"What Can I Do With A Black Studies Major?"

150 Answers

by

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Librarian
San Diego State University

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The interdisciplinary field of Blacks Studies—alternatively called African American Studies, Afro-American Studies, Africana Studies, Pan African Studies, or Afro-Ethnic Studies, depending on the school where it is offered—is a relative newcomer on the academic scene and its proponents have had to defend its theoretical underpinnings and practicality, something which the traditional liberal arts fields are also challenged to do but not to the same extent. Since the establishment of the nation's first Black Studies department in 1968 at San Francisco State University, and despite the wide acceptance and institutionalization of Black Studies in academia, there still remains the nagging question about its ability to produce outstanding citizens equal in quality to individuals who as undergraduates majored in, say, history or English or art. Black Studies has now been around long enough to notice its handiwork: men and women constructively contributing to society, employed in a wide spectrum of professions.

It is a difficult task to compile a list of noteworthy people who majored in Black Studies because there are so many who could easily qualify. This list merely scratches the surface. Black Studies attracts a broad span of interested scholars. Not only persons of African descent, but also persons of European, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, and Native American descent are represented in the list. Some of those mentioned are virtually household names or have received considerable local or regional
attention. Their professions range from A (Astronaut) to Z (Zoo administrator). In short, the answer to those asking what can a person do with a Black Studies major is simple: . . . Anything!

Most of the entries contain a brief sketch of the person's career, the type of degree obtained in Black Studies, the year the degree was obtained, and additional (usually graduate) degrees in other disciplines that the person was granted.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The National Council for Black Studies is extremely grateful to Robert Fikes for this excellent publication. For too long, those of us in the discipline have battled the traditional disciplines knowing the excellent job we do in developing excellent scholars and valuable community leaders. This publication clearly speaks to the work being done across the nation in Black Studies. Robert, we applaud you!

Dr. Shirley Weber. President, NCBS

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**MEDICINE & HEALTH**

Richard Lyn-Cook......Physician. Co-authored article in the *Journal of Neuroscience*. Co-president of his medical school class and active in social and professional groups.
B.A., Yale University, 1992. M.D., Yale Medical School.

William E. Dingus......Dentist. Board certified specialist in orthodontics in private practice in Cleveland, Ohio.

Billy Ray Flowers......Chiropractor. First black chiropractor in the state of Oregon.

Rushelle Jones......Physician. Works in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women's Health at Saint Louis University.
B.A., Duke University. M.D., University of Tennessee.


Anastasia Rowland-Seymore......Physician. Currently completing a fellowship in integrative medicine at the University of Arizona.

Claudia Thomas......Physician. The first black female orthopedic surgeon in the U.S.

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

Mae Jemison......Astronaut. Rocketed into space aboard the shuttle Endeavor in 1992 as a mission specialist. Received her M.D. from Cornell University School of Medicine.

David P. Johnson......Teaches computer applications at the University of Maryland and owns a desktop publishing business.
B.A., University of Maryland. Ph.D. in Occupational Studies, University of Georgia

James Steven Hoffmaster......Professor of Physics at Gonzaga University.
B.A., Edinboro State U. Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics, Stevens Institute of Technology.

KieSean Riddick......In 2003 he graduated with a double major in physics and African American Studies. He plans to pursue a master's degree in physics and teach high school.
B.S, B.A., University of Rochester.

Kimani C. Toussaint Jr......Electrical Engineer and a Gates Millennium fellow whose special interest is photonics (Quantum Optics). He has published technical papers.

**LAW**

Felicia A. Bowen......Associate in the law firm of Donoghue, Thomas, Auslander & Drohan. Recipient, West Publishing Award for Clinical Achievement in Consumer Law.
B.A., Wesleyan University. J.D., George Washington University

Erin Dozier......Attorney. Specializes in communication law in the firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, and Haver in Washington, D.C.
B.A., Hampshire College. J.D., George Washington University

Karen Freeman-Wilson......President and CEO of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). A former drug court judge in Gary, Indiana, her organizations advocates alternative sentencing for drug offenders in such courts.
B.A., Harvard University. J.D., Harvard University.

Wesley Fields......General Counsel for the Kansas City Tax Increment Finance Commission.
B.A., Yale University. J.D., University of Virginia.

Tanya Greene......An attorney in the Capital Defender Office in New York City representing people charged with capital crimes. Received the 1999 Reebok International Human Rights Award for her work against the death penalty.
B.A., Wesleyan University. J.D., Harvard University.

Leslie Harris......Judge. Suffolk (Massachusetts) Juvenile Court judge.

Latonia Early-Hubelbank......Attorney. Specializes in matrimonial, family, and adoption law in the firm of Cohn, Steinberg, Goldstein & Early-Hubelbank in New York.
B.A., Princeton University. J.D., Hofstra University.
**Politics & Government**

A.B., Smith College. J.D., Boston College.

M.A., State University of New York at Albany.

**Ahndrea L. Blue**......Executive policy advisor and Legal Counsel to the Governor of the State of Washington. Formerly CEO of the Seattle Urban League.  
B.A., J.D., University of Washington.

M.A., State University of New York-Albany. J.D., CUNY-Queens College.

**Tom Davidson**......Maine State Representative (Democrat) in his third term. Also a highly successful businessman as Vice President of Tyson Corners, an investment firm.  
B.A., Bowdoin College.

**Jendayi Frazer**......Senior Director of African Affairs at the National Security Council, appointed by Condoleezza Rice. Taught at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.  
B.A., Stanford University. Ph.D. in Political Science, Stanford University.

**Do Kim**......Founder of the Korean American Youth Leadership Program and President of the Korean Democratic Committee.
B.A., Harvard University. J.D., University of California-Los Angeles.

Alyce Lee......Boston Mayor Thomas Menino’s Chief of Staff.
B.A., Wesleyan University, 1981.

Marc H. Morial......Former Mayor of New Orleans and former
Louisiana State Senator. President of the National Urban League.
B.A., University of Pennsylvania, 1980. J.D., Georgetown
University.

Peter Shapiro......Chairman of the Prince Georges (Virginia)
County Council 2nd District.. A Truman Scholar.
B.A., University of Maryland.

Jabari Simama......Executive Director, Atlanta Mayor’s Office
of Community Technology. Media consultant and writer. Former
city councilman and professor.
M.A., Atlanta University, 1975. Ph.D. in American Studies,
Emory University.

Kelvin Simmons......Former 2-term Kansas City City
Councilman. Chairman of the Missouri Public Service
Commission.
B.A., University of Missouri-Columbia.

Adewale Troutman......Director of the Louisiana Metro Health
Department. Formerly director of the Fulton County (Atlanta)
Department of Health and Wellness.
M.A., State University of New York-Albany. M.D., New Jersey
Medical School.

Sharon W. West......Was elected Chairperson of the Erie County
(New York) Community Board of Trustees in 1992. Currently,
she is Executive Director of the Buffalo Housing Authority.
B.A., University of Buffalo.

**BUSINESS & INDUSTRY**

James Brantley......Director of Community Relations for Zoo
New England-Franklin Park Zoo.
B.S., B.A., majored in Zoology and African American Studies,
University of Tennessee.

Mishka Brown......CEO of Aerolith Incorporated, a media
consulting and technology development company in New York
City.
B.A., Yale University.

Rochelle Brown......Television producer. Producer of the top-
rated show “Emeril Live” on the Food Network.
B.A., Rutgers University.

Paul E. Butler...... Director of Program Enterprises for VH1
Music First and Country Music Television (CMT).
B.A., University of Rochester. J.D., Harvard University.

Julia Baker Jones......Business consultant. Graduated in the top
10 percent of her business school class at Stanford.

Robert J. Morris......Executive Vice President of Century
Housing based in Culver City, California, and Chairman of the
Board of the LINC Housing Corporation.
B.A., University of California-Santa Barbara.

Yvette Moyo......President and CEO of Resource Associates
International, Ltd., a marketing firm.
B.A., Eastern Illinois University.
Performing Arts & Entertainment

Michelle H. Anderson.......Singer and beauty contestant and consultant. Was Miss Delaware 1995. Has sung at pro sports events, casinos, and at Harlem's Apollo Theater.
B.A., Duke University.

Gabrie'l J. Atchison.......Choreographer and dancer. Established a production company.

Angela Bassett.......Actress. Winner of the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in 1994 and an Oscar nominee for the movie "What's Love Got To Do With It."
B.A., Yale University, 1980. M.A., Drama, Yale University.

Julius Brewster.......Dancer with the Dayton (Ohio) Contemporary Dance Company. Also, he is an Arts Commissioner for the city of Centerville, Ohio.
B.A., Southern Methodist University.

Rody Chiong.......Asian American actor and musician. Has appeared in Hollywood movies, plays, and accompanied Sania Twain and Celine Dion with his violin and fiddle.
B.A., Indiana University.

Andre De Shields.......Actor, director, narrator, labor union activist, adjunct professor. Has appeared in a number of movies, television shows, and stage shows. He has won an Emmy and been nominated for a Tony Award.
M.A., New York University.
Charles Dumas......Actor, director, and theater professor at Penn State. Appeared in several popular Hollywood movies and is seen on such TV shows as "Law & Order."
B.A., State University of New York-New Platz. J.D., Yale University.

Yolanda King......Actress-instructor. Daughter of Martin Luther King Jr. Taught theater at Fordham University and acted in stage productions across the country.
B.A., Smith College.


Melissa Walker......Professional jazz and pop singer. Sang at Lincoln Center under the direction of Wynton Marsalis, the Berlin Jazz Festival, etc. Four CD albums to her credit.
B.A., Brown University.

Sarah J. Glover......Photographer for the Philadelphia Inquirer.
B.A., Syracuse University.

Thelma Golden......Art museum director. Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Programs at the Studio Museum in Harlem. She has written books and articles on American art.
B.A., Smith College.

Dawit Lessanu......Web animator, writer, and creator of "Maatkarla" science fiction adventure featured on SCIFI.com. He is a managing partner of Stimulation Station.
B.A., Rutgers University.

Aaron McGruder......Creator of the nationally syndicated comic strip "The Boondocks."
B.A., University of Maryland, 1998.

Amani Willett......Professional photographer. His work has appeared in Glamour and Color Magazine. Solo exhibition titled "Fragments" at the Taranto Gallery in Manhattan.
B.A., Wesleyan University.

**VISUAL ARTS**

Jim Barry......Artist and art instructor at the California Institute of Technology.
B.A., University of California-Santa Barbara, 1986.

B.A., Emory University. B.A., Art Institute of Atlanta.

Robert Henry Graham......Artist-educator. His paintings have been displayed in more than 70 solo exhibits since 1968. He is Professor of Art at Virginia Tech.
M.A., University of Wisconsin. M.F.A., University of Wisconsin.

**LITERATURE & POETRY**

M.A., UC-Berkeley.

B.A., Harvard University.
Deborah Major......In 2002 she officially became the third Poet Laureate of San Francisco. She is also a trained actress, dancer, novelist, instructor, and editor.
B.A., San Francisco State University.

Felicia Mason......Author of 8 romance novels. Winner of Reviewer's Choice Award from Romantic Times and Affaire de Coeur Best Contemporary Ethnic Novel Award.
M.A., University of Maryland.

Ethelbert Miller......Award-winning poet, editor, college administrator and founder of the D.C. Humanities Council.
B.A., Howard University.

M.A., Yale University, 1983.

Jill Nelson......Novelist, freelance journalist and former staff writer at the Washington Post. Winner of the America Book Award for her memoir, Volunteer Slavery (1993). She is Associate Professor of Journalism at the City College of New York.
B.A., City College of New York. M.A., Columbia School of Journalism.

Irene Smalls......Award-winning author of 17 children's books.
B.A., Cornell University.

Natasha Tarpley......Award-winning author of books for children and adults.
B.A., Harvard University, 1993.

SPORTS

Vince Carter......Pro basketball superstar currently with the Toronto Raptors. Promised his mother in writing to return to school and finish his degree.

Lewis Chitengwa......Professional Golfer who, in 1993 became the first black African (Zimbabwean) to win the South African Amateur Championship. The Lewis Chitengwa Foundation and the $100,000 Canadian Golf Tour's Lewis Chitengwa Memorial Championship was established in his honor after his untimely death at age 26 in 2001.
B.A., University of Virginia, 1998.

Dorothy Gaters......As head coach of the girl's basketball team at Marshall High School in Chicago she has won 7 state championships.
M.A., Governor's State University.

Monique Hennegan......Sydney, Australia 2000 Olympic Games gold medalist in the 4x400 relay.
B.A., University of North Carolina.

Adam Hutchinson......Head basketball coach at Washington and Lee University, formerly head basketball coach at Case Western Reserve University.
B.A., Amherst College.

Keiko Price......Was Academic All-American, PAC-10 100 meter freestyle swimming champion, and swim team captain at UCLA.
B.A., University of California-Los Angeles.
Jerry Stackhouse.......High scoring basketball star with the Washington Wizards.

EDUCATION

Maisha Baton.......Poet, historian, and lecturer at the University of New Mexico.
B.S., University of Pittsburgh. Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh.

B.S., University of North Carolina. J.D., Harvard University.

Dale Colston.......Principal librarian in the Business, Science, and Technology Center at the Newark Public Library.
B.A., Rutgers University. M.L.S., Rutgers University.

Marta J. Effinger.......Teacher, playwright, and founder of The Mosaic Project which promotes human relations education to children.

Jeffrey B. Ferguson.......Assistant Professor of Black Studies and American Studies at Amherst College.
B.A., Harvard University. Ph.D., Harvard University.

Cheryl Finley.......Visiting Professor of Art History at Wellesley College. Author of Harlem Guaranteed: The Photographic Legacy of James VanDerZee (2002).
Ph.D., Yale University.

Eddie Glaude.......Associate Professor of Religion and Africana Studies at Bowdoin College. He has published two books on black religion and nationalism.

Allen J. Green.......Dean of the College at Wesleyan University.
B.A., Black Studies, Luther College. Ph.D., History, UCLA.

Cheryl T. Grills.......Professor of Psychology at Loyola Marymount University.
B.A., Yale University. Ph.D., University of California-Los Angeles.

Charlene Hayes.......Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources at Johns Hopkins University.

Redell Hearn.......Former curator of the California African American Museum. Currently in charge of a museum studies program at Southern University in Louisiana.
B.A., Syracuse University. M.A. in Museum Studies, Syracuse University.

Endesha Ida Mae Holland.......Retired at theater professor at USC, award-winning playwright, and author of several books.

Diane Hughes.......Associate Professor of Psychology at New York University.
B.A., Williams College. Ph.D., Michigan State University.

Adrienne Israel.......Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean at Guilford College.
Cedric Kwesi Johnson........Assistant Professor of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in New York. M.A., Ohio State University. Ph.D., University of Maryland.

Sunshine Lawson........Although blind, she graduated summa cum laude. A Ronald McNair Scholar, she intends to become a university professor. B.A., California State University-Fullerton.


Haipeng Li........Born in the Chinese Province of Jilin, he is a reference librarian at Oberlin College. M.A., University of Mississippi.

Sharif Z. Liwaru........Family teacher at the historic Boys Town (Father Flanagan's Boys Home), Omaha, Nebraska. B.A., University of Nebraska, 1993.


Saadi Simawe........Associate Professor of English at Grinnell College. M.A., University of Iowa. Ph.D., University of Iowa.


Tess C. Sparago........Director of the San Francisco Children’s Art Center. M.A., Universite de Paris III, La Sorbonne.

Stevie J. Swanson........Law professor at the University of Michigan. B.A., Yale University. J.D., University of Michigan.


Rebecca L. Upton........Assistant Professor of Anthropology at DePauw University. A.B., Colgate University. Ph.D., Brown University.

NEWS MEDIA

B.A., Wellesley College.

Tiffany Black.......At age 23, she is an online editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer.
B.A., University of North Carolina.

James T. Campbell.......Editorial writer for the Houston Chronicle. Former director of the Press Club of Houston.
B.A., University of Houston.

Haven Daley.......Television anchorman on "New 24" in Houston Texas. He is a member of the Native American Journalists Association.
B.A., Pennsylvania State University. M.A. in Broadcast Journalism, Northwestern U.

Marc Glick.......Television producer, Channel 11 WTTW-TV in Chicago.
B.A., University of Iowa.

Jessie Graham.......Freelance print and radio journalist. Has worked for National Public Radio (NPR) and the New York Post.
B.A., Wesleyan University.

Selwyn S. Hinds.......Former editor-in-chief of The Source, the leading hip hop magazine. He is also the author of two books.
B.A., Princeton University.

Gregory S. Kearse.......Managing editor of Masonic Digest, freelance writer, and CEO of Blue Light Publishing in Silver Spring, Maryland.
B.A., Howard University.

Pearl Stewart.......In 1992 she became the first black female to become editor of a major daily newspaper, the Oakland Tribune.
B.A., Howard University.

Martin C. Summers.......Team Site Editor for NBA.com responsible for maintaining the official Internet site of the National Basketball Association.
B.A., Yale University. J.D., University of Virginia.

David Van Taylor.......Has written, directed, and edited highly acclaimed documentary films including the 1993 Emmy-nominated "Dream Deceivers."
B.A., Harvard University.

Erica Terry.......MTV segment producer and news reporter.

Bill Whitaker.......CBS new correspondent based in Los Angeles. Frequently seen on the CBS Evening News with Dan Rather.
M.A., Boston University.

SOCIAL, COMMUNITY, & HUMANITARIAN SERVICES

Faisal Abdulla.......Prior to his death in a crash aboard a plane carrying aid to Kosovo in 1999, he was an economist for the United Nations Development Office.

Peter Bouckaert.......Researcher for Human Rights Watch investigating human rights abuses around the globe.
B.A., University of California-Santa Barbara. J.D., Stanford University.

*Onyije Chigozili*......Peace Corps worker in Guatemala.
B.A., University of Houston.

*Jonah M. Edelman*......Son of Marian Wright Edelman of the Children’s Defense Fund, he graduated summa cum laude and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. He is the Executive Director of Stand For Children.
B.A., Yale University. Ph.D. in Politics, Oxford University.

*James Forman*......Organizer and leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in the turbulent 1960s.

*Calvin Holmes*......Executive Director of the Chicago Community Loan Fund.
B.A., Northwestern University.

*Katherine Kennedy*......Executive Director of the San Francisco office of the Summer Search Foundation that identifies at-risk youth and shows them a way to a better future.
B.A., University of Pennsylvania.

*Anthony D. Perkins*......From 1989 until his death in 1994 he was director of a community center in Dorchester, Massachusetts that was named in his honor.
B.A., University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1989.

*Wendy D. Puriefoy*......President of the Public Education Network, the nation's largest network of community-based school-reform organizations.
M.A., Boston University.

*Christine Slook*......Executive Director of Playspace, a nonprofit children’s museum in Raleigh, North Carolina.
B.A., University of Idaho.

*Jacci Thompson-Dodd*......Founder of WeSpeakLoudly, a women’s health education and advocacy group in Seattle, WA.
M.A., Boston University.

*David Walker*......Executive Director of the Morristown Neighborhood House. Teaches program evaluation at Columbia University’s School of Social Work.
B.A., Stanford University. J.D., Georgetown U. M.S.W., Columbia University.

*Jason Warwin*......Co-founder and co-director of Brotherhood/Sisterhood Sol, which counsels and teaches black and Latino adolescents in New York City.
B.A., Brown University.

**RELIGION**

*Alise D. Barrymore*......Dean of University Ministries and Campus Pastor at North Park University in Chicago. Winner of academic and preaching awards.

*Yolanda D. Lehman*......Pastor of the multi-ethnic African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

*Danny Pyon*......Youth group pastor at the First Korean Church of New Jersey.
B.A., Brandeis University.
Frank M. Reid——Senior Pastor of Bethel AME Church in Baltimore. Prolific author, heard on radio and seen on television, and founder of Frank M. Reid Ministries. B.A., Yale University. D.Min., United Theological Seminary.


