusted friendships.

I am ever grateful for your efforts to make a difference!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Deborah'.

Deborah L. Stroman, Ph.D. CLU | @drstroman

BMBH Conference Coordinator

Founder, Center of Sport Business and Analytics (<https://www.theCSBA.com>)

Professor, University of North Carolina





Meeting Agenda - Day One

Tuesday, February 4, 2025 - Xavier University of Louisiana at New Orleans

8:00 - 9:00 AM	Breakfast and Registration
9:00 - 9:15 AM	Opening Remarks & Conference Overview Dr. Robert W. Turner II, Duke University Dr. Monica Rivera-Mindt, Fordham University/Mount Sinai
9:15 - 9:30 AM	Opening Session & Welcome Dr. Brian Turner, Xavier University of Louisiana
9:30 - 10:15 AM	Session 1: Clinical Trials and Advancing Black Men's Brain Health Keynote Address: Dr. Eric Griggs, LSU School of Medicine and Xavier University of Louisiana, College of Pharmacy
10:15 - 10:30 AM	Day 1 Keynote Q&A Moderator: Dr. Robert W. Turner II, Duke University
10:30 - 10:45 AM MORNING BREAK	
10:45 - 11:15 AM	Panel: Advancing Awareness and Participation in Clinical Trials for Black Men's Brain Health Moderator: Dr. Robert W. Turner II, Duke University Panel Participants: Dr. Eric Griggs, LSU School of Medicine and Xavier University of Louisiana College of Pharmacy Dr. Doris Molina-Henry, University of Southern California Dr. Charles Windon, University of California, San Francisco



Meeting Agenda - Day One

Tuesday, February 4, 2025 - Xavier University of Louisiana at New Orleans

11:15 - 11:45 AM	Session 2: Clinical Trials and Black Men's Brain Health in Greater New Orleans New Orleans Dr. Thomas LaVeist, Xavier University of Louisiana
11:45 - 12:15 PM	Panel: Engaging Local Communities in Black Men's Brain Health Through Clinical Trials Moderator: Dr. Oz Ismail, Alzheimer's Association Panel Participants: Dr. Thomas LaVeist, Tulane University Dr. Amy Thierry, Xavier University of Louisiana Dr. Lakeisha Williams, Xavier University of Louisiana Dr. Maurice Sholas, Oschner Health
12:15 - 12:45 PM LUNCH BREAK	
12:45- 2:15 PM	Lunch Sports Spotlight Series Journey of Resilience: Real Talk with Women Champions Moderator: Dr. Deborah Stroman, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill & University of Virginia Panel Participants: Dr. Hagar Elgendy, UNC School of Medicine, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Carmen McZeal, Psychotherapist & CEO, EDGE Sports Pat Kendrick, Xavier University of Louisiana, Executive Director of Athletics and Recreation

2:15 - 2:30 PM BREAK



Meeting Agenda - Day One

Tuesday, February 4, 2025 - Xavier University of Louisiana at New Orleans

2:30 - 3:30 PM

Workshop & Summary

Dr. Monica Rivera-Mindt, Fordham University/Mount Sinai
Dr. Eric Griggs, LSU School of Medicine and Xavier University of Louisiana
College of Pharmacy

3:45 - 4:15 PM

Session 3: Ethical Issues Around Clinical Trials for Underrepresented Communities

Dr. Dinithia Sampson, Xavier University of Louisiana

4:15 - 4:45 PM

Day 1 Topics Q&A

All Day 1 speakers and panelists available on stage or in audience

4:45 - 5:00 PM BREAK

5:00 - 5:30 AM

ESP Scholar Flash Talks Part 1

5:30 - 5:40 PM

Closing remarks

Dr. Eric Griggs, LSU School of Medicine and Xavier University of Louisiana, College of Pharmacy

5:00 - 7:30 PM

Reception/Social Mixer

Ray's Uptown (3629 Prytania St, New Orleans, LA 70115)



Meeting Agenda - Day Two

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 - Xavier University of Louisiana at New Orleans

8:00 - 9:00 AM	Breakfast and Registration
9:00 - 9:15 AM	Opening Remarks & Conference Overview Dr. Oz Ismail, Alzheimer's Association
9:15 - 9:30 AM	Host Site Welcome Remarks Dr. Kathleen B. Kennedy, Xavier University of Louisiana
9:30 - 10:15 AM	Session 4: Culture, Psychology, and Coping in Black Men's Mental Health Keynote Address: Dr. Brian Turner, Xavier University of Louisiana
10:15 - 10:30 AM	Day 2 Keynote Q & A Guy Troupe (Moderator), Founder, Players Network Event
10:30 - 10:45 AM BREAK	
10:45 - 11:15 AM	Panel: Cultural Influences on Mental Health and Coping among Black Men Moderator: Dr. Roland Thorpe, John's Hopkins University Panel Participants: Dr. Brian Turner, Xavier University of Louisiana Dr. Thomas LaVeist, Xavier University of Louisiana Dr. Walter Breaux, Xavier University of Louisiana Dr. Willie McBride, Spalding University

Meeting Agenda - Day Two

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 - Xavier University of Louisiana at New Orleans

11:15 - 11:45 AM

Session 5: Navigating Caregiving for Alzheimer's and Dementia with Local and National Resources

Corey Smith, "Mr. Serv-On" - Caregiver and Platinum Rapper from No Limit Records

11:45 - 12:15 PM

Panel: Bridging Policy and Practice in Alzheimer's and Dementia Care

Moderator:

Dr. Wanda Spurlock, Southern University and A&M College

Panel Participants:

Corey Smith, "Mr. Serv-On" - Platinum American Rapper, No Limit Records.

Delores Hurst, Alzheimer's Association

Stephen Hall, Alzheimer's Association

Senator Royce Duplessis, Louisiana State Senate

Representative Matthew Willard, Louisiana State Representative

12:15 - 12:45 PM BREAK

12:45 - 2:15 PM

Lunch

Sports Spotlight Series

The Fifth Down: Athletes' Reflections on the Pain and Pleasure of Pro Football

Dr. Deborah Stroman, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Panel

Moderator:

Guy Troupe, Founder, Players Network Event

Panel Participants:

Reggie Brooks, Former NFL Player & ED, Holtz's Heroes Foundation, Inc.

Quentin Gause, Former NFL Player & CEO, Rizewell

Dr. Herb Martin, NFL Team Psychologist



Meeting Agenda - Day Two

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 - Xavier University of Louisiana at New Orleans

2:30 - 3:15PM

Session 6: HBCUs and the Future of Black Men's Brain Health Research

Dr. Rahn Bailey, LSU School of Medicine

3:15 - 4:15 PM

Panel: Building Research Pathways for Black Men's Brain Health at HBCUs

Moderator:

Dr. Willie McBride, Spalding University

Panel Participants:

Dr. Rahn Bailey, LSU School of Medicine

Dr. Robert Newton, Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Dr. Anthony Jackson, Southern University and A&M College

Dr. Leonard Seoane, University of Queensland

4:15 - 4:30 PM BREAK

4:30 - 5:00 PM

ESP Scholar Flash Talks

Part 2

5:00 - 5:15 PM

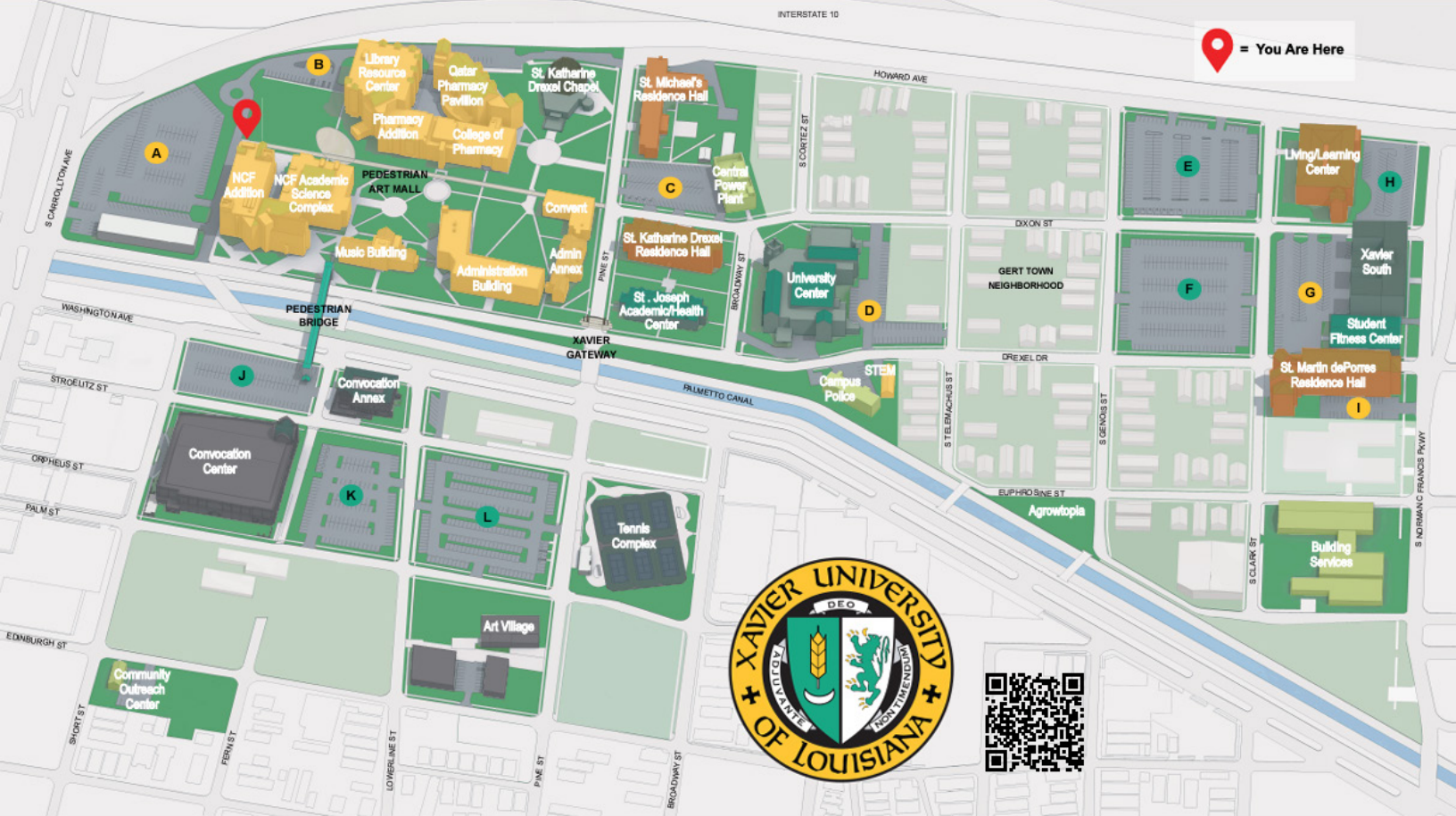
Closing Remarks

Dr. Desiree Byrd, Queens College, CUNY

Conference Location - McCaffrey Ballroom in the University Center

3rd floor McCaffrey Ballroom
 4980 Dixon St, New Orleans, LA 70125
 (University Center main entrance at corner of Broadway and Dixon Street).

Xavier University Campus Map



CAMPUS BUILDINGS

- = Academics
- = Student Housing
- = Support Services
- = Student & Cultural Life
- = Arts & Athletics

PARKING LOTS

- A = Faculty, Staff, Reserve
- B = Faculty, Staff, Vendors
- C = Faculty, Staff, Reserve
- D = Faculty, Staff, Reserve
- E = Open
- F = Open
- G = Faculty, Staff, Reserve
- H = Student
- I = Open
- J = Open
- K = Open
- L = Open

Conference Location - McCaffrey Ballroom Floor Plan

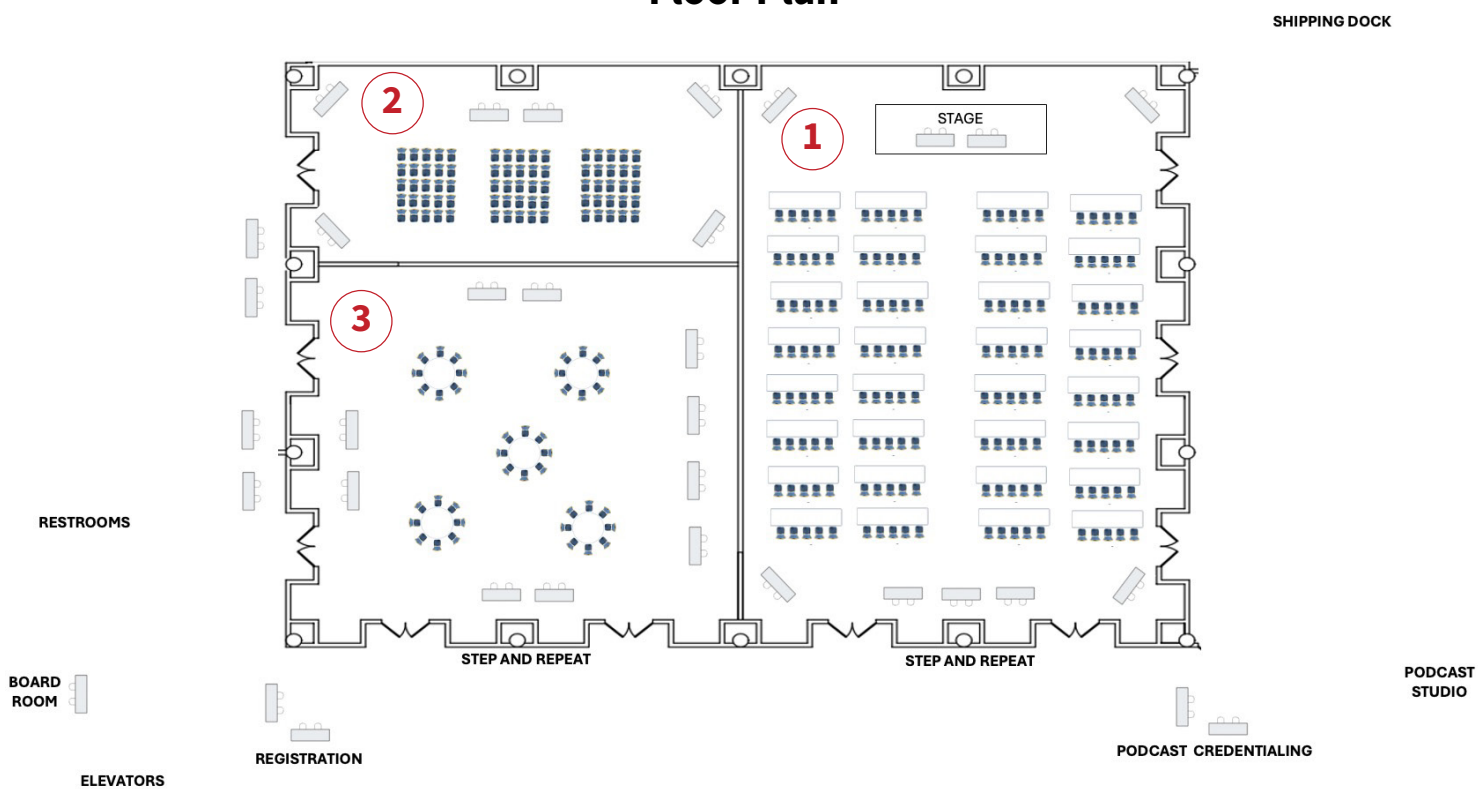


3rd floor McCaffery Ballroom

4980 Dixon St, New Orleans, LA 70125

(University Center main entrance at corner of Broadway and Dixon Street).

Floor Plan



1. Mardi Gras Ballroom
2. Bayou Room
3. Who Dat Room

Co-Principal Investigator



**Monica Rivera-Mindt, Ph.D.,
A.B.P.P.**

Professor of Psychology,
Fordham University/ISMMS

Dr. Monica Rivera-Mindt a board-certified neuropsychologist, is Past-President of the Hispanic Neuropsychological Society and a tenured Professor of Psychology, Latinx Studies, and African & African American Studies at Fordham University with a joint appointment in Neurology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Her multidisciplinary, community-based research is funded by the NIH/National Institute of Aging (NIA), the Alzheimer's Association, NSF, and Genentech.

Her work primarily focuses on the intersection between cultural neuroscience and health inequities in cognitive aging. Her current studies are examining genetic, cerebrovascular, and sociocultural risk factors for cognitive impairment and dementia in ethnoculturally diverse populations, as well as ways to increase diverse representation in cognitive aging and dementia research. She has authored more than 100+ peer-reviewed publications and book chapters. In addition, she is Co-Lead of the NIA-funded Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative's (ADNI) Engagement Core. At the national level, Dr. Rivera Mindt recently served as Chair of NIH/NIA's AGCD-4 Study Section, and is a member of the CDC's BOLD Public Health Center of Excellence on Dementia Risk Reduction Expert Panel, and the CDC/National Alzheimer's Project Act's (NAPA) Physical Activity, Tobacco Use, and Alcohol Workgroup. Locally, she serves as a Board Member for the Alzheimer's Association's NYC Chapter and a Treasurer for the Harlem Community & Academic Partnership (HCAP).

As a bilingual (Spanish/English), Afro-Latinx/Indigenous neuroscientist, she brings a unique perspective to her research and is the recipient of several awards for her research, teaching, and contributions to the field, including the 2020 Martha Bernal Award for the Advancement of Diversity Training and Education in Clinical Psychology from the Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology (CUDCP) and 2019 Hispanic Health Leadership Award from the National Hispanic Medical Association. She is also a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Division 40, Society for Clinical Neuropsychology), the National Academy of Neuropsychology, and Hispanic Neuropsychological Society.

Co-Principal Investigator

CONTINUED



**Robert W. Turner II,
Ph.D.**

Duke University Aging Center

Dr. Robert W. Turner II is an Associate Professor in the Department of Population Health Sciences, within Duke University School of Medicine. He holds a secondary appointment in the Department of Neurology, at Duke University, Aging Center. He earned his Ph.D. in medical sociology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY). After attending James Madison University on an athletic scholarship, he played football professionally in the United States Football League (USFL), the Canadian Football League (CFL), and the National Football League (NFL). He is the author of "Not For Long: The Life and Career of the NFL Athlete" (Oxford Press) and a consultant for the LeBron James-produced HBO documentary film "Student Athlete."

Dr. Turner is the PI for the \$6.3M NINDS-funded R01 grant, The Contribution of Repetitive Head Impacts and Social Determinants of Health to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias in Older Adult Black Men. Additionally, he is the Co-PI for an R13 grant entitled, Black Male Brain Reserve, Resilience & Alzheimer's Disease, and oversees the Men's Brain Health Initiative (MBHI), which launched the Men's Brain Health Directory in the summer of 2023.

Co-Principal Investigator

CONTINUED



Maria C. Carrillo,
Ph.D.
Chief Science Officer
Alzheimer's Association

As chief science officer, **Maria C. Carrillo, Ph.D.**, sets the strategic vision for the Alzheimer's Association global research program. Under her leadership, the Association is the world's largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer's research — currently investing over \$250 million — and an internationally recognized pioneer in convening the dementia science community. Dr. Carrillo uses her platform as a noted public speaker to play an instrumental role in the Association's efforts to lobby for increased funding for the disease.

Dr. Carrillo oversees the implementation of the Association's growing portfolio of research initiatives, including the Alzheimer's Association International Conference® (AAIC®), the world's largest and most influential dementia science meeting, and the Research Roundtable, which enables international scientific, industry and government leaders to work together to overcome shared obstacles in Alzheimer's science and drug development. In addition, she leads the Association's direct involvement in research by serving as a co-primary investigator for the Association-funded and led U.S. POINTER study, a lifestyle intervention trial to prevent cognitive decline and dementia.

Dr. Carrillo earned her Ph.D. from Northwestern University's Institute for Neuroscience and completed a postdoctoral fellowship focused on Alzheimer's brain imaging and risk factors at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

The Alzheimer's Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. For more information, visit alz.org.

Featured Speakers



Dr. Amy Thierry

Assistant Professor
Department of Public
Health Sciences

Dr. Amy Thierry completed her Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from LSU - Baton Rouge and a MPH in Behavioral and Community Health Sciences from the LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. Dr. Thierry earned her PhD in Biobehavioral Health with a minor in Demography from the Pennsylvania State University and completed her postdoctoral fellowship at the Duke University Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development.

With expertise in quantitative analysis of national survey and biomarker data, Dr. Thierry's research focuses on understanding how social inequality via chronic stress pathways drives population-level disparities in chronic disease, physical disability, and cognitive impairment in Black and Hispanic older adults. Dr. Thierry teaches in the MPH in Health Equity program.

Featured Speakers



Anthony T. Jackson

Associate Vice
Chancellor for Student
Affairs & Dean of
Students, Southern
University and A&M
College

Anthony T. Jackson joined the Southern University and A&M College as Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Dean of Students.

He has many years of experience as a Student Affairs educator and practitioner. Jackson started working within higher education as a student affairs professional in 2000.

For over 20 years in Student Affairs arena, he has worked at a Louisiana Tech University (Coordinator of Student Affairs, Admissions Office/ Recruiter, Grambling State University (Director of Housing, Assistant Director of Residential Life), Xavier University of Louisiana (Director of St. Michael Hall), and Southern University and A&M College (Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Executive Director of Admissions, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Dean of Students, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs). Jackson is a member of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, served on the Louisiana College and University Professional board as President, Vice President, treasurer and Chair of Convention, Energizing Resident Assistants (ERA) board member, and co-coordinator of volunteers for a national conference. He also serves on the Istrouma Council of the Boy Scouts of America and Vice President of three local charter schools in Baton Rouge, La.

Jackson lives by the quote: "Whenever you stop loving the job you're doing, then it is time to find something else to do. We are here to assist students and help them on their pathway to success. I would like to give back to the students, "because if we have no students than we do not have jobs. "

Jackson has a B.S. in Marketing from Louisiana Tech University, Master's degree in Teaching Psychology from Grambling State University and Doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration from Louisiana State University.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Brian L. Turner, Ph.D.

Department Head and Associate Professor of Psychology
Department of Psychology, Xavier University of Louisiana
Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Moments of Truth, LLC
Policy Director, New Orleans Youth Alliance (NOYA)

Dr. Turner has worked with a diversity of issues, clients, and settings, but most ardently he has worked with black males from adolescence to adulthood on a wide spectrum of issues. Academically, Dr. Turner has published work in peer reviewed journals, book chapters, and technical reports on community health, masculinity identity development, and mentorship. Dr. Turner is proficient on topics ranging from reduction of mental health stigma, masculinity identity, therapy and culture, and mental health in higher education. Dr. Turner's work as a professor, clinician, and researcher is grounded in his multicultural training which examines the impact of culture on mental health. During his time at Xavier University of Louisiana his research has focused on Black Male Experiences in Higher Education, Black Women and Risky Behaviors, and Mental Health and HBCU's. Dr. Turner's work with New Orleans Youth Alliance pulls together his work as a professor, a clinician, and a community member as he BLT BIO 2024 works to prepare the future leaders of New Orleans to serve our city and our world actively and well informed. Dr. Turner currently serves on the board for the Metropolitan Human Services District, City Park Improvement Association, and the Arts Council of New Orleans. He serves at a Co-Chair of the Association of Black Psychologist Ethics Committee. He also serves as a mentor for The SilverBack Society. Dr. Turner is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc, Sigma Lambda Chapter where he has served as Chapter Historian and he is Vice President Elect. He was also named the 2023 Sigma Lambda Chapter Charles C. Teamer Alpha Man of the Year. He has served as the 2024 78th Annual Southwestern Regional Convention Public Program Chairperson. Dr. Turner also has been honored with the 2024 Xavier University of Louisiana Faculty of Excellence Award in Service. Dr. Turner is an alumnus of the Urban League Equity and Diversity (ULEAD) fellowship, the Justice Revius O. Ortique Jr. Leadership Institute, and the New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute (NORLI), the Leaders of Color Leadership Institute. Most importantly, Dr. Turner is the proud father of the intelligent and beautiful, Blair Layla.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Charles Windon, MD

Assistant professor of
Clinical Neurology at
the UCSF Memory and
Aging Center

Charles Windon, MD is an assistant professor of clinical neurology at the UCSF Memory and Aging Center. In this role, he participates in the clinical care of those with neurodegenerative disease and also participates in the research evaluations of those referred to the Memory and Aging Center with a multitude of neurological conditions.

Charles is also involved in the community outreach program at the MAC, with a particular interest in outreach to underserved communities, especially the African American community within the San Francisco Bay Area.

In his career, Charles seeks to further our understanding of neurodegenerative disease and the significance of biological markers of disease among underserved populations that have traditionally not been included in research, with the goal of providing better care and better opportunities for therapy. Charles received his bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University before obtaining his medical degree from Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey. He completed his residency training in neurology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and his Behavioral Neurology Fellowship at the UCSF Memory and Aging Center.

In his spare time, Charles has been an avid golfer for over 22 years.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Corey Smith
"Mr. Serv-On"

Caregiver and
Musical Artist from
New Orleans

Corey Smith better known by his stage name Mr. Serv-On, is an American Rapper from New Orleans, Louisiana. Mr. Serv-On, a caregiver for his mother who has Alzheimers, is best known for his time spent with No Limit Records in the mid-to-late 1990s.

On August 12, 1997, Mr Serv-On's debut studio album, Life Insurance was released. Life Insurance met with commercial and critical success, peaking at number 23 on the US charts and number 5 on the R&B charts.

In addition, Serv-on established a music life mentoring program for troubled youth in New Orleans along his friend, and former NBA player, Randy Livingston. They helped to change their lives by providing them with free studio time and life counseling. Several "graduates" have gone on to secure employment, start their own record label, and sign major digital distribution contracts. His efforts made a difference for young people who are now making positive choices and actions in their personal lives.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Dr. Delores Hurst, MMC

Executive Director at
Alzheimer's Association,
Louisiana

Delores Hurst is the Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Association, Louisiana Chapter where she oversees the strategic priorities of the national organization implemented at the state level. In her two years in the role, there has been growth in engagement, awareness, and visibility across the state due to intentional Board placement and team structure. Formerly, she was the Senior Director of Community Impact & Equity at Capital Area United Way. In this role, she oversaw all financial capability programs, built programming strategy, and implemented initiatives focused on income stability, advocacy, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

A graduate of LSU's Manship School of Mass Communication (Master's degree in Public Relations, 2016) and LSU undergraduate (B.A. in Mass Communications, 2011), Ms. Hurst served in a number of nonprofit leadership roles including Corporate Relationship Manager at Capital Area United Way and Executive Director of H.O.P.E. Ministry of Pointe Coupee, Inc., a human services organization dedicated to serving the basic needs of Pointe Coupee residents and families. Because of her work in income stability, in 2024, she won the Rising Tide ISAAC Award for her work serving low to no income families as well as those affected by incarceration.

Ms. Hurst's knowledge of nonprofit governance and strategy, basic needs services, and income stability has placed her on several boards and planning committees, and she is a respected speaker in the Greater Baton Rouge region. A connector of people and resources, Ms. Hurst has built impactful relationships in multiple sectors including health care, nonprofit, social services, community development, and finance.

Ms. Hurst enjoys sitting on the Boards and committees of several local non-profits in the Baton Rouge area including the Centre of the Arts- Pointe Coupee, Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition, Capital Area Agency on Aging, and JumpStart Louisiana.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Dr. Desiree Byrd

Professor, Psychology,
Black, Race, &
Ethnic Studies. Queens
College, CUNY

Desiree A. Byrd, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Neurology and Pathology at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. Trained as a clinician-scholar at the UCSD/SDSU Joint Doctoral Program in clinical psychology, she completed her predoctoral internship at Brown University and a post-doctoral fellowship in Cognition and Aging at Columbia University.

Since completing her training, she has maintained an active research program as a neuropsychologist. Her primary research interests are in the neuropathogenesis of HIV-associated cognitive dysfunction and the sources and consequences of culture-related differences in neuropsychological test performance among American ethnic groups. Her research on the functional correlates of neuropsychological impairment in diverse populations has been funded by the Alzheimer's Association and the National Institute on Aging.



Dr. Dinithia Sampson

Assistant Professor of
Medicinal Chemistry at Xavier
University of Louisiana

Dr. Dinithia Sampson is a 2003 graduate of Xavier University of Louisiana, where she received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry. In 2014, she completed her Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences, with a concentration in Medicinal Chemistry, at Florida A&M University. Before coming to Xavier University, Dr. Sampson oversaw the Florida Department of Health's (FDOH) Ed and Ethel Moore Alzheimer's Disease Research Program and its Advisory Board, in addition to, the FDOH's Research Excellence Initiative (REI) Program, the premier research training program for FDOH researchers. Dr. Sampson's research interests include central nervous system (CNS) drug development, particularly, psychiatric diseases, Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Dr. Doris Molina-Henry

Assistant Professor in the
Department of Neurology
at the Keck School of
Medicine, University of
Southern California

Dr. Doris Molina-Henry earned her B.S. in Biology from Elon University and her Ph.D. in Neurobiology and Anatomy from Wake Forest Health Sciences in Winston-Salem, NC. She completed her postdoctoral training through the prestigious Postdoctoral Research, Instruction, and Mentoring Experience (PRIME)-Institutional Research and Academic Career Development Award (IRACDA) program at the Wake Forest School of Medicine. Following her postdoctoral work, she served as faculty in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). During her time at WSSU, she collaborated as an affiliate faculty member with the Wake Forest Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, where she became involved in lifestyle-based clinical trials. This work led to her participation, as a fellow, in the inaugural cohort of the Institute on Methods and Protocols for Advancement of Clinical Trials in Alzheimer's Disease (IMPACT-AD), an advanced training program focused on clinical trial methodology.

This pivotal experience shaped her transition toward pharmacological clinical trials. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurology at the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California. She also serves as a faculty member at the Alzheimer's Therapeutic Research Institute (ATRI) and plays a leadership role within the Recruitment and Retention Unit for the Alzheimer's Clinical Trials Consortium (ACTC).

Dr. Molina-Henry is committed to advancing innovative recruitment and retention strategies, with a particular focus on increasing participation from underrepresented groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, as well as individuals from lower socioeconomic and rural backgrounds. Her research focuses on plasma-based biomarkers, examining sociodemographic differences and their implications for trial eligibility in Alzheimer's research.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Eric Griggs, M.D.

LSU School of Medicine and
Xavier University of
Louisiana,
College of Pharmacy

Eric D. Griggs, M.D., affectionately known as "Doc Griggs," is a New Orleans-based Community Medicine Doctor and Health Educator who has dedicated his career to advancing health and wellness awareness locally, nationally, and internationally. Currently a professor at LSU School of Medicine and Xavier University College of Pharmacy, he previously served as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Dr. Griggs also holds the role of Associate Director of Community Health Affairs at Access Health Louisiana, a Federally Qualified Health Center, and is the Chief Health Officer of the Global Institute of Integrated Health in the UK. As the founder and Executive Director of the Doc Griggs Foundation, he leads a community-driven, student-activated, and professionally mentored organization that promotes health empowerment with the motto, "Get Checked. Get Fit. Get Moving!®" Dr. Griggs is actively involved with the 100 Black Men of America, where he serves as the Vice Chair of the World Health and Wellness Committee and is the Health and Wellness Chair for 100 Black Men of Metro New Orleans. "Doc Griggs" has an extensive media presence, appearing as a Health Educator on WVUE FOX 8, the Gray Media station in New Orleans, and reaching audiences worldwide through television, workshops, social media, and radio. His popular radio show, co-hosted with Dr. MarkAlain Dery, has contributed to his broad reach and influence, recently honored by being archived by the Library of Congress. His international work spans Cuba, the Turks and Caicos, the UK, and France (Saint-Ouen-sur-Seine and Paris).

In recognition of his community impact, Dr. Griggs was named the Health and Wellness Ambassador for both the State of Louisiana and the City of New Orleans in 2014. He continues to drive public health initiatives through innovative projects such as the Million Steps Club and his leadership role in the 'Risk Less. Do More' campaign, in collaboration with the 100 Black Men of America and Access Health Louisiana.



Guy Troupe

PNE Founder
President and CEO
of Troupe21 &
Associates

An experienced sports executive with a concentration in athlete development, life skills and career transition. Troupe is known for his expertise in program & curriculum development, training & development, public speaking and facilitation services.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Dr. Kathleen Kennedy

Professor and Dean, Xavier
University of Louisiana -
College of Pharmacy

Dr. Kennedy earned the Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of California, San Francisco and completed a residency in Pharmacy Practice at the University of California Hospitals and Clinics. In 2004, Dr. Kennedy received the Malcolm Ellington Professor of Health Disparities Research Endowed Professorship and is the founding Director of the Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education (CMHDRE) at Xavier.

As the Director of the Center, she provides leadership in the development of the research infrastructure necessary to support health- disparities research, education, and training in the College of Pharmacy. Dr. Kennedy's research has been around behavior modification and cultural competence.

She served as the Co-Principal Investigator for the Tulane-Xavier NCI Cancer Health Disparities grant where her research focus was on developing a national set of competencies on cultural competence for medical and pharmacy school students preparing for health profession careers. In 2007, she organized the first national health disparities conference for mid-level health care professionals to address the successful translation of research into effective models of practice to impact policy and change behaviors in the broader community. This conference continues annually. In July 2011, she and two of her colleagues received the Rufus A. Lyman award presented by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy for a publication on the use of an instrument to assess the perceived level of cultural competence of students to guide curriculum development. Her research continues around Community Engagement and Community-Based Participatory Research. She serves as the Co-Director of the Community Engagement and Outreach Core for the Louisiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Center for the state of Louisiana.

Dr. Kennedy was appointed Dean of the College of Pharmacy in May 2010. In 2020, she was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Louisiana Health Equity Task Force by Governor John Bel Edwards. At the American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists Midyear Clinical Meeting in 2020 she received the American Society of Health System Pharmacists-Association of Black Health System Pharmacists (ASHP-ABHP) Joint Leadership Award for demonstrated exceptional leadership to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Dr. Leonardo Seoane

Quality Control Coach,
Washington
Commanders CEO,
Equalizer Gams

Dr. Leonardo Seoane has been named as the Founding Dean for the Xavier Ochsner College of Medicine (XOCOM). XOCOM has a bold mission to develop the fifth HBCU medical school in the United States to train more underrepresented physicians for the U.S. Dr. Seoane also serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer for Ochsner Health. In this position, he leads Ochsner's continuum of education including undergraduate, graduate and continuing medical education programs as well as all research initiatives. Dr. Seoane oversees Ochsner's Academic partnerships with the University of Queensland School of Medicine, the LSU Health Science Center in Shreveport Louisiana, Xavier University of Louisiana, and Loyola University of New Orleans. In addition, he serves as the Chief Executive Officer for Ochsner Health North Louisiana.

Dr. Seoane graduated magna cum laude from Loyola University in New Orleans, with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences. He earned his Doctor of Medicine degree at Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans, graduating with Alpha Omega Alpha honors, an elite designation recognizing excellence in scholarship and the highest ideals in the profession of medicine. After medical school, he completed an internship at the University of Alabama Birmingham Medical Center and residency in Internal Medicine at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) in New Orleans.

He continued his education by completing a fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine through a combined LSUHSC New Orleans and Ochsner Medical Center program. He went on to complete a research and clinical fellowship in Lung Transplant at the Ochsner Medical Center where he has been a staff physician since 2002. He is regarded as an expert in the management of sepsis and medical education and has been an invited speaker at numerous national and international conferences.

Dr. Seoane has dedicated his career to training the next generation of physicians, improving the clinical learning environment, and improving the health of the communities of Louisiana. He gives back to the community by serving on the Loyola University of New Orleans Board of Trustees, founding the Gulf Coast Chapter of the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA) and serving on the Executive NHMA Board Nationally. But most importantly, he is a loving husband to his wife, Dr. Michelle Seoane, and proud father of Eddy and Leo.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



**LaKeisha Williams, PharmD,
MSPH, Xavier University**

Clinical Associate
Professor, Division of
Clinical and
Administrative Sciences

Dr. Lakeisha Williams is a Clinical Associate Professor in the College of Pharmacy at Xavier University of Louisiana. She also serves as Director of Community Engagement for two critical health organizations: the Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education and Research Centers in Minority Institutions and Community Engagement Core for the Louisiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Center (NIH funded).



**Maurice Sholas,
MD, Ph.D.**

Oschner Health.
Pediatric Physical
Medicine &
Rehabilitation

Dr. Sholas is a physician with greater than a decade of practice experience, significant senior executive experience and formal leadership training looking to work with organizations and institutions that manage, provide or facilitate services for children with special health care needs. In this world of complicated and evolving health care environments, those with skills as a provider and an administrative leader are valuable problem solvers. Through Sholas Medical Consulting, LLC, Dr. Sholas works with large and small organizations to tackle operational, clinical, and compliance challenges. Services are available virtually or in person, and geography is not a limitation.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Matthew Willard

State Representative,
New Orleans
Marketing Director

Matthew Willard is a lifelong resident of Gentilly, raised in a family that values faith, community service, education and altruism. Matthew attended elementary school at Corpus Christi, Stuart Hall for middle school, and is a graduate of Jesuit High School. He received his Bachelor of Science from the University of New Orleans.

As a child, he developed an early love for baseball. He grew up in the NORD system, playing for Milne and the Lakeshore Allstars, where his teams won several state and regional championships. He spent his teenage years painting houses for his father's company, and Matthew credits his dad, Dominic, for instilling in him personal values of selflessness, hard work and service.

His mother, Terrie Bazanac Willard, is a lifelong educator who taught Matthew to respect the tireless, and oftentimes, underappreciated work of educators. She always challenged Matthew to do his best and to utilize his God-given assets to help others.

Perhaps it would be impossible to miss the lessons of teamwork, setting and achieving goals, finding common ground to make improvements, and how to think critically and problem solve when there was a deep family legacy of service stemming from Matthew's grandparents, Elliot and Mary Jane Willard. Both were civil rights leaders and lifelong educators at St. Augustine, Booker T. Washington and John McDonogh High Schools. Matthew's Aunt Cynthia Willard-Lewis served as a State Senator and City Councilperson.

"I believe that every person is important with a unique purpose and value to our society. Everyone deserves a chance to succeed."

Today, Matthew is a Senior Marketing and Communications Manager at Fluence Analytics, a technology startup based in New Orleans. With innovative strategies and strong interpersonal skills, Matthew guides the company's overall marketing direction and manages business development initiatives and communication policies. Most notably, Matthew led the successful public relations campaigns following the company's Series A and A-1 venture capital funding rounds. He also spearheaded a comprehensive company rebrand in 2017. He received the certification of Scrum Master and leads an agile, companywide project management framework. He was recently honored by Gambit New Orleans as a 40 Under 40 leader.

Matthew is an elected member of Orleans Parish Democratic Executive Committee for City Council District D and serves as a Board Member for Jason's House, a nonprofit organization working to finance low-cost housing for men following rehabilitation for chemical dependency. Matthew is a homeowner, President of the Seabrook Neighborhood Association, and Board Member for the Seabrook Neighborhood Improvement and Security District. He is a parishioner of St. Raymond / St. Leo the Great Catholic Church.

Stemming from a legacy of service with deep roots to the Gentilly and Seventh Ward neighborhoods, Matthew is committed to the success of his community and embodies leadership that we can trust.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Dr. Ozama Ismail

Director, Scientific Programs at Alzheimer's Association

Ozama Ismail, Ph.D. is the director, Scientific Programs at the Alzheimer's Association. In this role, he leads the International Society to Advance Alzheimer's Research and Treatment, also known as ISTAART, and oversees its activities and strategic vision. Dr. Ismail also supports the Association's suite of international scientific conferences and guides its educational programs.

ISTAART carries out virtual and in-person programs for over 10,000 members across 122 countries. The society also provides resources and creates opportunities to help advance the careers of researchers, clinicians and all professionals in the field of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Through its activities, ISTAART aims to connect and support the next generation of dementia professionals and foster international progress in dementia research.

Dr. Ismail is an award-winning science communicator and podcaster. Further, he is an advocate for improving equity and inclusion and is passionate about raising LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority voices within science and society.

Dr. Ismail holds a Ph.D. in neuroscience from the University College London in collaboration with Eli Lilly & Company. He completed his postdoctoral training at Oregon Health & Science University. He has also carried out scientific research at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, Brunel University, and the University of Hertfordshire.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



**Dr. Rahn Bailey, MD,
FAPA, ACP**

LSU School of Medicine.
Department Head for
Psychiatry

Rahn Kennedy Bailey MD, LSU Health Sciences Center Kathleen & John Bricker Chair of Psychiatry and Assistant Dean of Community Engagement since 2021. Additionally, as of 2024, he serves as the Academic Medical and Psychiatric Director for the New Orleans Correctional Justice Center Mental Health Services Unit. He has served as Chairman of Psychiatry at Meharry Medical College, 2008-2014, Wake Forest Medical School, 2015-2018, and National Medical Association, 2002-2006.

Dr. Bailey's early research focused on Psychotic Disorders/SPMI, grew to include Depressive Illness/Bipolar Mood D/O, expanded to forensic topics, Competency, Confidentiality, and Risk Management. Currently, his focus is Health Disparities, Healthcare Reform, and Violence.

He has 65 peer reviewed publications in over 20 refereed journals and published three books: Health Disparities, 2013, Gun Violence, 2018, and Intimate Partner Violence, 2020.

Dr. Bailey is an advocate for change. He served as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, NMA/Cobb Research Foundation 2018-2022. He chaired the National Alumni Council Board of Trustees of the National Medical Fellowships, 2015-17 and completed a six-year term on Rutgers State University Board of Trustees, 2014-2020.

His work has been seminal in assisting communities in caring for the health of patients, developing strategies to improve their health paradigms, and working to enhance the lives of young professionals via mentorship and professional development and authorship.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



**Dr. Robert L.
Newton**

Pennington
Biomedical
Research Center

Dr. Robert L. Newton, Jr. is a Professor and Director of the Physical Activity and Ethnic Minority Health lab at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center. His research examines the effect of lifestyle interventions on the health of African Americans across the lifespan. A significant portion of his research efforts focus on the development of physical activity interventions in older African Americans and assessing its effects on cognitive function. Many of these interventions include collaborations with community-based organizations and incorporate the use of mobile technology to foster behavior change. Dr. Newton has obtained federal, state, industry, and private foundation funding to support his work.



**Roland J. Thorpe,
Jr., Ph.D.**

Professor at Johns
Hopkins Bloomberg
School of Public Health

Roland J. Thorpe, Jr., PhD, MS, is a Professor in the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society, Founding Director of the Program of Men's Health Research in the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions (HCHDS), Deputy Director of HCHDS, and Co-Director of the Johns Hopkins Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center for Minority Aging Research at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He holds joint appointments in the Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology in the Department of Medicine, and the Department of Neurology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and the Department of Sociology at the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Thorpe is a social epidemiologist whose research focuses on the association of how social determinants of health impact health and functional outcomes among men across the life course.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Senator Royce Duplessis

Louisiana State Senate,
Principal @Duplessis Law
Firm, LLC.

On December 6th, 2022, **Royce Duplessis** was sworn in as Louisiana State Senator for District 5. He represented District 93 in the Louisiana House of Representatives following the 2018 election. While serving in the legislature, he has passed commonsense criminal justice reforms, championed legislation to expand access to affordable healthcare, prioritized efforts to allow for paid sick leave, worked to make housing more affordable, fought to enact a living wage, and more. Most recently, Senator Duplessis championed legislation to require universal perinatal mood disorder screening, to end solitary confinement for juveniles, to limit when mugshots can be released to the public, and more.



Thomas LaVeist, Ph.D.

Dean of the Tulane University
School of Public Health and
Tropical Medicine

Thomas LaVeist is dean of the Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine and Principal Investigator for Partners for Advancing Health Equity. His career has been dedicated to understanding the causes of inequity in health and its potential solutions. He has an extensive record of publication in scientific journals as well as numerous mass media outlets and is director and executive producer of "The Skin You're In," a documentary series about racial inequalities in health. He is also author of six books including "Minority Population and Health: An introduction to health disparities in the United States" (the first textbook on health disparities). An award-winning research scientist, Dr. LaVeist has received the "Innovation Award" from National Institutes of Health, the "Knowledge Award" from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2013.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Walter Breaux, III, Ph.D.

Professor Department
of Psychiatry at the
University of California,
San Diego

Dr. Walter Breaux, III possesses a diverse portfolio of professional work with a focus on the human development and experience of the psyche. He is a university professor, clinical therapist, corporate trainer, and numerological consultant currently practicing in New Orleans. Dr. Breaux is dynamic and engaging as a workshop trainer and classroom instructor, yet possess the ability to facilitate insightful, client-centered sessions for those seeking psychotherapy or spiritual analysis.

With over 13 years of exceptional clinical service, Dr. Breaux specializes in the metaphysical and existential realities of psychic perception. Dr. Breaux's accurate and unique analysis of personal, relational, and environmental functionality is highly sought and endorsed by his clients, colleagues, and students.

Dr. Breaux offers his services as a Master Numerologist and Life Consultant with more than a decade of study and successful practice in the numerological sciences and metaphysical wellness.



Dr. W.F. McBride, PhD.

Clinical
Neuropsychologist at
Spalding University

Dr. Willie F. McBride is a new assistant professor with Spalding University School of Professional Psychology where he is the Adult Emphasis Neuropsychology Director. He finished his 2-year fellowship with the Neurology department within the University of Virginia Health System.

He also serves as the treasurer for the Society for Black Neuropsychology. He also previously completed a fellowship in Interprofessional Psychology at the Tennessee Valley HealthCare System in Murfreesboro TN. He completed his internship with the Vanderbilt/Veteran Affairs Professional Psychology Consortium in Nashville TN. He fulfilled his doctoral degree requirements at the Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology in Norfolk VA. His research interests include neuropsychological practice within minority communities, forensic neuropsychology, and personality. Originally from Louisville Kentucky, Willie enjoys vinyl records, video games, and debating the merits of anime as a national pastime.

Dr. McBride served on the KnowNeuropsychology Committee from April 2020 to December 2021 and is one of the founding members.

Featured Speakers

CONTINUED



Dr. Wanda Spurlock

Professor of Nursing,
Southern University
and A&M College

Dr. Wanda Raby Spurlock an associate professor in the Southern University College of Nursing and Allied Health, was recently installed as the Vice President of the National Gerontological Nursing Association at the organization's 2014 NGNA Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

Prior to becoming Vice President of the organization, Spurlock served as chair of the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes Committee, and later served as chair of the Long-term Care, Advancing Excellence Special Interest Group (LTC-AE SIG). She also received NGNA "Fellow" status in 2010.

In her role as Vice President, Dr. Spurlock serves on the board of directors of NGNA and as board liaison to the LTC-AE SIG.

Spurlock is also a representative of NGNA to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes. The aim of this partnership is to reduce the use of antipsychotic medications in dementia residents through enhanced training of nursing home staff in person-centered care and through the use of evidence-based non-pharmacological interventions as the front-line approach to managing behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

Spurlock is a board member of LEADER, Louisiana Enhancing Aging with Dignity Empowerment and Respect, Louisiana's culture change coalition and "Voice for Choice in Aging." As a member of the Louisiana Dementia Partnership, Dr. Spurlock participates in educational conferences aimed at reducing the inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications in dementia residents in nursing homes throughout Louisiana.

Dr. Spurlock has devoted her nursing career to improving the quality of life for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, as well as their caregivers, and views her work with NGNA and the national and statewide dementia partnership as part of her "mission in nursing."

Sports Spotlight

February 4 & 5, 2025 - Xavier University of Louisiana at New Orleans

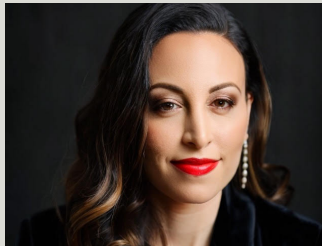
SPORTS SPOTLIGHT SERIES PART I: Tuesday - Feb. 4, 2025

Journey of Resilience: Real Talk with Women Champions

A round table Black History Month discussion on key strategies to overcome mental, physical, and relational challenges



Dr. Deborah Stroman
Moderator
 UNC/ UVA Professor



Dr. Hagar Elgendy
 UNC Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation



Pat Kendrick
 XULA Athletics & Head Coach



Carmen McZeal
 Psychotherapist & CEO of Edge Sports

SPORTS SPOTLIGHT SERIES PART II: Wednesday - Feb. 5, 2025

The Fifth Down: Athletes' Reflections on the Pain and Pleasure of Pro Football

A panel discussion on navigating cognitive aging, mental health, and transitioning from sport participation



Guy Troupe
Moderator
 CEO, Player Network Event (PNE)



Regie Brooks
 Former NFL Player & ED, Holtz's, Heroes Foundation, Inc.



Quentin Gause
 Former NFL Player & CEO, Rizewell



Dr. Herb Martin
 NFL Team Psychologist

Emerging Scholars Leadership Team



Desiree A. Byrd, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Queens College, CUNY



Ozama Ismail, Ph.D.
Director, Scientific Engagement
Alzheimer's Association



Roland J. Thorpe, Jr., Ph.D.
Co-Director DRPH Concentration
In Health, Equity, and Social
Justice, Professor, Associate Vice
Provost of Faculty Diversity
Johns Hopkins University



Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort III



Nazsa Baker

Dr. Nazsa Baker earned her Ph.D. in Urban Systems with a concentration in Urban Health from Rutgers University, School of Nursing in 2021. Currently, she is a 2nd year post-doctoral fellow with the New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center at Rutgers University, School of Public Health. Her research focuses on firearm violence with an emphasis on the following areas: 1) examining the lives of Black men with firearm acquired disabilities, 2) identifying adverse lifespan health experiences among violently injured Black males, and 3) evaluating participant outcomes in hospital-based and -linked violence intervention programs.



Christopher Carey

Department of Kinesiology |
School of Health and Human
Sciences
Indiana University

Christopher Carey has background in behavioral modification, exercise science, and the pathophysiology of type 2 diabetes and its related conditions. My primary focus lies in examining the impact of psychosocial stress on cognitive decline, particularly within Black individuals. I am seeking mentorship from experts with an understanding of cognitive function and advanced technological methods for analysis.



Emmanuel Epenge, MD

Atlantic Fellow
Global Brain Health
Institute

Emmanuel Epenge is a neurologist and Atlantic fellow for equity in Brain Health. Researching protective factors, cognitive and biological markers of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia is my motivation to significantly decrease the spread of dementia. Raising awareness and implementing local solutions with different stakeholders are key strategies to reduce the impact of dementia worldwide.



Christopher Howard, PhD

Licensed Clinical
Neuropsychologist
Thomson Memory &
Attention

Dr. Christopher Howard's training has centered on cognitive aging and health disparities. His goal is to continue to bridge the gap between underserved communities and those who may not have equitable access to neuropsychological testing and the field of neuropsychology. Early intervention is the best medicine.



Neke Nsor, MS
Neuroscience Ph.D. Candidate

Neke Nsor interests included understanding the effects of lifestyle factors on cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease, and related disorders. Her training includes neuropsychological testing, data analysis in Jamovi, SPSS, MATLAB, and has recently started learning MPlus.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort III

CONTINUED



Tabia Pope, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Clinical Instructor of
Speech-Language Pathology
College of Arts & Sciences at the
University of the District of
Columbia

Dr. Tabia Pope is a Clinical Instructor of Speech-Language Pathology at the University of the District of Columbia and currently co-directs the B.R.A.I.N. Lab, where she engages in brain health and injury prevention, research, assessment, innovative interventions, and neurocognitive training. Dr. Pope works with athletic trainers and football coaches to integrate brain health coaching, mindfulness and cognitive-communication tasks into African American football players' sports drills, fitness routines, and daily activities in order to examine their cognitive-communication outcomes in the areas of attention, reaction time, auditory processing, memory, thought organization, word finding, reasoning, problem solving, sequencing, planning, organizing, and social communication.



Eleanna Varangis, PhD

Assistant Professor of
Movement Science, School of
Kinesiology, University of
Michigan

Eleanna Varangis is a cognitive neuroscientist with specific training in the application of neuroimaging methods to the study of aging and concussion. Her program of research concerns the long-term effects of exposure to collision sports and/or concussions on neurocognitive health and function in the context of aging.



Joy Stradford, MS

Clinical Neuropsychology
Ph.D. Student San Diego
State
University/University of
California San Diego

Joy Stradford achieved her B.S. in psychology from Howard University and her M.S. in neuroimaging and informatics from the University of Southern California. Joy is currently a first year doctoral student in the SDSU/UCSD Joint Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology, studying under the mentorship of Dr. Erin Sundermann and Dr. Sarah Banks. Her research focus is on health disparities in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and she is currently exploring how lifestyle factors and cumulative disadvantage impact tau accumulation and cognitive outcomes in Black women. She is excited to join cohort 3 of the BMBH Emerging Scholars Program and is looking forward to examining similarities and sex differences in Black men and Black women's risk for ADRD in the future.



Paul Robbins PhD

Assistant Professor

Paul Robbins is a developmental scientist who investigates the psychosocial processes by which context, culture, and identity mitigate or exacerbate inequitable health and educational outcomes at various life stages. Specifically, my work examines the developmental contexts and consequences of participation in families, sports, and religious institutions to identify mechanisms that ensure optimal wellbeing within these spaces. Paul Robbins has expertise in elucidating domains of developmental diversity in adolescence and understanding strategies for fostering resilience, particularly in Black youth, families, and communities.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort III

CONTINUED



Robert L. Newton, Jr. Ph.D.

Professor; Director, Physical Activity & Ethnic Minority Health laboratory Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Dr. Newton is a Professor and director of the Physical Activity & Ethnic Minority Health laboratory at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center. His overall research program examines the effect of lifestyle interventions, including physical activity and weight loss, on the health of African Americans. One line of research investigates health promotion in African American men and another area specifically addresses the effect of non-pharmacological interventions on cognitive function in older, urban and rural dwelling African American adults. Many of the investigations utilize a community-engaged approach and often incorporate digital technology to foster behavior change. Currently, Dr. Newton leads investigations of physical activity in African American men, women, and older adults.



Yonas E. Geda, MD, MSc

Professor of Neurology, Program Director.

Barrow Neurological Institute

Dr. Geda is a behavioral neurologist with expertise on lifestyle factors (e.g., physical activity), neuropsychiatric symptoms, and mild cognitive impairment and related disorders. He earned his M.D. from Addis Ababa (Haile Selassie) University, Ethiopia. He then trained at Mayo clinic, subsequently becoming Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry. After a 25 years at Mayo Clinic, he then joined Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix as Professor of Neurology and program director.



Charisse Winston- Gray M.S., Ph.D.

MOSAIC K99/R00 Scholar
Assistant Professor |
Physiology & Neuroscience
Keck School of Medicine at USC

Charisse Winston's research interests include understanding the ethno-racial impact of blood and saliva-based, extracellular vesicles as biomarkers for early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and other age-related dementias amongst minoritized and underrepresented groups, specifically Blacks or African American subjects.



Keenan Walker, Ph.D.

Tenure-Track Investigator
National Institute on Aging
Intramural Research
Program

Dr. Walker is a Tenure-Track Investigator at the National Institute on Aging's Intramural Research Program. His research program focuses on understanding the role of abnormal immune function and inflammation in Alzheimer's disease and late-life cognitive decline. He uses proteomic, genetic, and multimodal neuroimaging methods applied to large longitudinal cohort studies to understand disease biology and identify novel therapeutic targets and biomarkers. Other areas of research include understanding the mechanisms leading to cognitive decline following critical illness and major infection, and evaluating the role of vascular risk factors and physical frailty in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Emerging Scholars Program - Cohort IV



Dr. Timothy D. Goler,
Ph.D., MUPDD

Director of Research at the Center for African American Public Policy and as an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Urban Affairs at Norfolk State University

Dr. Timothy D. Goler is a distinguished scholar, educator, and leader with a dynamic background in sociology, urban planning, and public policy. He currently serves as the Director of Research at the Center for African American Public Policy and as an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Urban Affairs at Norfolk State University. Driven by a commitment to equity and community well-being, Dr. Goler's work bridges the gap between academic research and societal impact.

A central focus of Dr. Goler's research is understanding the intersection of race, environment, identity, and mental health. His groundbreaking studies explore the enduring effects of systemic racism and discrimination, particularly the mental stress and coping mechanisms of marginalized communities. He is deeply engaged in examining health disparities and the socio-environmental factors that contribute to inequities in mental health and well-being. His work extends to addressing the challenges of misinformation in underserved communities and enhancing health literacy through community-led interventions.

Dr. Goler's academic foundation is as impressive as his professional contributions. He earned his Ph.D. in Sociology with specializations in Medical Sociology and Aging and the Life Course from Case Western Reserve University, where his dissertation examined racial differences in stress, coping, and psychological well-being among urban older adults. His additional academic credentials include a Master of Urban Planning, Design, and Development from Cleveland State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from Norfolk State University.

Beyond academia, Dr. Goler is a social entrepreneur and visionary leader. As the Founder and CEO of the HBCU Preparatory Schools Network, he has created pathways for educational advancement rooted in the legacy of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He is also the co-founder of Policy Bridge, a public policy think tank that fosters collaboration between academics and practitioners to address societal challenges.

In addition to his academic and entrepreneurial endeavors, Dr. Goler plays a significant role in community development and advocacy. As a Senior Advisor for Equity and Community Affairs at Morino Ventures and the Urban League of Hampton Roads, he leads initiatives aimed at promoting equity, inclusion, and access to resources for underserved populations. He is a founding board member of African Diaspora United and the National Rites of Passage Institute, demonstrating his dedication to cultural preservation and empowerment.

Dr. Goler's contributions have earned him recognition as a public scholar who seamlessly integrates academic inquiry with practical application. His work has been featured in national conferences, peer-reviewed publications, and impactful community projects. A decorated veteran of the United States Marine Corps, he brings a unique blend of discipline, service, and leadership to all his endeavors.

Dr. Goler continues to inspire by exemplifying the power of using education and research to drive societal progress. His unwavering commitment to equity, his innovative approach to addressing health disparities, and his dedication to uplifting communities position him as a transformative figure in the pursuit of social justice and academic excellence.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Erin-Leigh Gallop, Ed.D.

Postdoctoral scholar at the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute and the University of Miami Department of Neurology

Erin-Leigh Gallop is a postdoctoral scholar at the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute and the University of Miami Department of Neurology. Her research focuses on the relationship between neighborhood contexts and mental health among older adults with a sleep apnea diagnosis. With a multidisciplinary background that includes degrees in Psychology (B.A., New York University), Nutrition and Food Science (M.S., Montclair State University), Community Health (M.S., Columbia University), and Health Education (Ed.D., Columbia University), Erin-Leigh is dedicated to understanding how dietary profiles influence cognitive health in older adults, aligning her work with the goals of improving health equity and advancing translational science."



Cortney Vanhook, Ph.D.

Mental health interventionist

As a mental health interventionist, my work centers on the development, management, and evaluation of interventions to treat mental illness with specific attention to young Black males in the adolescent and young adult cohorts.

My secondary interest is the prevention and intervention of intra-community gun violence, a social problem that impacts young Black men more than any group in this country. Understanding and treating the conditions that lead to gun violence among young men – adverse childhood events, socio-economic immobility, community disorganization, harmful gender norms, policy disinvestment, and systemic racism – are all areas that I address in my work.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Lilcelia A. Williams, Ph.D.

Postdoctoral scholar with dual appointments in the School of Medicine in the Division of Geriatrics and the School of Rehabilitation Sciences in the Department of Occupational Therapy

Lilcelia "CeCe" A. Williams is a postdoctoral scholar with dual appointments in the School of Medicine in the Division of Geriatrics and the School of Rehabilitation Sciences in the Department of Occupational Therapy, supported by the Integrated Clinical Research and Geroscience T32 Program. Williams recently concluded her appointment as an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center Optimizing Scientific Careers in Alzheimer's disease Research (OSCAR) scholar in the Outreach, Recruitment, and Engagement Core and will begin a faculty appointment as a Research Instructor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

Williams' research is driven by her passion to improve patient health outcomes and to eradicate health disparities experienced by persons who self-identify as a member of a minoritized community (e.g., socioeconomically disadvantaged, racial or ethnic minority, residing in an underserved rural area, sexual or gender minority, person with a disability). Her research specifically focuses on the health disparities experienced by minoritized communities at the intersection of cognitive changes due to chronic illnesses associated with cardiovascular disease (e.g., stroke) and Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (e.g., vascular dementia, mixed dementia).

Williams is currently serving as the Principal Investigator of a pilot study examining the lived experiences and outcomes of persons who experienced a stroke and received in-patient rehabilitation, demonstrating her commitment to improving patient outcomes in neurodegeneration and aging. She is also the co-investigator of a multi-institutional study examining the lived experiences and perspectives of persons at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

Williams is a clinically trained and board certified interdisciplinary clinician, with more than 20 years of health care experience as a clinician, manager, and patient advocate. Williams has advanced training in educational leadership and management and has taught a dearth of courses in undergraduate and graduate programs, such as applied science in technical leadership, business, science, and physician assistant studies. Williams earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Wayne State University, her Master of Business Administration in Healthcare Management degree from Western Governors University and her Doctor of Philosophy in Instructional Management and Leadership degree from Robert Morris University.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Phelan Glenn

A second-year PhD student
in the Neuroscience Interdepartmental
Program at UCLA

I am a second-year PhD student in the Neuroscience Interdepartmental Program at UCLA. My research is motivated by my grandfather's experience with Alzheimer's Disease and focuses on employing multiomic approaches to identify ancestry-specific biomarkers and address brain health disparities in underrepresented populations. Previously, I conducted research at San Francisco State University in Dr. Misty Kuhn's Biochemistry Lab, investigating enzyme acetylation and structural motifs, and in Dr. Plueni Pennings' lab, applying machine learning to predict antibiotic resistance. Beyond my academic pursuits, I am deeply committed to community outreach, including addressing food insecurity, advocating for brain health equity, and serving as a UC Healthy Campus Initiative fellow. In this role, I am leading the development of a community garden at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior to promote agricultural sustainability and foster intergenerational connections.



Merci Ngozi Best, Ph.D.

A postdoctoral research fellow at the
University of Michigan, specializing in
tau-mediated neurodegeneration

Dr. Merci Ngozi Best is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Michigan, specializing in tau-mediated neurodegeneration. As a Black Men's Brain Health Emerging Scholar, she will investigate the roles of genetics, tau pathology, and educational inequality in Black men's vulnerability to Alzheimer's, dementia, and other brain disorders. Dedicated to community engagement, Dr. Best will also actively collaborate with local organizations. Dr. Best holds a Neuroscience degree and a Community Studies minor from the College of William & Mary. Inspired by early research opportunities, she founded STEAMTRIX, an education company addressing summer learning loss in K-12 students through hands-on STEM activities. Continuing her impact on STEM education, she transitioned STEAMTRIX to STEAMKITX, a product-based company that makes STEM educational experiences more accessible and sustainable. In 2023, Dr. Best earned her Ph.D. in Pharmacology from the University of Virginia with a dissertation titled "Breaking Barriers: A Quantitative Analysis of Axon Initial Segment Damage in Neurodegenerative Disease." Currently, her goal is to lead an independent research lab using human brain organoids, datasets, and post-mortem tissue to uncover the cellular mechanisms of Alzheimer's disease and frontotemporal dementia, with a particular focus on Black Americans.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Marcus Johnson, Ed.D.

Researcher, Texas Southern University

Dr. Marcus Johnson is a seasoned educator and researcher specializing in kinesiology, physical education, and health studies. Dr. Johnson earned a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Health, Kinesiology, Physical Education, and Sports Studies from Texas A&M Commerce in 2021. His dissertation explored the impact of integrating a literacy intervention in pre-kindergarten physical education classes, highlighting his commitment to interdisciplinary approaches in education.

Dr. Johnson holds a Master of Education in Kinesiology and a Bachelor of Applied Science in Interdisciplinary Studies with concentrations in History and Education from Dallas Baptist University. With over a decade of experience teaching at various academic levels, Dr. Johnson has developed and managed course curricula, mentored students, and engaged in scholarly research aimed at promoting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) in physical education.

Currently, Dr. Johnson serves as an Assistant Professor of Kinesiology at Texas Southern University, where he is also a member of the Graduate Faculty and actively involved with the Center for Biomedical and Minority Health Research Collaborative. His research projects, such as the Thirdspace Movement Model and the Spectrum of Teaching Styles, focus on refining pedagogical applications to foster inclusion and social justice in physical education settings.

Dr. Johnson has contributed to the academic community through publications and numerous presentations, including co-authoring articles in esteemed journals like the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*. He has also led workshops and delivered presentations at national conferences, sharing insights on integrating JEDI principles into physical education lessons.



Tracie Canada, Ph.D.

Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Duke University

Tracie Canada is the Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology and is affiliated with the Sports & Race Project at Duke University. She is also the founder and director of the Health, Ethnography, and Race through Sports, or HEARTS, Lab. As a Black feminist anthropologist and ethnographer, her work uses sport, specifically American football, to theorize race, kinship, care, and gender. Dr. Canada is the author of *Tackling the Everyday: Race and Nation in Big-Time College Football* (University of California Press, 2025). In this ethnographic work, she analyzes the performing athletic body to reveal how processes of anti-Blackness, injury, violence, and care impact the everyday lived experiences of Black college football players. In addition to her academic publications, her work has been featured in public venues and outlets like *The Museum of Modern Art*, *The Guardian*, and *Scientific American*.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Katelyn Foltz

Sociologist, University of Maryland

Katelyn Foltz (she/her/hers) is a sociologist whose work explores how institutions create and maintain social inequalities, thereby promoting exploitation and violence towards marginalized populations. Katelyn interrogates the intersections of race, class, and gender in two distinct but overlapping institutions: sports and intimate partner relationships. Currently, she is interviewing wives and partners who often become caregivers for retired NFL players who are experiencing health decline due to injuries, specifically head injuries, sustained during their playing career. In addition to researching violence as a tool to maintain structures of inequality, she also investigates resistance and activism within these institutions. Katelyn earned her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Global Studies: Securities and Justice from the University of Virginia in 2018. She earned her first Master's Degree in Sociology and a Graduate Certificate in Women and Gender Studies from George Mason University in 2020. She earned her second Master's Degree in Sociology from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2022. She is currently a Doctoral Candidate in the Sociology Department at the University of Maryland, College Park with plans to graduate in Spring of 2025.



Mark A. Bernard. Ph.D.

Instructor of Neurology at NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Dr. Mark A. Bernard is an Instructor of Neurology at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, where he is junior research faculty at NYU's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC), and a member of the ADRC Biomarker Core. His current research focuses on increased understanding and development of biomarkers of Alzheimer's Disease (AD), particularly those in blood plasma. He is investigating associations between neuropsychiatric symptoms (such as anxiety and depression) and changes in these biomarkers, and is further interested in the nexus between plasma AD biomarkers and sleep and circadian rhythm dysfunctions.

Dr. Bernard is a chemical biologist by training, with a PhD in Organic Chemistry, and a postdoctoral fellowship and Master's degree in Clinical Epidemiology and Health Services Research. This unique background, combining basic physical sciences and clinical research, informs Dr. Bernard's continued interest in not only the molecular mechanisms of disease progression, but also in developing culturally-competent methods of translational research, aimed at reducing health disparities in his and other underserved communities. Mark enjoys food, travel, cars, and photography. Many days, he can be found outside riding his bike.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/markabernard/>

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Donaldson F. Conserve, MS, Ph.D.

Associate Professor in the Department of Prevention and Community Health in the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University

Donaldson F. Conserve MS, PhD is an Associate Professor in the Department of Prevention and Community Health in the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University. His research focuses on implementing and disseminating evidence-based HIV prevention, care, and treatment interventions for scale-up and population impact. As part of his K99/R00 Pathway to Independence Award from the National Institutes of Mental Health, he developed the Self-Testing Education and Promotion (STEP) Project and contributed to implementation science efforts to promote community-based HIV self-testing (HIVST) distribution in Tanzania. Building on his experience in Tanzania, he has expanded his research on HIVST to his native country of Haiti, and other Sub-Saharan African countries with collaborators from the HIV Self-Testing AfRica (STAR) Initiative, the world's largest HIVST implementation science project to date. In the US, he is contributing to the upcoming HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 096 protocol, a community-randomized implementation science trial designed to test an integrated, HIV status-neutral, population-level health equity approach to reducing intersectional stigma and increasing rates of HIV testing, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake, and HIV viral suppression among Black men who have sex with men (MSM). Currently, he is leveraging his HIVST research experience to inform the implementation of COVID-19 self-testing, which was recently authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug and Administration.

Conserve received his MS and PhD in Biobehavioral Health from the Pennsylvania State University and completed his postdoctoral training in the Department of Health Behavior at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In recognition of the impact of his work, he received the Pennsylvania State University College of Health and Human Development 2020 Emerging Professional – Graduate Degree Award, given to graduates of the past 10 years who have demonstrated professional excellence and exemplary voluntary community involvement in the health and human development professions. Prior to joining George Washington University in October 2020, he was an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina.



Krim K. Lacey, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, University of Michigan at Dearborn

Krim K. Lacey is an Associate Professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. His primary research is on intimate partner violence. Within the broader topic of intimate partner violence, Dr. Lacey's research has focused on understudied and marginalized populations and the intersection of race, ethnicity, culture, and environmental factors in shaping occurrences and experiences of interpersonal violence and related health outcomes. A focus of Dr. Lacey's more recent work has involved the investigation of risk factors and consequences of violence toward African American and Caribbean Black women. Along with his work on intimate partner violence, Dr. Lacey has explored the physical and mental well-being of Caribbeans living in the United States, England, Canada and within the Caribbean region to better understand the influence of social context, culture, and processes of migration on health outcomes.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Thomas K.M. Cudjoe, M.D., M.P.H., M.A

Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Endowed Professor,
Associate Professor of Geriatric Medicine and
Gerontology at the Johns Hopkins School of
Medicine

Thomas K.M. Cudjoe, M.D. M.P.H. M.A. is the Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Endowed Professor, Associate Professor of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Dr. Cudjoe is the co-director of Medicine for the Greater Good and the Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology's Director for Community Engagement. He leverages community-based strategies, mixed-methods and human centered design to understand and address social isolation. Dr. Cudjoe also serves on the Scientific Advisory Council for the Foundation for Social Connection and as the co lead to the Stakeholder Core for the Johns Hopkins Artificial Intelligence and Technology Collaboratory for Aging Research. Additionally, he has led studies that examined the prevalence of social isolation among older adults and associations between social isolation and health outcomes. His work has been featured in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, NPR, and on Good Morning America. He is a Major in the US Army Reserve Corps. Dr. Cudjoe received his undergraduate degree in Cellular and Molecular Biology at Hampton University and was active in the Honors College and Army ROTC program. He graduated from Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and earned a master's in public health in health policy at Harvard School of Public Health. He completed his internal medicine residency Internal Medicine at Howard University Hospital and clinical and research fellowship at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. In 2023, Dr. Cudjoe completed a master's degree in social design at Maryland Institute College of Art.



Lauren J. Parker, Ph.D.

Associate Scientist, the Johns Hopkins
Bloomberg School of Public Health

Dr. Lauren J. Parker is an Associate Scientist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Her research focuses on leveraging home- and community-based supports to address the cultural needs of African American and Hispanic caregivers and individuals living with dementia. Supported by the National Institute on Aging (NIA), Dr. Parker investigates the impact of adult day services on both physiological and psychosocial stressors among African American caregivers, integrating biological and psychosocial indicators of stress. She is also the Principal Investigator of the clinical trial "Understanding Mechanisms of Action of the Tailored Activity Program for People with Dementia in Adult Day Services," funded through the EMBRACE Roybal Center (NIA 1P30AG086642-01).

In addition to her research, Dr. Parker serves on the Leadership Core/Health Equity Task Force of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure, Public Health Center of Excellence in Dementia Caregiving at the University of Minnesota. She is a member of the Research Committee of the National Adult Day Service Association and a Co-Investigator of the Partnership and Engagement Core of The State Alzheimer's Research Support Center (StARS). Dr. Parker completed her postdoctoral training at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She earned a dual-title PhD in Gerontology and Health Promotion from Purdue University and a Bachelor of Arts from Hampton University.

Emerging Scholars Program- Cohort IV

CONTINUED



Joyce (Joy) Balls-Berry, Ph.D., M.P.E.

Associate Professor of Neurology, Washington University School of Medicine

Joyce (Joy) Balls-Berry Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Neurology at Washington University School of Medicine and inaugural Core Leader for the Health Disparities and Equity Core in the Knight Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, the Associate Lead for Community Engagement for Precision Health for the Institute of Clinical and Translational Science, and the Academic Engagement Lead for the Greater Plains. Before joining the faculty of Washington University School of Medicine, Dr. Balls-Berry was an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at the Mayo Clinic. She completed her formal education at the Xavier University of Louisiana with graduate training at Washington University School of Medicine and The University of Toledo. Dr. Balls-Berry completed a post-doctoral research fellowship in health equity, epidemiology, and biostatistics at The University of Florida and a faculty fellowship in aging at Mayo Clinic. Her work as a scientist centers on increasing awareness of community-patient engagement in research to increase health equity in minoritized and under-resourced communities. As a scientist, Dr. Balls-Berry has published over 80 peer-reviewed publications. Her current funding as a PI includes NIH and CDC. Her current funded includes a National Institute of Aging R24 grant titled, Creating Opportunities to Increase Health Equity and Equality for Persons at Risk for Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementia (COEQUAL). The goal is to establish a novel approach to recruiting, enrolling, and retaining under- resourced communities into an ADRD research registry. To date, 833 people have enrolled in the COEQUAL registry. Dr. Balls-Berry serves as the Secretary/Parliamentarian of the Association for Clinical and Translational Science Board of Directors and Chair of Person of the Board for Health Literacy Media. The Aside from her work as a scientist, Dr. Balls-Berry shared her story of living with dyslexia as a TEDx Talk. More recently, in January 2025, she was honored as one of The 40 for 40 MLK Servant Leader Awardees during the 40th Annual Bayer YMCA Commemorative King Breakfast.

Special Thanks



Monica R. Emery

Media Relations and Event Management
Specialist

Monica R. Emery — a Renaissance leader whose expertise spans media relations, event management, community engagement and Empowerment.

As the CEO of MRE Global, Monica crafts strategies that bring bold ideas to life. When she's not providing consultation or logistical services as the Project Manager for Gdavis Productions and Films, Gdavis TV, and leading productions such as "Unforgettable" and "The Loretta McNary Show."

Monica R. Emery's journey is a testament to purpose and passion. She launched "Huddle Up!"—a mentoring and program workshop that is designed to help student athletes and their families to navigate the complex world of athletic eligibility and the recruitment process while gaining crucial essential life skills.

Monica's Mantra: "Life is a journey to be embraced with grace, courage, a willing spirit and a commitment to make every day count."



**Ceeon D. Quiett Smith, Ph.D.,
Dillard University**

Vice President of Auxiliary Services for Dillard
University

Ceeon D. Quiett Smith, Ph.D., serves as the Vice President of Auxiliary Services for Dillard University, focusing on state and federal affairs. Smith served as a HBCU Advisor for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Division of Civil Rights, advising on Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Implementation strategies to increase technical assistance and contract equity opportunities for HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions.

Smith has held cabinet-level, executive leadership positions at Florida Memorial University (FL), Benedict College (SC), Grambling State University (LA), and Dillard University (LA). Her campus leadership experiences and accomplishments as Chief of Staff, Executive Vice President, and Community Development Corp. Chair, underscore her philosophy that student success and institutional economic resilience are pivotal in driving economic development and innovation.

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The Black Men's Brain Health Conference is committed to providing an inclusive environment and, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, will honor requests for reasonable accommodations made by individuals with disabilities. Send direct accommodation requests to Deborah Stroman at debby@dstroman.com or through the event platform, UBMe.