

# BIOGRAPHY OF CRYSTAL A. deGREGORY

A historian and storyteller whose research interests include black higher education and college student activism, DR. CRYSTAL A. deGREGORY is a research fellow at Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

A proud native of The Bahamas and a Phi Beta Kappa alumna of the historic Fisk University, she also earned Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in history from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Education from Tennessee State University. Among her myriad professional and civic affiliations is trusteeship of The Kamalamee Organization and membership with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Hailed "young sister leader" by Spelman College and Bennett College President Emerita Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, deGregory's most recent publishing includes the op-eds "Here in the Bahamas, Every Generation Has Its Storm Stories. The Tale of Hurricane Dorian Is Still Being Written" and "How the Black Colleges Beyoncé Honors in Homecoming Have Played a Vital Role in American History" for *TIME*, a film review of Stanley Nelson's *Tell Them We Are Rising* in the *American Historical Review*, the co-authored articles "Historically Black Community Colleges: A Descriptive Profile and Call for Context-Based Future Research" in *Community College of Research and Practice*, and "'Yet with A Steady Beat': Advocating Historically Black Colleges and Universities as Black Women in the Age of Trump's America" in *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*.

She has written chapters featured in *Reclaiming the Great World House: The Global Vision of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2019), *Black Colleges in the Diaspora: Global Perspectives on Identity and Culture* (2018), *Gumbo for the Soul: Liberating Memoirs and Stories to Inspire Females of Color* (2016) and *In an Inescapable Network of Mutuality: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Globalization of an Ethical Ideal* (2013). Dr. deGregory also served as the editor of *Emancipation and the Fight for Freedom* (2013), the sixth volume of the 12-part series, "Tennessee in the Civil War: The Best of the Tennessee Historical Quarterly."

A gifted orator and sought-after commentator, Dr. deGregory offers a wide range of expertise on multiple topics including history, culture, education, black fraternity and sorority life, and of course, HBCUs. Known for her collaborative advocacy and entrepreneurial leadership, she is also the founder of the HBCUstory—an advocacy initiative preserving, presenting, and promoting inspiring stories of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs)—and is editor-in-chief of *The Journal of HBCU Research + Culture*, an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal which publishes scholarly articles relating to HBCUs.

As the convener of the HBCUstory Symposium, she is responsible for securing host partnerships, keynote speakers, and sponsorships as well as for organizing two-day meetings of scholarly research and case studies outlining the historic and contemporary value of HBCUs.

The convenings have featured more than 100 presenters to date. A finalist for the HBCU Awards "Alumna of the Year" recognition, Dr. deGregory was the recipient of the Fisk University "Women of Prominence" award, her high school's 50th Anniversary "Golden Warriors" award, and was recognized as the "Hope Dealer of the Year" by the Washington, D.C.-based The H.O.P.E. Scholarship Initiative.

In addition to regular contributions to HBCUstory.org, Dr. deGregory's words have appeared in *The New York Times*, *TIME*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *USA Today*, *The Tennessean*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Market Watch*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The State Journal*, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *The Key Reporter*, *Nashville Scene*, *The Atlanta Voice*, *Tri-City Defender*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *EducationDIVE*, *INSIGHT Into Diversity*, *The Nation*, *The Feminist Wire* and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.

Her other published work includes contributions to *The Athletic Experience at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (2015), *HBCU Experience: The Book* (2014), *The Journal of Tennessee State University* (2012), *Encyclopedia of African American Popular Culture* (2011) and *Freedom Facts and Firsts: 400 Years of the African American Civil Rights Experience* (2009).

Dr. deGregory has presented to audiences at TEDx, SXSWedu, the Southern Festival of Books, the Nashville Public Library, Nashville Public Television, The New School, Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation, Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, Ford, Nissan North America, National Institutes of Health, and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. She has also given talks and served on panels for Alcorn State, Edward Waters, Fisk, Florida Memorial, Harvard, Howard, Michigan-Ann Arbor, Tennessee State, Vanderbilt, Wilberforce universities. She also served as the graduation speaker for her alma mater Bishop Michael Eldon School and was commencement speaker for the inaugural University of The Bahamas, Northern Campus graduation exercise.

Most recently, Dr. deGregory was an associate professor of history who also served as the award-winning inaugural director of the Atwood Institute for Race, Education, and the Democratic Ideal at Kentucky State University.

July 2020