"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.

**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**


**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. B.A., Stanford University, 1977. M.D., Cornell University.

**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.

**Kiese 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. B.A., University of Pennsylvania. Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering, Boston University.

**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


**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.


**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


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.


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 Louisana State Senator. President of the National Urban League.

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.

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.

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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.

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.
Jesse Norfleet.......Director of Programming at Community Media Center in Palo Alto, California. Produces community affairs and sports shows on cable television. B.A., Stanford University.

Steven Phillips.......At age 28 became the youngest member of the San Francisco Board of Education. Started his successful high tech company, law firm, and nonprofit company. Written numerous newspaper articles and made many television appearances. B.A., Stanford University. J.D., Stanford U. Law School.

Mark Douglas Smith.......President and CEO of California Healthcare Foundation. A.B., Harvard University, 1979. MBA, University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business. M.D., University of California at San Francisco.

Brian J. Stevens.......Executive Director of The Telecom Opportunity Institute (TTOI), a telecommunications employment and entrepreneurship company. B.A., Harvard University.

Craig Thompson.......Founder and President of Thompson Communications, an education and media consulting firm. An Associate in the law firm of Peter Angelos, owner of the Baltimore Orioles. Hosts radio and television talk shows in Baltimore. B.A., University of Maryland. J.D., University of Maryland.

Carter Woodruff.......Secretary/Treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees of Iowa, and Chief Stewart Negotiations Chair, Local 3673. B.A., Luther College.

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.


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.


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.


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 “Maatkara” science fiction adventure featured on SCIFI.com. He is a managing partner of Stimulation Station. B.A., Rutgers University.


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.


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


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 Tarpely. 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 Hennagan. 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.

Eddie Glaude......Associate Professor of Religion and Africana Studies at Bowdoin College. He has published two books on black religion and nationalism. M.A., Temple U. Ph.D., Princeton University.

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.


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


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


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.
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. Spargo......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.

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 or radio and seen on television, and founder of Frank M. Reid Ministries.
B.A., Yale University. D.Min., United Theological Seminary.

W. Franklyn Richardson......Senior Pastor of the 4000-member Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, New York.

Cheryl Sanders......Pastor of Third Street Church of God in Washington, D.C.

B.A., Denison University. D.D., Union Theological Seminary.

B.A., University of Maryland. J.D., Georgetown University.

Richard Toliver......Rector of St. Edmund's Episcopal Church in Chicago, former Peace Corps administrator and university professor. Profiled in Ebony and Business Week.
M.A., Boston University. Ph.D., Howard University.