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# WARRIORS

HIGHLIGHTING WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

February 2019

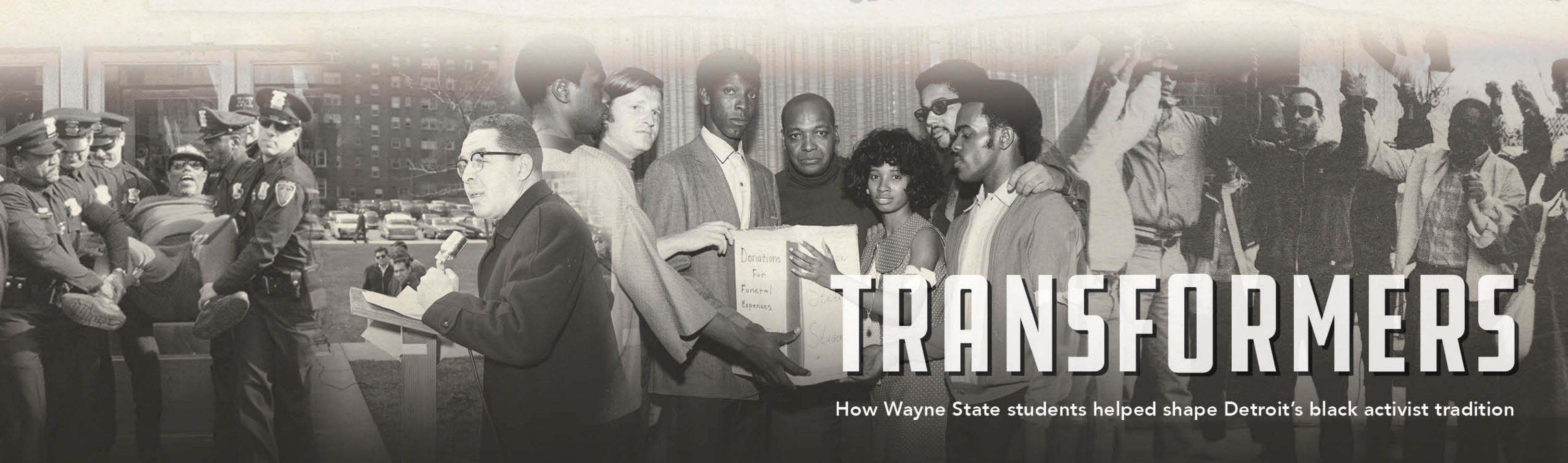
WE WERE VERY CONFRONTATIONAL,  
IN YOUR FACE, LOUD AND BOISTEROUS

IF THE STUDENTS DON'T RAISE THESE ISSUES,  
THERE'S NO ONE TO DO IT

THE STRUGGLES WERE BRUTAL

The most powerful force  
of black activism

It's been up to black students to  
advocate for the right to their education



# TRANSFORMERS

How Wayne State students helped shape Detroit's black activist tradition





**Cover story: Transformers**  
As social change swept the nation in the 1960s, Wayne State became a crucible for some of the best-known African American activists in Detroit history — and is home to an enduring legacy of grassroots engagement. **Page 6**

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As the publication devoted to covering Wayne State's community involvement, we encourage readers to share stories about the work the university does in and around Detroit.

Got an idea for *Warriors* magazine? Contact us at [engaged@wayne.edu](mailto:engaged@wayne.edu).

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## Letter from the PRESIDENT

As president of Wayne State University, I've enjoyed telling you about the great things happening on our campus. But I'm equally excited about what Wayne State is doing throughout Detroit. I believe our role as a community leader is just as important as our position as a top-tier research university.

Our location in the heart of a major city offers numerous unique service opportunities. Detroit may not be thought of as a traditional college town, but thanks to Wayne State's presence here for 150 years, it could easily be considered a college city. Our university plays a vital role in the education, health and support of Detroit's residents, setting a precedent for how "town and gown" can best collaborate.

This has always been an essential part of our identity, as stories in this second issue of *Warriors* illustrate. In 1967, for example, Wayne State established the Center for Urban Studies to help understand and alleviate the challenges that metropolitan areas face. Today, this center continues to leverage our position as an urban research institution to understand the complex factors that impact every city — a point underscored in the story on the award-winning AmeriCorps Urban Safety Program.

We have a long history of advocating for our fellow Detroiters, and a rich legacy of student activism toward that end. That tradition of engagement is reflected today in programs such as our Free Legal Aid Clinic and Street Medicine Detroit, which serve the city's homeless population. It is also enshrined in the work of our Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which we profile in this issue.

Universities have a mission to shape the next generation — something that happens in Detroit classrooms every day, and not just our own. Wayne State is host to a number of programs that help prepare local elementary, middle and high school students for college and beyond.

Not only do we reach students, but we also mold teachers. TeachDETROIT, which you can read more about in this issue, provides hands-on educational experience in classrooms to College of Education students while also supporting the needs of Detroit Public Schools.

Changing our world begins right outside our front door. I'm proud of Wayne State's commitment to Detroit, and I'm eager to see it grow. As you explore this issue to learn more about our community engagement work — both historically and in the present — I hope you'll share my pride and excitement.

Sincerely,

President M. Roy Wilson







## PwC MPREP Scholars seeks to provide greater access, opportunity for students of color in business school.

When Lynita Taylor was charged last spring with recruiting students for PwC MPREP Scholars (the new cutting-edge Multicultural Professional Readiness Education Program in the Mike Ilitch School of Business), she expected the diversity effort to unfold slowly, with only a few participants trickling in to start.

Instead, Taylor has sometimes found herself inundated with students clamoring to join MPREP.

“The goal was to have 15 to 20 current Wayne State students participate for the year,” said Taylor, diversity and inclusion manager for MPREP Scholars and its administrative cornerstone. “We expected that it would be a gradual progression, where we would end up with 20 students by the end of the school year as a whole.

“After only a month, we were at 18!”

And student interest continues to rise.

That’s hardly surprising, however, considering that MPREP Scholars is the first of its kind and offers the potential for networking, mentorship and other opportunities that students of color too often feel shut out of in many other places.


A collaborative measure between Wayne State and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the MPREP learning community aims to prepare young professionals of color by enhancing their education beyond the classroom. The program pairs students with multiple mentors across respective business fields and provides a host of academic and professional support services.

Although MPREP Scholars is open to any student, the program is specifically geared to attract and retain talented students of color, as PwC officials seek to make an investment in diversity beyond the company’s monetary donations.

“They wanted to make a change in the fact that, with Wayne State being a school that is right in the heart of an urban location, the amount of multicultural students that they were getting, especially in accounting and finance, was extremely low,” said Taylor. “They wanted to put their efforts and funds toward trying to increase that number.”

Taylor has been a major driving force behind that involvement. Working out of her second-floor office in The District Detroit, she has overseen everything from MPREP’s programmatic development to recruitment. In addition, Taylor teaches a mandatory freshman course focused on student success. (She’s also pursuing a doctorate in the College of Education.)

MPREP student Sydney Lockhart, who’s majoring in global supply chain management, emphasized the value of the program. “It’s important to know that there are people who look like you in positions that you desire to be in. It’s good to see that as an African American student — because it leads to you wanting to do more.”


If Taylor, PwC officials and others have their way, MPREP Scholars will be leading students at the Mike Ilitch School of Business for many years to come. 

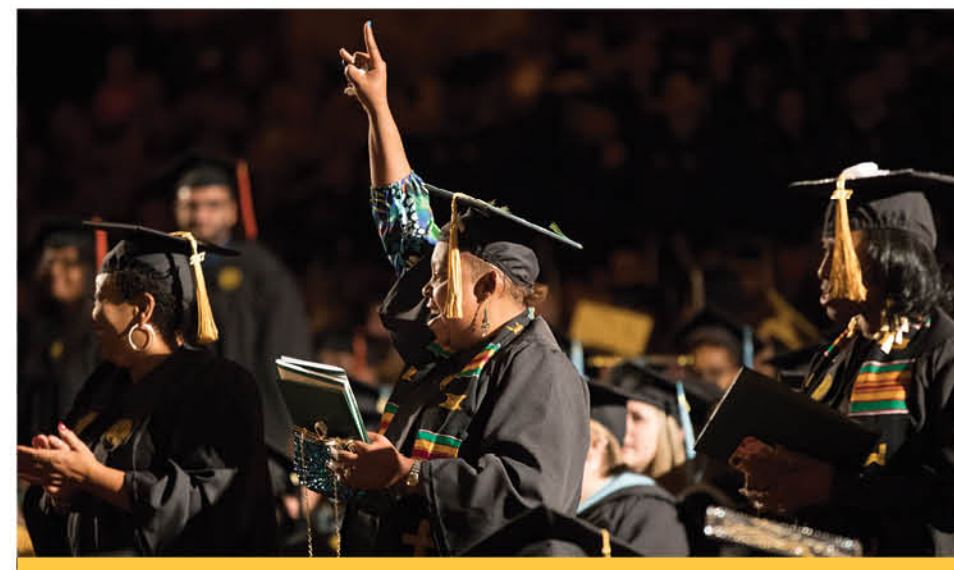
# NEWS BRIEFS

## Wayne State graduation rate improvement best in nation

The latest federal data on college graduation rates reveals that Wayne State is the fastest-improving university in the nation among public universities with more than 10,000 students. Wayne State’s graduation rates have nearly doubled between 2011 and 2017, increasing from 26 to 47 percent according to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Gains have been particularly pronounced among first-generation, low-income and minority students.

While Wayne State’s graduation rate has increased 21 percent in six years, nationally, graduation rates have increased only two percentage points over the last decade. 




## Sean Anderson Foundation donates \$10K to the HIGH Program



The Sean Anderson Foundation has donated \$10,000 to benefit Wayne State University’s HIGH (Helping Individuals Go Higher) Program.


This is the third gift from the Sean Anderson Foundation in support of the HIGH Program. In 2016, the foundation created a \$25,000 endowment for the program, exemplifying recording artist Big Sean’s commitment to improving the quality of life of young people. The foundation also donated \$15,000 to the HIGH Program in 2017.

A Detroit native, Big Sean established the Sean Anderson Foundation in 2012 to provide better opportunities for those in need. 

## \$1 million scholarship established by WSU and Corvias

Wayne State and Corvias have announced the first two recipients of a new \$1 million Corvias Endowed Scholarship at Wayne State University. Both

Corvias and Wayne State are committed to promoting affordability for new students pursuing higher education. In keeping with Corvias Foundation’s commitment to providing “beyond the dollar” support, the scholarship also includes opportunities for mentoring, internships and a significant network throughout students’ college careers.

This endowed fund demonstrates the benefits of a well-executed, 40-year partnership between Wayne State and Corvias to develop, finance, construct, operate and maintain the university’s student housing. Wayne State worked with Corvias Foundation to create a scholarship tailored to students who pursue an education despite economic challenges, which will be awarded during the first two years of school — statistically the period when the majority of students drop out. The Corvias Scholar Awards will assist freshmen and sophomores in covering tuition and fees, room and board, and other costs associated with attendance. 




## Wayne State helps launch national effort to increase college access, equity and postsecondary attainment

Wayne State University is participating in a new effort in which 130 public universities and systems will collaborate to increase college access, close the achievement gap and award hundreds of thousands of degrees by 2025. The participating institutions will work within clusters of four to 12 institutions as they concurrently implement innovative and effective practices to advance student success on their campuses. Wayne State University President M. Roy Wilson will lead a cluster of 11 urban universities. Collectively, the institutions enroll 3 million students, including 1 million students who receive Pell Grants.

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities is organizing the collaborative effort, known as Powered by Publics: Scaling Student Success.

Powered by Publics represents the largest collaborative effort to improve college access, advance equity and increase college degrees awarded. Participating institutions also have pledged to share aggregate data demonstrating their progress to help spur lasting change across the higher education sector.

“To meet the demand for college-educated workers, we need to provide access to education for all potential graduates, including transfer students, as well as those students who are at-risk, such as first-generation college students,” said Wilson. 



# TRANSFORMERS

As social change swept the nation in the 1960s, Wayne State became a crucible for some of the best-known African American activists in Detroit history — and is home to an enduring legacy of grassroots engagement.

In 1963, it was anything but fashionable for self-respecting black militants to publicly disagree with Malcolm X.

The most strident voice of resistance to racial oppression in urban communities in the North, Malcolm X had gained a nearly universal chorus of support from the masses disenchanted with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s unfaltering commitment to nonviolence.

So it took a particularly bold type of university student to — even respectfully — dispute Malcolm X's fiery oratory when he visited Detroit's King Solomon Baptist Church in November 1963.

"You haven't got a revolution that doesn't involve bloodshed," he told the audience gathered at the Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference. "And you're afraid to bleed."

Although Malcolm X never called for actual violence, this signature refrain about revolution often left many in the audience silent, giving unspoken assent to his idea about the discomfort created by the rapid change seizing the country at the time.

Not this time, though.

"We'll bleed, Malcolm!" a group of students shouted back.

"I said you're afraid to bleed," Malcolm X repeated.

Again, the activists vociferously begged to differ.

Their sentiments included those of Wayne State University students General Gordon Baker Jr., Charles Simmons, John Watson and others in an organization called UHURU — Swahili for "freedom." The young crusaders' presence at what became one of Malcolm X's most impactful speeches, "Message to the Grass Roots," wouldn't be the last time faces from Wayne State gave voice to fearless advocacy for political change.

Indeed, the legacy of progressive black political activism at Wayne State, among both students and faculty, runs long and deep. As both a hotbed for activity and a historical crucible for some of Detroit's sharpest political minds, Wayne State has had a profound and lasting impact on the political direction of not just Detroit, but black America as a whole.

Consider just some of the local progressive icons and influencers to have emerged from the university's undergraduate and professional programs: venerated former federal judge Damon Keith; former U.S. Congressman John Conyers; the late Detroit City Councilman Ken Cockrel Sr.; activist attorney Chokwe Lumumba; labor organizer General Baker; Black Power theologian Albert Cleage, founder of the Shrine of the Black Madonna; Erma Henderson, the first black woman elected to the Detroit City Council; and Adam Shakoor, social justice lawyer and one-time deputy mayor under Coleman A. Young.

and other UHURU organizers used the Wayne State campus as a mobilization point. Their activism was often informed by real-world experience at Detroit's manufacturing plants, where Simmons spent several months working before returning to his studies.

"That gave us the education about the labor conditions in the factories; plus, our parents and grandparents worked in the factories," said Simmons.

Goldberg, who discusses the mobilization of black auto workers in 2010's *Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action and the Construction Industry*, described the student-influenced LRBW as "the most powerful force of black activism" at the time. He said political maturity was a trait shared by many WSU scholars who strived for racial parity and social transformation.

And with that maturity came a certain boldness. "We were very confrontational, in your face, loud and boisterous," Simmons said.

With a core of about 20 active members, UHURU demonstrations near Wayne State and throughout the city often drew hundreds, like the group's 1963 protest outside Detroit police headquarters after a white police officer shot a black woman named Cynthia Scott.

And the students' influence was felt on campus as well as off.

For instance, at about the same time he helped form LRBW, journalist and UHURU member John Watson took over WSU's student newspaper, *The South End*. As LRBW gained influence, Goldberg pointed out, the Black Panther Party was finding footing locally in the wake of the 1967 rebellion.



"Look at all the people who came from here, in terms of their lives of struggle."

"Look at all the people who came from here, in terms of their lives of struggle," said David Goldberg, a professor of African American studies at WSU since 2007. "You have Chokwe Lumumba, you have Ken Cockrel, you have General Baker, and all these people were students at Wayne State University who devoted their lives to being revolutionaries and stayed the course locally."

Baker, regarded as a pioneer in labor rights, is the subject of Goldberg's forthcoming biography, tentatively titled *Dare to Fight, Dare to Win: The Revolutionary Life of General Baker*. According to Goldberg, it was largely within the Wayne State campus environment — against the backdrop of protest movements throughout the '60s — that Baker developed the consciousness to launch what became the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) with fellow WSU alumni Watson, Cockrel and Luke Tripp.

Now a professor in the social justice graduate program at Marygrove College, Charles Simmons recalled how he, Baker

As a result, a brief merger of the two movements led to regular printings of *The South End* with a black panther's emblem on the paper's masthead.

Rev. V. Lonnie Peek Jr., currently the assistant pastor of Detroit's Greater Christ Baptist Church, remembers enrolling at WSU in September 1967, just two months after the rebellion. He was almost instantly introduced to the activism electrifying the campus back then.

"My first day on campus ... I noticed there were maybe 50 or 60 people outside one building," Peek remembered. "There was an urban symposium, and they were protesting the lack of community involvement."

Among the other demonstrators were Frank Joyce and Grace Lee Boggs, wife of Detroit labor activist James Boggs and one of Detroit's most decorated activists until her death at age 100 in 2015. To Peek's great surprise, Joyce not only recognized him, but pointed him out when the media asked who represented black students at Wayne State.



Long, hot summer: Tumultuous historical events such as the 1967 rebellion that erupted in Detroit (pictured) were instrumental in shaping the political activism that fueled generations of Wayne State students in the 1960s and beyond.





Black ink: Leaping black panthers, a reference to the then-popular Black Panther Party, adorn a 1965 edition of *The South End*.

## "The struggles were brutal."

"Frank Joyce turned to me and said, 'He does,'" Peek recalled, chuckling.

When a reporter inquired about Peek's affiliation, he thought on his feet, citing the not-yet-established Association of Black Students (ABS).

"It was a name I created on the spot," he said.

The name and the concept not only stuck, but it quickly grew into a force both on campus and in the community. Peek and other ABS members met regularly, recruited new participants and distributed flyers. He ran unchallenged for president of the organization, which set up an office in State Hall, winning support from the dean of the School of Social Work for his efforts. ABS held a symposium that included a two-day workshop examining urban student issues. The group's ranks swelled to between 200 and 300 under Peek's leadership in the late 1960s.

"We established ourselves as a viable organization," he said.

When the organization decided to ask WSU's administration to create a black studies curriculum, Peek approached President William Rea Keast about resources for a research trip to the West Coast.

"He said, 'You want me to pay for you to take a trip to California — to go and study programs about black studies?'" Peek said. "I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'You're a funny man!'"

Keast soon relented, though, and Peek found himself traveling to several universities with a few other ABS members in 1968. They returned to Detroit with what became the eventual blueprint for Wayne State's original Center for Black Studies.

Thirty-one years later, black WSU students built on ABS' foundation in two interconnected ways: by demonstrating on campus and by further advocating for improvements in curriculum, including a full-fledged department that awarded degrees in black social, cultural and political scholarship.

One of those students, Tim Muhammad, recalled how the need to boost diversity even further inspired him to want to take up where Peek and others left off.

"When I got to Wayne State as a theatre student, I was pretty shocked," says Muhammad, a Detroit Denby High grad who recalled how his transition from a predominantly black public school to a mainstream college campus came as "a shock to my sensibility."

"I was like a fly in a pot of rice," he remembered.

Wayne State's still-vibrant political tradition allowed the theatre major to find camaraderie with other black students of different academic backgrounds. He remembered the day he first learned about plans for what eventually became an 11-day "study-in" and takeover of campus buildings in 1989 to demand an accredited program that would replace the Center for Black Studies.

"I was walking through Gullen Mall, about to go into the Student Center, when somebody asked if I'd been to the rally," Muhammad recalled.

He hadn't even heard about the gathering, but he became active in plans for the study-in from that point forward. Eventually, the student demonstration — in which about 150 students initially occupied four buildings on campus — gave birth in 1990 to the current Department of African American Studies.

"The struggles were brutal," recalled author and educator Gloria House, Ph.D., a former Wayne State faculty member who advised the students during the study-in.

*Continued on page 26*



# MAKING THEIR MARK



Like other colleges, Wayne State University was a hotbed of African American student activism throughout the 1960s. Inspired by the social momentum of the era, which included the Black Power movement, the civil rights struggle and antiwar protests, Wayne State students found themselves engaged in any number of efforts to stoke the spirit of change that was sweeping the country.

For many, that passion for social and political change didn't end when they left campus; rather, it burned even brighter when they began to take their places in world beyond college. Taking up roles as politicians, lawyers, labor leaders and the like, many of those same student activists left marks on the city, the state and even the nation that can still be seen today.

Here are a few notable Wayne State student activists whose legacies endure:

**Adam Shakoor** graduated from Wayne State and became a social justice lawyer, served as chief judge of the 36th District Court and founded his own private practice.

**Erma Henderson** was the executive director of the Equal Justice Council and in 1972 became the first black woman elected into the Detroit City Council, where she was elected president five years later.

**Albert Cleage** went on to found the Shrine of the Black Madonna following his launch of the Black Christian National Movement, which encouraged black churches to reinterpret Jesus' teachings to fit the social, economic and political needs of black people.

**Ken Cockrel Sr.** was elected into the Detroit City Council in 1977 and was recognized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Conference of Black Lawyers.

**Damon Keith** founded one of the first black law firms in Detroit, was the first black attorney hired by Wayne County's Friend of the Court and was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson as United States district judge, where he ruled in many historic cases for over 50 years.

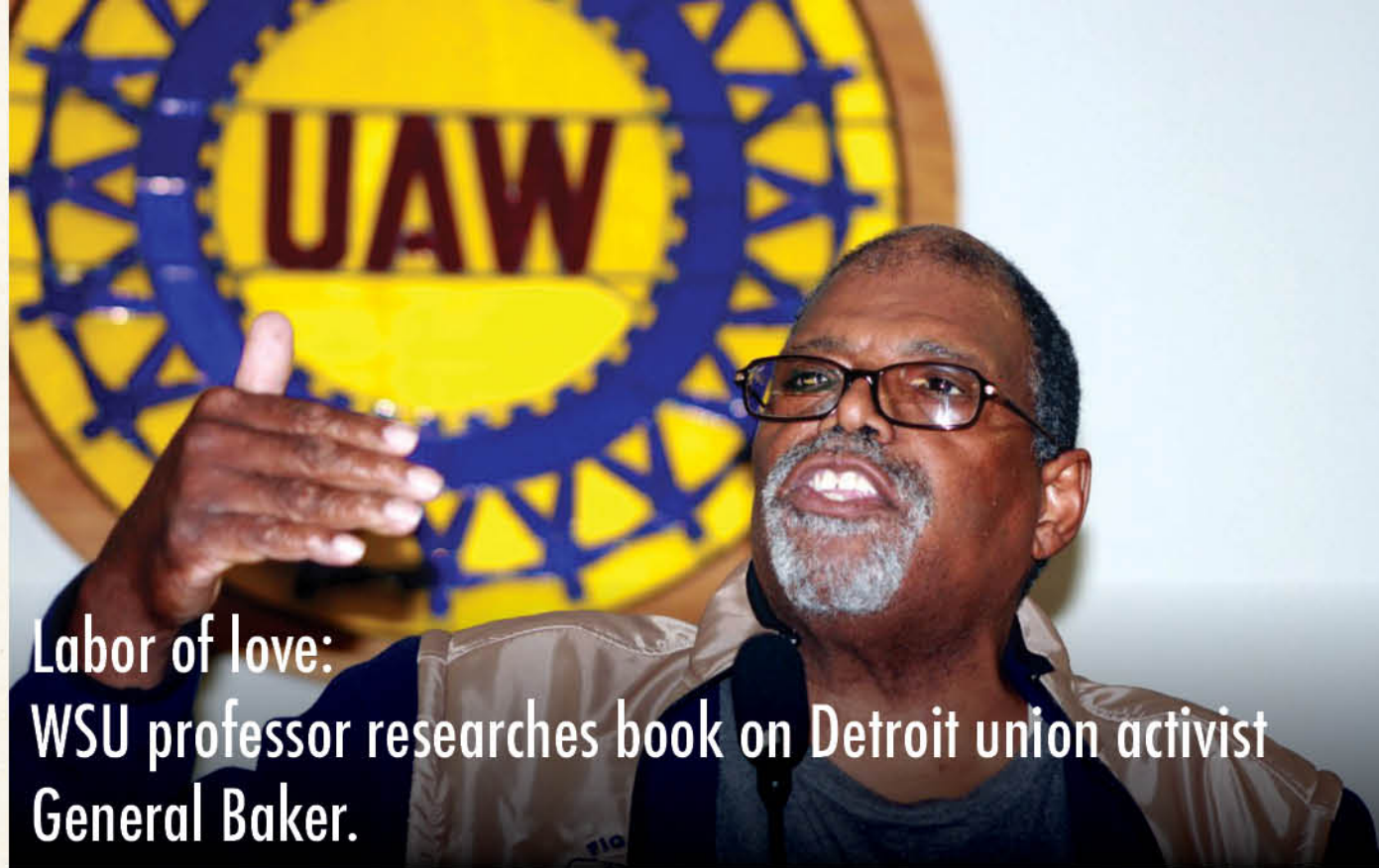
**Chokwe Lumumba** became a notable activist-attorney and is remembered as an aggressive defense lawyer. He became the mayor of Jackson, Mississippi, and upon his death, his son Chokwe Lumumba Jr. was elected mayor.

**Charles Simmons** runs the Hush House Community Museum and Leadership Training Institute alongside his wife, Sandra. Simmons spent time as a notable broadcast writer and educator.

**John Watson** founded Inner City Voice, a black community newspaper used to distribute information, organize politically and revolutionize. Watson was a member of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM).

**General Gordon Baker Jr.** was a labor activist locally, nationally and internationally. Baker was a founder of DRUM and the legendary League of Revolutionary Black Workers.





## Labor of love: WSU professor researches book on Detroit union activist General Baker.

While the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 70s is rightly credited with fostering numerous gains among African Americans over the past half century, the attendant labor movements of that era are regarded by many as playing a vital — albeit less prominent — role in the advancement of racial equity.

Now, Wayne State University associate professor David Goldberg is shining a spotlight on the labor struggles of the era with an upcoming book about late activist and former WSU student General Gordon Baker, founder of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and inarguably one of the most influential Detroit labor organizers of the late 20th century.

Goldberg, who teaches in the Department of African American Studies and is the director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Scholars Learning Community, sat down for a chat about the upcoming book, Baker and Wayne State's black activist tradition.

### What made you want to do this book?

The focus of my research has always been on the connection between black freedom movements and labor, because the majority of the black community has always been working people, and black workers have played a central role in every black social movement, whether it was the New Negro movement, the civil rights movement or the Black Power movement. I'm looking at uncovering that kind of nexus by looking at the centrality of workers to liberation politics and activism. I am writing about General Baker because his life's work is the embodiment of this general theme, but also because I think his approach to racial and socioeconomic injustice remains incredibly relevant to contemporary struggles. Beyond that, General was a friend and mentor to me. While he was alive, we discussed telling the story of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) from his perspective.

To my mind, the LRBW was the most advanced form of black power politics that emerged during the 1960s and early 70s. While the organization is known and discussed by scholars, it has yet to be captured in its full complexity. It's often dismissed as a fanatical small sect when, in fact, it was an extremely influential political force in Detroit for a brief, but critical,

period in the city's history. And its influence carried over into grassroots Detroit politics for the next 50 years. For example, General's wife, Marian Kramer, was arrested for laying down in front of the QLine a few months back, so as DRUM used to say, 'the beat goes on.'

These politics resonate with me. Their critique of capitalism made sense to me. Growing up in this area, of course the nexus between racism and capitalism made perfect sense. Plus, General was a friend of mine. I used to ask, 'Why don't you write this history? There are lessons to be learned here.' He'd be like, 'You write it. I'm too busy actually doing things.'

General felt like his activism had been caricaturized, and I felt the same way. I mean, he was the one actually organizing people in the plant, organizing workers, and scholars have kind of, to use vernacular from the field, caricaturized him as a 'pork chop' nationalist devoid of class politics. That really hurt him because he was the one, of course, organizing at the point of production. His message to me was to tell the story, to get what really happened out — but also to be critical, because General's whole idea about using history was to learn from it and build upon it.

*Continued on page 15*

## ■ VISIBLE MAN



## Ollie Johnson leads new Wayne State campaign honoring a half-century of African American studies.

Ollie Johnson, Ph.D, can clearly recall his family's reaction when, while still a college undergrad, he announced to them that he was planning to pursue a degree in black studies.

"Some of them asked me: 'Why are you doing that? What kind of job can you get with that?'" Johnson said. "And these are people who love me. They want me to do well, so they weren't asking out of any ill will but because they were unfamiliar with the discipline and, in some instances, underestimating the importance of the study of black history, culture, politics and black people in general.

"They didn't understand the significance of what black studies represented."

Several decades later, now the chair of the Department of African American Studies at Wayne State, Johnson shakes his head in amazement as he speaks of a student telling a distressingly similar story — just a week ago.

"One of our African American studies majors told me that her black father asked her the same question," said Johnson. "'Why are you majoring in African American studies? What can you do with the major?'"

But as black/African American/Africana studies now enters its 50th year as an interdisciplinary academic field — an anniversary that Johnson's department will celebrate through 2019 as part of its "50 Years of Black Studies" campaign — Johnson said he long ago figured out the most accurate response to the skeptical question posed by his family and his student's dad.


"What can you do with a degree in African American studies? The short answer is, 'Anything you want to do — anything and everything.' You can be a policeman. You can be a fireman. You can be a journalist. You can be a university professor. You can be a government official. You can be an actress. We cover a lot of ground so, if you take black studies seriously, you are well prepared once you leave these hallowed halls — for whatever you want to do. Like any other area of study, you may need graduate

training. You may need specialization. But you can do it. You can do anything you want with a major in black studies."

The 50th anniversary campaign — which marks the launch of the nation's first university-level black studies program, created in 1968 at San Francisco State University — is designed to showcase the power and versatility of the discipline.

Johnson said the campaign will feature keynote lectures from nationally respected experts in the field. He's also working on a "career day" showcase where successful African American studies majors who've graduated can return and promote the discipline to others. Johnson said he also hopes to organize a "Black Studies Summit" that brings together leaders of African American studies departments and programs at colleges throughout the state.

Brandishing a brochure promoting the WSU Department of Black Studies and possible careers in fields ranging from public health to urban planning, Johnson reiterated his pride in both his academic pursuit and in the resilience of the black studies discipline.

"There've always been haters who try to muddy the waters when it comes to importance of studying black history and culture and people, but we're trying to break down those stereotypes," he said. "We come from a righteous tradition of trying to make America and the world a better place, and we take it seriously. I'm so proud to be chair now because I feel like we're doing good work, and I am proud that I majored in African American studies. We want to break down the notion that African American studies is not enough, that it's insufficient. It's a good foundation for whatever you want to go into, and this is a great discipline." 





# SCHOOL FOR TEACHERS

**TeachDETROIT turns Detroit public schools into training grounds and college classrooms for would-be teachers.**

On a brisk autumn morning at Munger Elementary School in southwest Detroit, a first-floor kindergarten class is in full swing. As teacher Lisa Briegel runs through the day's first lesson — a phonics exercise emphasizing words with similar-ending syllables — the 5-year-olds arrayed in front of her wriggle and bounce in their seats, some raising hands to be called on while others blurt answers in impatient outbursts.

Nearly all of the 30 or so children appear engaged. But for all their wide-eyed captivation, no student in this kindergarten classroom is as focused as the tall, 40-something woman assisting Briegel from the rear of the room, her hands clasped, her eyes studying the teacher's every word and gesture.

For this particular pupil — Wayne State College of Education graduate student Tuesday Rambo-McCall — today's lessons go well beyond phonics. Rambo-McCall isn't here only to teach kids to learn — she's also here to learn how to teach.

**“This is a much better approach than the traditional way of training teachers.”**

— Tuesday Rambo-McCall

Along with six other College of Education students, Rambo-McCall has been stationed at Munger as part of their participation in the university's cutting-edge TeachDETROIT residency program, which embeds aspiring teachers in city schools for hands-on classroom training, mentorship from veteran teachers and real-life interaction with students' families.

“This is a much better approach than the traditional way of training teachers,” said Rambo-McCall. “When you go to college, often you're just sitting in a university classroom for four years. You need that undergraduate work, but you also want to begin work in your field.

“With this model, you go into a public school classroom and you're actually teaching. You find out early whether teaching is for you or not. I think a model like this would've eliminated a lot of bad teachers. They'd know this might not be a good fit for them without having to waste four or five years pursuing a degree.”

By applying a discerning, clinical approach to training, TeachDETROIT turns Detroit public schools into equal parts training grounds and classrooms for its WSU cohorts. Participants — most of whom already come equipped with at least a bachelor's — enroll for up to 12 months in the program, splitting time between classwork at Wayne State's campus and training alongside veteran teachers in real public school classrooms.

Established in 2015, TeachDETROIT has become a model program for education experts nationwide and a vital asset to the Detroit Public School Community District, which has grappled with shortages of capable teachers and other resources for years.

“If you are in public education and you care about the achievement gap and you care about every kid — especially children of color living in poverty — getting a great education, then Detroit is the place to be, for a lot of reasons,” said Jennifer Lewis, a veteran mathematics teacher and professor of mathematics education who, along with other WSU faculty, founded the program in 2015. Jeffery Robinson, a veteran Detroit educator, is also a partner in the program.

“As the city tries to find itself again,” Lewis continued, “there is really a discussion about how education is key. All my interest and all my work has been on creating excellent public schools, especially for children of color living in poverty. We know how to do that. It's not rocket science. We actually know how to do it; we could do it.”

Still, Lewis noted, many universities stick to training methods that don't necessarily prep teachers for some of the challenges they face in Detroit.

“We are trying to prepare people very broadly,” she said. “So if you want to teach in Farmington Hills or Chicago or somewhere in Texas, that's the training. I knew that this involved something



**TeachDETROIT has become a model program for graduation experts nationwide.**







special. I knew that to work in Detroit, you have to train in Detroit. And you'd have to find great teachers in Detroit to learn from, in part because you almost need to prove to people that it's possible. If you have people who are doing amazing work with the most underresourced and underserved kids, then you see that and think, 'Hey, I can do this, too.' And those are the people you want to learn from — not just from the textbooks on campus.

"It's not like college as you know it."

**“We want them thinking early in their training about serving all kids and to recognize that all kids come with strengths.”**

— *Barrie Frankel*

To underscore her point, Lewis noted that from the time each new cohort starts in the spring/summer semester, TeachDETROIT students spend far more time in elementary school classrooms than on the WSU campus. Residency begins almost immediately.

Even as TeachDETROIT students take their initial university courses in the spring (covering subjects like bilingual and multicultural education), they shuttle to and from local public schools, where they prepare for placement in a public school environment.

"We want them thinking early in their training about serving all kids and to recognize that all kids come with strengths," explained TeachDETROIT project coordinator Barrie Frankel, who assumed oversight of the program's day-to-day operations in 2018 after Lewis took a position with the Detroit Public Schools Community District. "It's really important in this environment to orient yourself that way."

Early in the process, the brand-new teacher trainees gather in one classroom. Lewis and Frankel say this helps ensure that the students — most of whom are graduate students — enter the training process with the right outlook.

"We put them together in one classroom so that we all see the same thing and can process the same thing," said Frankel. "They're all teaching the same activities and watching each other."

The trainees begin with small tasks in the summer, working with one or two children in controlled settings. Eventually, they are paired with veteran teachers who work with them to expand their skill sets.

"By the time they're at a school in the fall, they actually have some really nice skills under their belts," said Lewis. "They start by just teaching one child, then they teach two, then three, then they're teaching a small group. By fall, all of them are teaching small groups, and some are starting to teach the whole class."

The initiative has trained its teachers — about 25 students in total — in schools throughout the city. TeachDETROIT students currently work out of Munger, Coleman A. Young and Bennett elementary schools. Previously, the program also worked out of University Prep Science and Math Elementary School.

"We also end up in schools that want to host us and that have teachers who are interested in learning to help other teachers teach, an idea that is not automatically baked in with all veteran teachers," said Lewis. "You might be a great teacher, but it's very different from helping an adult learn a new profession. It turns out to be a very different skill set, and teachers are insanely busy. They do not sit down all day and have 30 cases in front of them at the same time. It's just nuts. And so to say, 'Yeah I'm willing to take part of my day every single day to talk it through with a student teacher' — that's asking a lot, and not everybody wants to do that. But at the schools where we work, the teachers want to host and the principals want to host us, too."

TeachDETROIT participants speak glowingly about their mentors.

"I really enjoy watching the teachers I work with," said Rambo-McCall, who, along with another TeachDETROIT student, shares time with teachers Lisa Briegel and Amanda Hohf in one classroom. "They have different styles, so you get to learn a lot. You see what works well for one or the other, and they're both super knowledgeable. I can ask them anything, share ideas and let them know what I discovered while doing things like going over lesson plans with them."

For Victoria Diego, another TeachDETROIT participant, the streamlined nature of the training is as attractive as the chance to learn directly from veteran teachers. Diego had already obtained an M.B.A. and a law degree years before deciding to seek her teacher's certification, so, like McCall, she was looking for a chance to delve directly into her area of study rather than first wade through undergrad courses she didn't see as relevant to her aims.

"I was in the military, so I can see that TeachDETROIT does some of what the Army does in that it provides what they call 'just-in-time training,'" said Diego. "They'll put you in a position, and then they'll get you certified, get you educated so you can do that job. The TeachDETROIT program, to me, seemed to be modeled after that, so I thought that was for me the way to go."

While TeachDETROIT allows participants a more direct path to a teaching certificate, the steps students take are still deliberate.

"They meet at the schools where they will be working," said Lewis. "And they learn the same things — like theory — with us, and we read the same textbooks. They do the same little lectures, but then they actually have to do what we're learning in the theory. So, for example, if you're learning how to teach reading, if you're learning how to help children learn beginning sounds, we actually script a little lesson for them where they take that theory and try it out with third graders."

Initially, TeachDETROIT students are given only a few minutes to share the lesson with the children before they turn the reins back over to the veteran teachers. The student teachers then have their performance critiqued; this feedback process is one of the major areas where TeachDETROIT sets itself apart.

"It's all very gradual," said Lewis. "You start out with teaching 10 minutes. Then by the end of that first week, it's 20 minutes. By the end of the second week, you're doing 40 minutes and now maybe your group is getting a little bigger, so you start out with two children and then maybe by the end of the second week, it's six children. It's growing in complexity. It's all day, so it's very intense. If you've been a traditional college student, you're not used to being around children starting at 8 a.m. The summer is an intense experience, but we really like it because we're all together. We are all in the same classroom."

And the evaluation process isn't based solely on random observations. Under the TeachDETROIT model, student teachers are filmed while working in the classroom, their performances later dissected by TeachDETROIT leadership and peers in an effort to help the burgeoning teachers improve. In some ways, the film study reminds less of teachers being trained than of football players prepping for a big game.

The comparison is not unintentional. "What we did in conceiving the program originally was look at the way other professions train," Lewis said. "Especially professions where there are very high stakes, and there's a big investment in excellence. One of them was a medical model, which is how we came up with something sort of like grand rounds. Almost like that. And the other actually came from sports, such as how professional athletes film themselves and get a critique every day."

Frankel, who said she learned through more traditional training models, said she hoped the TeachDETROIT approach would catch on elsewhere.

"I wouldn't be surprised if all of a sudden there is a movement toward this because, other than the fact that it's a really effective way of learning, it's a really effective way of teaching," said Frankel. "Our students don't work from a textbook. For the most part, they videotape themselves, discuss their learning, videotape their teacher and observe that. It's real-life learning."

And for those in TeachDETROIT, there's no better way to prepare for real-life teaching. 🌱

*Goldberg: continued from page 10*

The book is kind of a dual biography — because if you talk about General, you have to also talk about (Baker's wife) Marian because they lived revolutionary lives. They lived in the spirit of what Che Guevara referred to as 'The New Man and Woman,' which required revolutionaries to develop and live by collectively oriented principles. Not only in your public work, but in your private work.

**When did you start working on the book, and when will you be done?**

I started working on the book probably in the late 20th century. I mean, I've been collecting stuff on black power in Detroit for years and years. In fact, General and I used to collect the material and share it together.

It's very hard for me to predict when I'll be done. I'm a slow writer generally, very careful with my writing — especially this one, because this is my passion project, the one thing that I've always wanted to write. And because it's somebody that I not only knew, but revered and loved, I don't want to screw it up. I'm going to be as thorough as I can be, so I can't really predict when it will be done.

**You were friends with General Baker, so you already know his story. Are you making any new discoveries as you go?**

One of the things that's very difficult about this is to really understand organizations like the Black Panthers or the league and what happened to them. You really have to get an understanding of just how active the FBI was in suppressing movements. So I've been getting a lot of files. And it takes years, and you never know if they're giving what they have or if they're giving you a portion of it, so you have to be very careful using those things. So I'm learning certain things through that. I was looking at a group that General was involved in after the league, called the Communist League. The depth of surveillance during this time was really intense and pervasive. I'm also trying to get evidence of the various different forms of counter-intelligence that helped foster the split in the League, and in Detroit's Black Power movement more generally.

**General Baker was part of a long line of black political activists who came out of Wayne State. Can you talk a bit about the university's role as it pertains to the local activist tradition?**

Wayne State was central to the black radical tradition in Detroit, but perhaps not always for the right reasons. It was always a school that was very accessible to the working-class, so people sought to get their educations here. But at the same time, the school has always had a very complicated relationship with the surrounding community, particularly the black population.

A lot of the organizing that took place on this campus by students was focused more on the real-world implications of what the school was doing in the community. Groups like UHURU quickly took what resources they could get on campus and sought to mobilize those in the community to deal with real-life issues facing the black student body in the '60s, like police brutality. The general ethos of ditching the 'ivory tower' and having connections in the broader community has always been a part of black student activism at Wayne State. Many in the community would like to see more of that again because we think that it's important for Wayne State to not only educate people from Detroit, but be an urban institution that serves working-class people — and the black working class in particular — a mission that the Department of African American Studies is committed to. 🌱



# IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE



## SCHOLAR, VOLUNTEER, LEADER

WSU junior Cedric Mutebi is the personification of Warrior Strong.

Cedric Mutebi was 18 and barely out of his freshman year at Wayne State University when he was confronted with the gravity of the public health challenges that shaped his professional ambitions.

Volunteering in a Detroit Receiving Hospital emergency department program that provided Detroit residents free testing for a variety of diseases, the aspiring physician had the difficult job of delivering unthinkable news to a young man barely a year older than him.

"He had come into the emergency department with some symptoms and was just trying to get treatment," recalled Mutebi. "It turns out that the symptoms were from him being HIV-positive. For me, in that instant, looking at this young black man who looks like me and having to tell him that he had HIV, my experience went from being someone who just wanted to do this work to someone who was now in it.

"It was incredibly tragic, but also transformational. The magnitude of that moment spoke to a lot of reasons why I do what I do, because I know a lot of the health disparities associated with my community. And that's really what I want to do: to change the culture of health, from an African American standpoint and from a global standpoint."

While many young men and women dream of changing the world, Mutebi has a head start — on Wayne State's campus and beyond. Now 20 and in his junior year, Mutebi is something of a WSU standard bearer — a source of pride, affirmation and high expectation. He can be seen in promotional video clips, on posters, in online images and numerous other vehicles celebrating the Warrior Strong ethos.

In November, Mutebi rode the WSU-branded float at the annual America's Thanksgiving Parade. Less than a month later, he was chosen to be the first student to pose a question to former first lady Michelle Obama during her impromptu meeting with a group of young black men from Wayne State.

Meanwhile, Mutebi's influence across the university has been as ubiquitous as his face.

A scholar in the Wayne Med-Direct program, the cutting-edge initiative that puts its high-performing participants on a fast-track to M.D. programs by embedding the students in the School of Medicine community during their undergraduate studies, he recently led an effort to train 1,040 people in CPR as part of the university's participation in the statewide Hands-Only CPR Challenge. The success earned the university first place in the competition.

Mutebi also works closely with multiple on-campus mentorship efforts. He helped found The Brotherhood, an organization for young men of color, in which he and other members offer tutoring and mentoring to children through the Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program. He works with Provost Keith Whitfield on new community engagement strategies and sits on the board of the American Heart Association Heart Walk Cabinet.

In addition, Mutebi carries a full load of classes and plans to graduate in May 2020, volunteers at the university food pantry, and helps his mother — a registered nurse who immigrated from Uganda to the U.S. with Mutebi's accountant father in 1989 — with an overseas relief program she established nearly 15 years ago.



**Mutebi recently led an effort to train 1,040 people in CPR as part of the university's participation in the statewide Hands-Only CPR Challenge.**


The nonprofit program, Opening Doors, assists Ugandans who battle learning disabilities. Mutebi has helped his mom with the program since he was about 8.

"That was one of my first touchpoints with medicine," said Mutebi, "and one of the first reasons why I started to pursue it as a career. It's hard, but we try to help people. I like being able to see that and impact lives."

While such ambition may be what drew Mutebi to Wayne State, he admits that the decision wasn't exactly cut and dried. A top-notch football and basketball player while attending University of Detroit Jesuit High School, Mutebi earned numerous athletic scholarship offers, including a roster offer from the University of Michigan football team.

When Mutebi later learned that he had been accepted into the Wayne-Med Direct program, he made the difficult decision to forego college sports to fully pursue a medical career.

"It was kind of like excitement, but kind of like fear at the same time," he said. "Now I had this opportunity to pursue medicine debt-free, or I could pursue my childhood dream of playing college football. The next month was full of sleepless nights and lots of conversations with people who were close to me trying to figure out what was the best route.

"Nobody really pressured me into going one way or the other. Everyone was pretty much saying, 'Follow your heart, just do whatever really want to do — and either way, you're going to end up where you need to be.'" 



# GOOD FELLOWS

ENTERING ITS 15TH YEAR, THE DETROIT FELLOWS TUTORING PROJECT HELPS VULNERABLE SCHOOLCHILDREN SPAN SOME OF THE CITY'S BIGGEST EDUCATIONAL PITFALLS.

The scene is often the same: A classroom of first-graders buzzing with competitive enthusiasm as students jostle and talk over each other in an effort to win a teacher's attention. Judging by the students' passion, passers-by might think there was a new toy at stake — that maybe a bicycle or a video game hung in the balance.

Few would guess that all this fuss is over the chance for a half-hour of free literacy tutoring from some of Wayne State University's best and brightest.

But it is precisely this infectious roar and good-natured competition that marks the full measure and impact of the Detroit Fellows Tutoring Project, the Irvin D. Reid Honors College program that offers the free tutoring services that has the kids in Detroit Public Schools Community District so eager.



Since launching as a pilot program in 2004, the Detroit Fellows Tutoring Project has accumulated more than 61,120 service tutoring hours, providing supplemental literacy education to hundreds of students from kindergarten to second grade.

"We know that literacy is a huge challenge for students in Detroit," said Kevin Rashid, who has been managing the program since its inception. "This program is focused on K through two because we want to catch children in that critical moment before they fall behind."

A student is chosen at the beginning of the school year at his or her teacher's discretion. The week after school starts, the tutor meets the child at the school — but outside the classroom — twice a week to work on fundamental literacy skills. By eschewing the traditional classroom setting, tutors are able to get kids' undivided attention.

Typically, Wayne State tutors earn credit through a university course that requires them to work with the students for two-and-a-half hours each week for 12 weeks, or a semester. Tutors have the option of choosing the public school where they'd like to work, picking from a list of participating schools.

Each elementary school has a school coordinator who the tutor works with for additional support. The coordinators work with the teachers and tutors to determine which classroom and students best fit the needs of the program.

To assemble the Detroit Fellows Tutoring Project, Rashid sought out reading specialist Dale Thomas and retired school principal Marcella Verdun. Both worked with Rashid to coordinate the program's curriculum.

"It benefits all levels," said Thomas. "It benefits the students, of course, and it benefits the teachers and the school."

Though equipped to instruct students up to third grade, the Detroit Fellows Tutoring Project has seen its strongest impact with first-grade students.

"In the state of Michigan, kindergarten is not mandatory," said Thomas. "Kindergarten-age kids can miss 50 or 60 days of school, so when they come to first grade, they're so far behind. That first grade teacher has a mix of kids: some who don't know one single letter of the alphabet, kids who read at grade level and kids who are exceeding."

The curriculum focuses on the five basic components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Thomas said the curriculum is modeled to touch on each of the components during every tutoring session to build momentum and consistency.

"Tutors love the program because they see the effectiveness," said Rashid. "They can mark the children's progress, and they love their interactions with the children. When tutors realize the kinds of difficulties in learning — and sometimes the learning environment — that these children have, it intensifies their commitment to the course. We've had many Wayne State students take the tutoring project more than once."

**"TUTORS LOVE THE PROGRAM  
BECAUSE THEY SEE  
THE EFFECTIVENESS."**

—KEVIN RASHID





## SAFETY PATROL

### AmeriCorps and WSU join forces to help make Detroit's neighborhoods secure.

The four fresh-faced volunteers stroll onto the porch of the older house on Detroit's west side and begin knocking on the door. A resident answers a moment later. Soon after that, the team is hard at work.

Wayne State University graduate students Morgan Rote and Sarah Monhollen conduct an interview with the resident and inspect the home for 15 possible safety hazards, including child lead poisoning, asthma risks and smoke detectors.

Charles Harris prepares to install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors while the fourth team member, Ayne Jeilani, unwraps additional equipment. After assessing the needs of the home, the team installs two smoke detectors, a carbon monoxide detector and a deadbolt lock.

The volunteers are members of the AmeriCorps Home Safety Assessment team, and work to provide the resident with all of the quick safety fixes applicable. The concerns that the team are

unable to resolve are outsourced and residents are connected with outside resources.

This isn't just a one-off occurrence or seasonal offering from AmeriCorps; it is a daily routine. After this installation, the team moved on to the next home, imitating the same procedure until all appointments were done for the day. Depending on the day, the Home Safety Assessment team can service up to four houses in Detroit each day, primarily installing fire and carbon monoxide detectors.

AmeriCorps has been at Wayne State for nine years and is located in the Academic/Administrative Building. AmeriCorps initiatives are executed by approximately 80 volunteers a year, 10 percent of whom are Wayne State students. Members can serve a 300-hour term or a full term of 1,700 service hours. For some residents, installing the basic safety devices is just the beginning.



AmeriCorps also has members who work with city precincts to assist those battling domestic violence issues by putting together safety plans and personal protection orders. A computer statistics team analyzes and combines real-time crime mapping with neighborhood prevention and safety intervention measures.

With all of these measures, AmeriCorps volunteers work to provide the safest Detroit possible, and it is this unwavering service that in September earned the program the 2018 Social Innovation and Impact Award from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

"It is an honor and privilege to accept the award on behalf of Wayne State University and the Center for Urban Studies, the members, and staff that are committed to service and community," said Ramona Washington, director of the program, during her acceptance speech. "It is important for everyone to

know that every member makes a difference, and service makes a difference in the life of every member."

It also makes a difference to the residents and communities served by the program.

**"It is important for everyone to know that every member makes a difference, and service makes a difference in the life of every member."**

— Ramona Washington

"When people have an abandoned house next to their home, they tell us," said Ayne Jeilani, an AmeriCorps Home Safety Assessment member. "Sometimes we'll even take the initiative of letting the city know, because a lot of times when we do board-ups, it's a bigger project with all of the teams, but sometimes it has to be done right away. We can't wait for a bigger project, so we'll let the city know so they can board up that home."

AmeriCorps operates as an umbrella, offering multiple layers of urban safety services aimed at enhancing home and community safety. Boarding up abandoned homes is critical because they often facilitate crime. AmeriCorps also boards up houses that are abandoned along designated Safe Routes to School to ensure student safety. The group boards up about 25 homes at each of its four annual service events.

"We follow the routes that most students walk to school," said Washington. "We also work with community patrols and connecting the community with organizations and law enforcement."

And to the AmeriCorps participants at WSU, the strength of those connections is where the real security lies. 







## LIFT EVERY VOICE

**A critical component in the university's effort to promote educational equity, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion works to amplify traditionally underrepresented groups — on and off campus.**

Marquita Chamblee concedes that, whether in education, among nonprofits or within the corporate ranks, jobs like hers aren't usually created when things go well. The chief diversity officer for Wayne State University, Chamblee recognizes that institutions — be they colleges, nonprofits or corporations — typically turn to folks like her in times of serious need.

"Look around the country," said Chamblee, who is also the university's associate provost for diversity and inclusion. "You'll find that a large percentage of chief diversity officers were hired because something was going on that was wrong that needed to be addressed."



**Bridge builder:**  
Associate Provost Marquita Chamblee uses the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to strengthen bonds among faculty, staff and students — and between the university and the communities around it.

When President M. Roy Wilson hired Chamblee in February 2015, his mandate to her wasn't much different: Help the university not only more effectively pursue its diversity mission, but also ensure that those efforts translate into improved academic performance, especially among African Americans and other students of color.

Nearly four years since she came on board, Chamblee, who leads the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) and is a valuable contributor to the university's ongoing student success initiative, is seeing substantial results. The university's graduation rate has nearly doubled over the past six years, increasing from 26 to 47 percent. Moreover, gains have been especially strong among students of color as well as first-generation and low-income students.

A key component of these successes has been the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement (OMSE), which is headed by director Leo Savala and overseen by ODI. Among other efforts, OMSE has created learning communities such as The Network and Rise, which are aimed at male and female students of color, respectively. The learning communities have not only helped ease students' transition into college, but have also provided critical academic and social support. OMSE has also helped sponsor a series of celebrations, lectures and other events.

"We work on creating a sense of belonging," said Savala. "It's not that students don't feel safe in other places on campus, but I think students come to our office and see we have a nice quiet study space and some computers in there where they can do some of their work. We have a variety of discussions about issues they care about. Students can come up and talk about issues, brainstorm ideas, all of that. They just see it as a space they can be their authentic selves, and it's OK to do that."

Although OMSE's work centers on students, ODI boasts a reach felt across the entire campus. For instance, Chamblee's office has put together numerous programs aimed at opening up dialogue about race, gender, sexual orientation and other issues. Over the past two years, the office has hosted a series of events to recognize the National Day of Racial Healing. And in 2018, ODI conducted a universitywide climate survey to gauge feelings about diversity, bias and other matters.

Further, Chamblee's office also helped revitalize the once-dormant Black Faculty Staff Association (BFSA) and is aiding in the development of similar support groups for Latino and LGBTQ faculty on campus.



Leo Savala


"Early in my tenure, I asked some African American colleagues, 'Do you have a black faculty and staff association?'" Chamblee recalled. "Someone said there used to be something but it was no longer functioning. So when I got here, one of the high priorities for me was, if we're going to support black students, we needed to reach out to and support black staff and faculty."

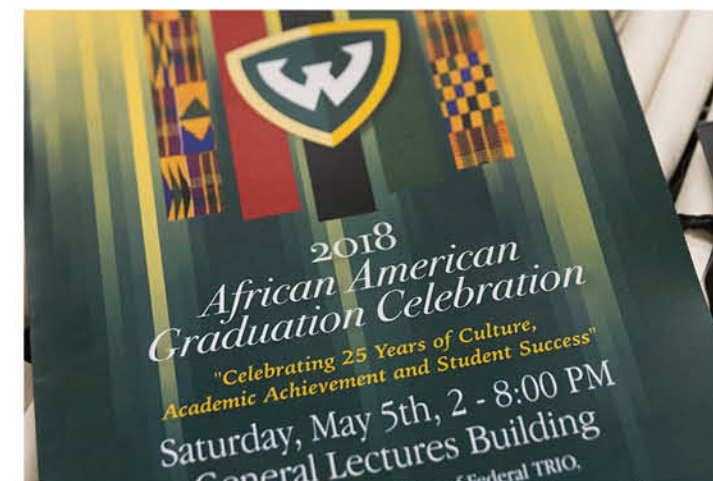
**"We want to make sure we're doing a good job of letting our communities in general, and communities of color in particular, know what's happening here around some of these issues. I've said many times to people, 'If we don't control the narrative, the narrative will control us.'"**

"The very first meeting we had, we invited everybody who was black on campus. We had about 200 to 250 people show up at this reception. The energy in the room was like, 'Wow, look at us.' The BFSA is still young and figuring out what they want to do, but now there's a mechanism for black faculty and staff to have a voice that connects them through this office to the president."

Moving forward, Chamblee said she hopes to work more closely with alumni of color to further open channels of communication between the campus and the city at large.

"I want to be sure that Detroiters know who we are," she said. "We want to make sure we're doing a good job of letting our communities in general, and communities of color in particular, know what's happening here around some of these issues. I've said many times to people, 'If we don't control the narrative, the narrative will control us.' There are misperceptions in the community that continue to hurt us. What some folks aren't aware of is that there are actually concerted efforts designed specifically to support student, staff and faculty success that may not have been here before."

For proof, they need look no further than the chief diversity officer herself. 





# ENGAGED

## A Q & A with Professor Bertie Greer

Perched in her fourth-floor office inside Wayne State's newly opened Mike Ilitch School of Business, Associate Dean for Strategy and Planning Bertie Greer, Ph.D., enjoys a vivid, expansive view of the city, her gaze able to stretch in all directions and out toward the horizon.

Perhaps it's no wonder then that, when considering the potential the new facility gives the Ilitch School to make significant positive impact on Detroit, the view in her mind's eye is just as far-reaching as the urban panorama unfolding outside her window in The District Detroit.

Greer — who served as an associate professor of global supply chain management before being installed in January as associate dean for strategy and planning — harbors high hopes for the business school, its ability to help spur Detroit's ongoing rebound, its benefit to the university's reputation and its potential to bring greater diversity to an all-too-homogenous business landscape. Though the facility only officially opened last fall, the Ilitch School — and its more than 4,000 students — is deepening the university's impact already, she says, in its neighborhood, in the city as a whole, and in the dreams and ambitions driving its hard-charging students.

*Warriors* sat down with Greer (who in addition to being a faculty member is the wife of WSU basketball Head Coach David L. Greer), to take a long gaze through her lens and discover why her outlook for the Ilitch School and its potential for Detroit seems nearly as unbounded as the picturesque view below.

**Q** *Warriors:* What's your primary role at the Mike Ilitch School of Business?

**A** *Greer:* As an associate dean, part of my responsibility is accreditation. I also oversee instructional technology, diversity and inclusion, and the events here at the Mike Ilitch School of Business. And while we're new here in the middle of downtown Detroit, we're not new in general. We have always been in business and have been doing a lot. In this role, particularly because we're down here, we're looking to get more engaged with the community and meet our neighbors. And since I'm in charge of events, we do have a process in which communities from outside, external from the school, can rent a space or come in and try to have some program, if there's space available. In terms of instructional technology, we have a lot going on, from looking at different modes of teaching to different ways of engaging the students as we move deeper into the 21st century.

In terms of instructional technology, for example, we are doing a joint venture with Apple where we're getting students to learn how to code and develop apps. We are doing stuff with Microsoft through a certification program that they offer. And we will be working with the city and its Grow Detroit's Young Talent program, in which young people from the city work with us on a variety of ventures and projects for hands-on experience.

**Q** Speaking of diversity and inclusion, how are those values reflected right now, in both the student body and the programs in place?

**A** We're making concerted efforts to be more inclusive. We're diverse in general, from the presence of different international groups to people of color from the area — but we have to do more in terms of African Americans as well as in trying to make sure everybody feels comfortable and is able to learn without obstructions.

One very big example is that we have a new program that we're working on with PricewaterhouseCoopers where we build and put in place support systems for African Americans in accounting and finance. It's called PwC MPREP Scholars, which stands for Multicultural Professional Readiness Education Program. We've got about 15 students right now, and we only just started. Our goal right now is to recruit 20 students into the program. We're going to meet that.

The program itself is open to everyone, of course, but we are especially interested in students who are of color, African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans.

Also, Ally Financial sponsors our corporate mentoring program, which is aimed at first-generation students of all colors. We've been doing that for five years. Now we're looking to broaden a program like MPREP to include all the financial service industry, to go beyond finance and accounting. And there's been a lot of interest from external companies who want to help with that.

**Q** What does opening this new chapter in business education at Wayne State do for us as a university and for our community as a whole?

**A** One, it's had a tremendous impact in the community. The fact that someone of the Ilitches' status would donate that much money to us says something about us, and it says something about them. Their donating money to the school tells people that they are good stewards in the Detroit area who are willing to give back to the Detroit community.

Second, the fact that they're willing to give it to us tells us that we've been doing something right, that they wanted to attach to us. Now the impact is that when people see that you're going to invest in the community, it puts a spark in them: "Wow, the Ilitches are willing to donate? I went to Wayne State; I'd like to donate." We have all types of naming rights in this building, and almost everything is getting named.

Our stunning auditorium space is sponsored by Lear Corporation. Alumnus Frederick Hessler named our Undergraduate Student Success Center. We've had the Kresge Foundation make investments in our finance department. Ford Motor Company has sponsored multiple spaces, and Microsoft wants to work with us on some things. A lot of our sticky spaces, where students sit, have been named. They aren't all big spaces or famous donors. A lot were just individual people who love Wayne State.

**Q** What else about the new surroundings excites you?

**A** Well, I'm really excited to be downtown and to be in this building. I think this building gives us a lot of opportunity to operate as one. Because when we were on main campus, all of our functional areas weren't in the same building. We were not large enough to have events, so we had to go to the McGregor Memorial Conference Center.

But now we can do it in this building, and I'm hoping that, because of that, we'll get more people engaged. Because we got new neighbors, we were able to work with them on more community engagement.

We started our second cohort of the Detroit Police Department Leadership Academy, which offers training to Detroit and Wayne State University police officers to grow their leadership skills and business expertise. That's big for us, just to build that relationship with the community and to work with the police officers to bring them into the fold of what we do here with the students.

**Q** What's your vision for what the school of business will be, what the programs will become, and for the student body?

**A** I hope that, as we move forward, more and more and more engagement, more innovation. I want us to come up with things and programs that are unique to us sitting here in Detroit and are engaging with the community. I want to see our faculty more engaged. I want to see us have more programs that meet the need. Some programs may just be for the support of the community. I want to see more of that nature. I want to see more diversity, more inclusion.

Most business colleges have some ways to go, but because we sit in a city that's 85 percent African American, I want to see us do better.


**Q** Do you think that the Ilitch School will be able to boost entrepreneurship in Detroit?

**A** Where we were before, kind of embedded in the campus, we weren't really doing as much as we can. We have TechTown, of course, where we have some incubators of entrepreneurship businesses.

But being here allows us to do more. One big step forward is our BELL program. In August, we announced a generous \$500,000 gift from alumnus Russell Belinsky and the Belinsky Family Trust to launch the Belinsky Entrepreneurial Learning Laboratory, BELL for short, this fall. That money will help us kick off sustainable, investment-ready student startups and startups based on WSU intellectual property. The BELL will help student founders commercialize and draw additional funding.

We have an area for pop-up shops near the Avalon Bakery so if there's a business that wants to come in on a short-term basis and be in this location and start showcasing themselves, they can get that space.

**Q** As a business school educator and dean, what do you think about the business climate here in the city?

**A** I mean, 2008 was a wake-up year for us, when the economy was failing. Businesses were abandoning Detroit. I think people realized how important the economy and businesses are to the city proper. Because of it, they've come back — with a vision and a degree of commitment and loyalty to Detroit. They're starting to invest. In five to 10 years, this city is going to be just as vibrant as any city anywhere. And Wayne State and the Mike Ilitch School of Business will be part of that. 





"If the students don't raise these issues, there's no one to do it."

*Transformers: continued from page 8*

Previously a faculty member of Wayne State's Monteith College, House had already amassed an impressive résumé as both an academician and activist by the time of the study-in. A longtime fixture in numerous civil and human rights movements in Detroit, House had taught interdisciplinary studies from 1971 to 1998. She also advocated for the hiring of more black professors on campus and instructed a program for inmates at the Jackson State Prison.

At Jackson, she met Ahmad Abdur-Rahman, a former Black Panther convicted to a lengthy prison sentence for a shooting he hadn't committed. House quickly began to push for his sentence to be commuted. Eventually, in part because of House's persistence, Abdur-Rahman was freed by the governor in 1992.

Similar legal battles were waged — and often won — by Wayne State Law School graduates Ken Cockrel and Chokwe Lumumba. Frequently called upon as a defense lawyer for Detroit activists, Cockrel had already become something of a celebrity on campus during the '60s. He accepted high-profile cases that often took on the local political establishment, and helped lead the fight to disband the STRESS (Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets) police unit, which had a reputation for racial profiling and abuse. Cockrel won a city council seat in 1977 and was pondering a mayoral campaign when he died in 1989.

Lumumba did become a mayor, being elected to office in Jackson, Mississippi, years after his work as an attorney known for his radical politics and affiliation with Detroit activists including the Republic of New Afrika. A *cum laude* graduate of Wayne Law, Lumumba went on to represent rap legend Tupac Shakur and former Black Panthers such as Geronimo ji-jaga

Pratt, who'd been wrongly convicted of murder. Lumumba, who died in 2014, was highly regarded by many black Jackson residents after bringing many of the same ideals and passions to Mississippi that he'd upheld in Detroit.

The energy and sacrifices made by campus activists haven't been forgotten.

"The people who started out in UHURU continued throughout most of their lives to engage in social justice wherever they went," said Simmons.


Similarly, Judge Adam Shakoor and other students of the era later distinguished themselves in community and public service.

Along with Baker, Lumumba and others, names like Gene Cunningham, a former *South End* editor, and Dan Aldridge are among those Goldberg often mentions when discussing the history activism at WSU.

"It's been up to black students to advocate for the right to their education and for inclusion of the community," he said.

Years later, the fruit of that advocacy abounds and is as visible on campus as anywhere else. It is reflected in such strides as the creation of the university's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, in its deep-rooted commitment to ensuring educational equity for students of color, in rising retention and graduation rates, and in learning communities such as the Warrior Vision and Impact Program and Rise.

Goldberg said present-day challenges like gentrification in the neighborhood surrounding WSU and ongoing concerns about educational equity leave opportunities for activists to assume the mantle of their forebears.

"If the students don't raise these issues," he added, "there's no one to do it." 

VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY

Why the bachelor's degree matters more than ever

KIM TRENT

Because both of my grandfathers built comfortable middle-class lives for their families as skilled tradesmen for Detroit automakers, I have tremendous respect for the dignity and value of skilled trades careers. But every time I find myself in front of a microphone, I use my influence as chair of the Wayne State University Board of Governors to advocate for four-year degrees as the most direct and sustainable path for Detroiters to secure 21st century prosperity.

Sometimes I feel lonely in my role as a cheerleader for boosting four-year degree attainment in Michigan. Often, folks like me are made to feel elitist or out of touch. Conversely, there is no shortage of voices — from the highest levels of government to grassroots nonprofit leaders — downplaying higher education as a socio-economic ladder and instead pitching skilled trades careers as the best path for Detroiters to secure a prosperous life.

However, there is overwhelming evidence of the correlation between four-year college degree attainment and economic stability.

For example, in the 1980s, full-time workers with a high school diploma earned 40 percent less than those with a bachelor's. Today, that same earning gap has expanded to more than 80 percent. Furthermore, college graduates are more likely to be employed than non-degree holders, even in an economic downturn.

Meanwhile, a 2011 study by the Brookings Institution showed that a college degree earned its recipient a 15.2 percent return on investment through a lifetime of earnings. If that same investment was made in the stock market, it would secure only a 6.8 percent return — and would earn even less if staked in corporate bonds, gold, long-term government bonds or housing.

The impact of college education extends beyond individual outcomes. As nonpartisan think tank Michigan Future Inc. pointed out in 2017, of the 15 states with the highest per capita income, 12 of them rank in the top 15 in college degree attainment.

I don't disagree that our nation must make college more accessible. At Wayne State, for example, one program we offer is the Wayne Access Award, which helps fill the funding gap for Pell-eligible students whose scholarship or grant money can't cover tuition costs. In 2018, the award fully funded tuition and fee costs for more than 1,100 incoming freshmen — 47 percent of the class.

Student success must be a campuswide mission. When I was elected to the Wayne State University Board of Governors in 2012, only one in four students earned a bachelor's in six years. The graduation rate was even more dismal for black students: Only 1 in 10 completed a bachelor's degree within six years.

*Kim Trent is chair of the Wayne State Board of Governors. She holds a bachelor's in journalism and a master's in communication, both from Wayne State.*

Today, Wayne State University wins prestigious awards and earns national acclaim for our progress in helping students finish their degrees in a timely fashion, nearly doubling both our overall and African American undergraduate graduation rates. I, for one, won't be satisfied until Wayne State completely closes the degree completion gap between black and white students, but I'm proud of our progress.

Now more than ever, it's especially important that Wayne State University fulfills its urban mission — the promise to educate and serve Detroit's citizens. What good will come of revitalizing Midtown buildings, attracting high-end retail shops and building upscale residential enclaves in Detroit if the families who never left the city don't have access to the economic boom that made it all possible?

Expanding college degree attainment is the best hope for ensuring that Detroiters are prepared for the jobs — and prosperity — of Detroit's future.

And so, even if my voice is an increasingly solitary one, I plan to continue urging Detroiters to earn bachelor's degrees. And I will continue to encourage Wayne State University President M. Roy Wilson and his leadership team to create and support innovative urban K-12 pipeline programs to help Detroiters thrive at Wayne State University. 