

JENNIFER C. THOMAS

EVIDENCE OF PARTICIPATION IN CREATIVE ACTIVITIES EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/ PRODUCER

Please find all supporting documents in the attached PDFs

Works in Progress

Documentary Series

Protest & Pageantry: Miss Howard University from Civil Rights to Black Power

Contribution, Impact

This documentary series will delve the complexities, consequences, and political and social impact of the women who donned the crown and title of Miss Howard University during the transformative 1960s and 1970s. This is a project that began with a 2014 Moorland-Spingarn Research Center grant and continued with a 2017 Advanced Junior Faculty Summer Research Fellowship for Creative Works. My research has also been published in the Winter 2018 issue of the [Journal of Negro Education](#).

I traveled to Los Angeles to conduct an in-depth interview with Ms. Robin Gregory, who made history as the first Miss Howard University to don an afro. She was one of the main focuses of my journal article and was a very prominent and controversial figure during the political transition at the university. I have also interviewed Dr. Richard Wright, Professor in the Cathy Hughes School of Communications, who was also a student at Howard in the preceding years in which black activist Malcolm X visited the campus (1964.)

Relevance

The documentary series will have first-hand accounts from Gregory and three of the other former queens from the late 1960s and early 1970s, many of whom have taken part in my previous ethnographic research. The creative work will also reveal discourse into a little-known history into the storied tradition which ultimately helped serve as the foundation for the university's stances on subjects such as political discourse, and Black beauty. Additionally, it can be used as an educational tool as an example of "sociological imagination" allowing students the ability to situate individual life experiences and events within broader social contexts and be showcased another integral component of Howard University history.

Subsequent segments will also focus on the following themes: Genesis of Black Beauty Pageantry, Era of Transformation and Rise of Feminism, Civil Rights and its Impact, and Angela Davis and Miss Howard. This documentary series will be pleasing from historical, scholarly, and cultural perspectives. It is my intention to seek additional grant funding and to broadcast the series on PBS or another national network.



*Robin Gregory, Miss Howard University 1966
Photo courtesy The Hilltop*



*Robin Gregory Jennifer Thomas
2017 Los Angeles,*

Journal Article Abstract

Pageantry & Politics:

Miss Howard University from Civil Rights to Black Power

Few realize that, historically, the women elected to serve as "Queens" of Howard University, were often reflections of political, social, and cultural issues of the time. This parade of beauty, intellect, and charm was an unofficial barometer of where the University as well as the country stood on matters that pertained to cultural politics, institutional identity, and evolving definitions and standards of beauty. This article, written by a former Miss Howard, examines the embedded traditions, historical significance and controversies of this iconic position from the Civil Rights Era through the Black Power Movement, to argue that an in-depth analysis of the Queen's role over these tumultuous years reveals a little-known, yet important narrative in the trajectory of Howard University.