



5TH ANNUAL  
**BLACK  
EXPERIENCE  
SUMMIT**

**THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 17, 2022**



**Keynote Speaker**

**Gina Athena Ulysse, Ph.D.**  
Professor, University of California  
at Santa Cruz



**Janine Fondon**

Assistant Professor, Bay Path University



**Robert E. Johnson, Ph.D.**

President, Western New  
England University



**Keynote Speaker**

**Treva B. Lindsey, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor,  
Ohio State University



**Tracy Y. Espy, Ph.D.**

President, Mitchell College



**Lynn Perry Wooten, Ph.D.**

President, Simmons University



**Aprell May Munford**

Trending/breaking news reporter



**Pilar Egúez Guevara, Ph.D.**

Cultural Anthropologist and Filmmaker

**Stories of Our Becoming, The Shoulders on Which We Stand**

The Black Experience Summit is hosted by the elms College President's Office  
and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion

# Fifth Annual Black Experience Summit

## Theme: "Stories of Our Becoming: The Shoulders on Which We Stand"

In its fifth year, the Black Experience Summit is an annual event bringing students and scholars across Western Massachusetts together to educate and inspire within the larger mission of Elms College. Our theme this year: "Stories of our Becoming: The Shoulders on which we Stand" explores the multiple histories, and the stories told about those histories, which inform the black experience today—their diversity, their silences and their inextricable link to black liberation and social justice movements.

### EVENT SCHEDULE

12:30 p.m. **Welcome**  
Jennifer Shoaff, Ph.D.

12:35-12:50 p.m. **Opening Remarks**  
Harry E. Dumay, Ph.D., MBA  
President, Elms College

12:50 -1:45 p.m. **Opening Keynote Address:**  
Gina Athena Ulysse, Ph.D  
is a Haitian-American feminist artist-anthropologist and professor of Feminist Studies at University of California Santa Cruz, California. Her opening keynote address is entitled  
***"Free Falling and Finding Self: Meditations on Blackness and Rasanblaj."***

1:45 -1:55 p.m. **Break**

1:55 - 2:40 p.m. **Interactive Panel: "The Art of Storytelling"**  
Invited Panelists, Pilar Eguez Guevara, Ph.D., Janine Fondon, and Aprell May Munford will be speaking with Elms undergraduate and graduate student about "The Art of Storytelling" and why historicity—the stories we tell about history—is so central to black experiences.

2:40 - 3:25 p.m. **Presidential Panel: "Lifting as We Climb"**  
In our Presidential Panel, "Lifting as we Climb," Harry Dumay Ph.D., MBA, will moderate a discussion on their respective journeys with three esteemed guests: Tracy Espy, Ph.D., President of Mitchell College; Robert E. Johnson, Ph.D., President of Western New England University, and Lynn Wooten, Ph.D., President of Simmons University.

3:25 - 3:30p.m. **Break**

3:30 - 4:30p.m. **Closing Keynote Address**  
Trevia B. Lindsey Ph.D.  
Ohio State University  
A black feminist historian and Associate Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the Ohio State University. Her keynote address is entitled  
***"Witness and Witnessing: The Archive of Black Freedom Struggles."***

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ELMS COLLEGE



**Harry E. Dumay, Ph.D., MBA**, President, Elms College

As we prepare for the fifth Annual Black Experience Summit, I want to express how grateful I am that Elms College will be able to host this annual conversation once again on Thursday, February 17, 2022. Each year, we have invited the Western Massachusetts community and beyond to discuss important issues related to the African-American experience with passionate and thought-provoking dialogue. From issues of equity and empowerment to the basic human rights of housing, health, and education to last year's examination of our resilience in the face of tremendous challenges, we have led powerful discussions of the Black Experience that remain with me to this day.

This year's theme - The Stories of Our Becoming: The Shoulders on Which We Stand - in many ways, encapsulates the prior years' themes and brings our personal stories and histories to the forefront. Each of us has unique perspectives and experiences and it is those individual threads of history that make up the fabric upon which black liberation and social justice movements were born.

I thank you in advance for making time to be with the Elms College community for this annual conversation.

## Panelists



**Dr. Tracy Y. Espy, Ph.D.**, became the eighth president and first African-American woman to lead Mitchell College in New London, Connecticut, on July 1, 2020. She is currently engaged with the Governor's Workforce Council, the FEMA Region 1 Covid-19 Long-Term Recovery Task Force, and the CT Higher Education Resilience Working Group on Workforce Development. She was also recently appointed to serve on the Council of Independent Colleges and Universities administered Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE), a nationwide network of colleges and universities formed to enrich intellectual and theological exploration of vocation among undergraduate students. Since taking the helm at Mitchell College, she has completed the year-long Harvard Seminar for New Presidents.



**Robert E. Johnson, Ph.D.**, was appointed the sixth president of Western New England University in August 2020. His 30-year career spans leadership roles at nonprofit colleges and universities in the Northeast and Midwest, including public, private, urban, rural, small and large institutions, with enrollments from 2,000 to more than 25,000 students. Before joining WNE, he served as chancellor of University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (2017-2020) and as president of Becker College (2010-2017). A proponent of innovation and entrepreneurship, hallmarks of his leadership include elevated institutional stature and competitive market position; national recognition; enrollment growth and resource development success; and fast-tracked facilities and infrastructure upgrades. He is a future-focused thought leader and commentator on issues including the future of work, agile mind education and the agile university, and the sense of humanity imperative.



**Janine Fondon**, a writer, educator, and speaker, brings her New York spirit, Caribbean lineage, and Massachusetts mindset (with Southern exposure) to the boardroom, living room, and classroom. Janine has used her communication skills to build bridges of inclusion in corporations and communities. Her work on diversity councils and leadership teams has focused on raising unheard voices and inspiring change through effective communication. She has worked for several corporations (ABC-TV, CBS-TV, BankBoston) as well as with her husband to co-found their own 'diversity-related' news service, UnityFirst.com. As an MFA candidate at Bay Path University, where she is Chair of Undergraduate Communications, Janine inspires women and communities to make new history.

She curated a museum exhibit, *Voices of Resilience*, once shown the Springfield Museums to highlight women, women of color, and changemakers worldwide and founded the On the Move Program to Advance Women, which celebrated its five years of engaging over 1,000 women.



**Aprell May Munford** is a trending/breaking news reporter at The Republican Company Newspaper in Springfield, Massachusetts. She is currently working on her memoir entitled *Classic Fly: Essays on a Journey from Intergenerational Trauma to Healing* a follow up to her first poetry collection entitled *Expose: Such is Life* available on Amazon Kindle. She is a former business owner with 15 years of providing leadership. She brings life experience, character, humor, voice and philosophy that will delight the urban creative-nonfiction reader.

Aprell has maintained Dean's list each semester with courses in The Anti-Racist Workshop, Food and Travel Writing, Writing about Others, Medical Narrative, Teaching to Learn, Philosophy, Writing for the Media, Technical Writing, Professional Research and Writing, Women in Art, Intercultural Communications, Culture, Race and Identity, she has utilized active learning methods and remains abreast of ongoing developments in her studies.

Currently, she is interning at the Springfield Library and Museums and contributing to The Daily Republican, Art for the Soul Gallery, Old Sturbridge Village Theatrical performance and with many other organizations in the Greater Springfield Area.

Her work has been seen in The New England Connector, The Metro Record, Multiplicity Commons and the Network News at Bay Path University. Her work has been published in academic publications. She has collaborated with the Gray House after school program, Arise for Social Justice, and The Pan African History Museum.



**Lynn Perry Woolen, Ph.D.**, a seasoned academic and an expert on organizational development and transformation, is the ninth president of Simmons University. She is the first African American to lead the University.

Specializing in crisis leadership, diversity and inclusion, and positive leadership, Dr. Woolen is an innovative leader and prolific author and presenter. She came to Simmons from Cornell University, where she was the David J. Nolan Dean and Professor of Management and Organizations at the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management. Prior to that, she served on the faculty of the University of Michigan Ross School of Business for nearly 20 years.

Dr. Woolen is the author of two books, nearly 30 journal articles and more than 15 book chapters. She is also co-author of the upcoming book *Arrive and Thrive* due out this April. A resident of Brookline, Dr. Woolen is actively involved in the Boston philanthropic and civic community. She currently serves on the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Association for Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (AICUM) Board of Directors, the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Trustee Advisory Board, the JFK Library Foundation Board of Advisors, the Fenway Alliance Board of Directors, The George School Board of Trustees, the MASCO Board of Directors, and the WBGH Board of Trustees. In addition, Dr. Woolen is an active member of several national volunteer leadership organizations, and she serves on the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan Board of Directors and the North Carolina A&T University Board of Trustees.



**Pilar Egüez Guevara, Ph.D.**, is an Ecuadorian cultural anthropologist, writer and filmmaker. She holds a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. She has worked directly with communities for over 15 years on research and community-based projects in Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, and the United States. Her most recent work has focused on amplifying the voices of older women and men who are the bearers of traditional knowledge about food and medicine in the coast of Ecuador. In 2012, she co-founded and currently directs Comidas que Curan, an independent food and media company dedicated to research and promote traditional foods and knowledge through ethnography and film. She most recently directed and produced *Raspando coco* (Scraping Coconuts) an award-winning documentary about the culinary and medicinal traditions of Afro-Ecuadorians, which has been screened to audiences in the Americas, Europe and Asia. She is a published author, and speaks internationally in educational and community settings about the intersections of food, culture, conflict and health. She most recently taught "Cooking for a Strong Immune System," an online course taught to 800 community members across three different continents, in partnership with the Seed Savers' Network of Ecuador. She is also a certified conflict mediator and coach.

## Keynote Speakers



**Gina Athena Ulysse, Ph.D.**, a Haitian anthropologist is a professor of Feminist Studies at University of California Santa Cruz. An interdisciplinary methodologist, her research questions, and art practice engage geopolitics, historical representations, and the dailiness of Black diasporic conditions to confront the visceral in the structural. She is the author of several books and articles, including; *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives: A Post Quake Chronicle* (2015), published in English, Kreyòl, and French, and *Because When God is too Busy: Haiti, me & THE WORLD* (2017)- a collection of photographs, poetry, and performance texts. It was long-listed for the 2017 PEN Open Book Award and awarded the 2018 Best Poetry Connecticut Center for the Book Award. Gina edited "Caribbean Rasanblaj," a double issue of *e-misférica*, NYU's Hemispheric Institute for Performance and Politics journal. Her creative work and non-fiction writing have appeared in *American Ethnologist*, *AnthroNow*, *Feminist Studies*, *Interimpoetics*, *Gastronomica*, *Journal of Haitian Studies*, *Liminalities*, *PoemMemoirStory*, *Meridians*, *Souls*, *Third Text*, and *Transition Magazine*. In the last decade, she has made a conscientious turn to the arts. In 2020, her performance installation, "An Equitable Human Assertion," was presented in the Biennale of Sydney in Australia. Her last publication *WoodsWork Rasanblaj* is from her current project.



**Treva B. Lindsey Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor at The Ohio State University and the co-founder of Black Feminist Night School at Zora's House. Her research and teaching interests include African American women's history, black popular and expressive culture, black feminism(s), hip hop studies, critical race and gender theory, and sexual politics. Her new book, *America Goddam: Violence, Black Women, and The Struggle for Justice* (University of California Press) will be released in April 2022. Her first book, *Colored No More: Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington D.C* was a Choice 2017 "Outstanding Academic Title." She has published in *The Journal of Pan-African Studies*, *Souls*, *African and Black Diaspora*, the *Journal of African American Studies*, *African American Review*,

*The Journal of African American History*, *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, *Urban Education*, *The Black Scholar*, *Feminist Studies*, and *Signs*. She was a 2020-2021 ACLS/ Mellon Scholars and Society Fellow. She was the inaugural Equity for Women and Girls of Color Fellow at Harvard University (2016-2017). She writes for and contributes to outlets such as *Time*, *CNN*, *Al Jazeera*, *NBC*, *BET*, *Complex*, *Vox*, *The Root*, *Huffington Post*, *PopSugar*, *Billboard*, *Bustle*, *Teen Vogue*, *Grazia UK*, *The Grio*, *The Washington Post*, *Women's Media Center*, *Zora*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

# **Black Issues Summit Planning Committee**

## **Committee Chair:**

**Jennifer Shoaff, Ph.D.**

*Director, Office of Diversity & Inclusion*

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**Bevin Peters**

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