

NOLIWE M. ROOKS

L. HERBERT BALLOU UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR · CHAIR, Africana Studies/Rites and Reason Theatre

BROWN UNIVERSITY

NROOKS@BROWN.EDU

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

L. Herbert Ballou University Professor Africana Studies, Brown University	2021–Present
W. E. B. Du Bois Professor Africana Studies, Cornell University	2018–2021
Associate Professor Africana Studies, Cornell University	2012–2018
Associate Director and Lecturer African American Studies, Princeton University	2000–2012
Visiting Scholar African American Studies, Columbia University	2003, 2007
Visiting Assistant Professor History and African American Studies, Princeton University	1997–1999
Assistant Professor English and African American Studies, University of Missouri–Kansas City	1994–1997

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

Chair Africana Studies, Brown University	2021–Present
Director American Studies, Cornell University	2017–2021
Interim Chair Africana Studies, Cornell University	2015–2017
Director of Graduate Studies Africana Studies, Cornell University	2013–2015
Associate Director Center for African American Studies, Princeton University	2000–2012
Founding Coordinator Civic Initiatives on Environmental Justice, Urban Education Reform, Art & Social Justice, Center for African American Studies, Princeton University	2009–2012
Founding Director Black Studies Program, University of Missouri–Kansas City	1994–1998

EDUCATION

Ph.D. American Studies, The University of Iowa	1994
M.A. American Studies, The University of Iowa	1991
B.A. English, Spelman College	1987

PUBLICATIONS:

— RACE, BEAUTY & VISUAL CULTURE

BOOKS

Ladies' Pages: African American Women's Magazines and the Culture That Made Them. Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture and African American Women. Rutgers University Press, 1996. (Winner, Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Book, 1997; Outstanding University Press Book, Public Library Association, 1997)

Lead Editor, *Women's Magazines in Print and New Media*, Research in Gender and Society Series. Routledge, 2016.

Editor, *Black Fashion: Art. Pleasure. Politics*, special issue of *NKA: Journal of Contemporary Art*, no. 37. Duke University Press, 2015.

Associate Editor, *Paris Connections: African American Artists in Paris, 1920–1975.* Q.E.D. Press, 1992. (Winner, 1993 American Book Award)

CHAPTERS & ARTICLES

“Reading Race and Gender/Writing Identity and Culture,” Introduction to *Women's Magazines in Print and New Media*, Routledge, 2017: 1–8.

“Black Women's Studies: Ideology, Identity and Assumptions,” in *Schomburg Studies on the Black Experience*, eds. Howard Dodson and Colin Palmer. Michigan State University Press, 2007: 95–125.

“Wearing Your Race Wrong: Black Hair and the Contemporary History of African Americans at Play on a Battlefield,” in *Recovering the Black Female Body*, ed. Michael Bennett. Rutgers University Press, 2001: 279–296.

“Like Canaries in the Mines: Black Women's Studies at the Millennium,” *Signs*, special issue *Feminisms at the Millennium*, 25, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 1209–1211.

“Writing Themselves Into Existence: The Intersection of History and Literature in Writing about Black Women,” *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* (Spring 1989): 51–63.

“The Women Who Said I Am: Black Women and Activism, 1880–1960,” *Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women* (Winter 1988): 26–35.

“By Any Other Name: Cicely Tyson, Sweet Justice and Contemporary Visual Politics,” *Camera Obscura: Journal of Feminism and Film Theory* 36 (Summer 1997): 49–68.

— RACE, EDUCATION & PUBLIC LIFE

BOOKS

Integrated: How Schools in America Failed Black Children. Pantheon, 2025.

Starred review, *Publishers Weekly*; Spring 2025 Most Anticipated, *Lit Hub*; Must-Read Books of 2025, *San Francisco Chronicle*; reviewed in *Kirkus* and *Booklist*; Most Anticipated 2025, *Read Between the Spines*; Most Anticipated Books and Memoirs 2025, *Paste Magazine*; subject of “The Rise of the Brown v. Board Education Skeptics,” *The Atlantic*, March 2025.

A Passionate Mind in Relentless Pursuit: The Vision of Mary McLeod Bethune. Penguin Press, 2024.

Nominated, 2025 NAACP Image Award; Best Books of 2024, The New Yorker; Most Anticipated Summer 2024, Books-A-Million; Most Anticipated Feminist Book of 2024, Ms. Magazine; 2024 Editors' Choice Award, American Library Association; Best Books of 2024, College Transitions; starred review and Best Holiday Gift Book 2024, Publishers Weekly; starred review, Booklist; longlisted, National Archives New Deal Book Awards.

Cutting School: Privatization, Segregation, and the End of Public Education. The New Press, 2017. (2019 10 Best Books of the Year, Patreon; 2018 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for Non-Fiction)

White Money/Black Power: African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education. Beacon Press, 2006.

CHAPTERS & ARTICLES

"Being the Lone Black Friend Did Not Protect Him," in *Our Black Sons Matter: Mothers Talk About Their Fears, Sorrows, and Hopes*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2016: 41–44.

"My Father's Whistle," in *Father Songs: Testimonies by African American Sons and Daughters*, ed. Gloria Wade-Gayles. Beacon Press, 1997: 98–101.

WRITING FOR THE POPULAR PRESS (SELECTED)

— RACE, BEAUTY & VISUAL CULTURE

"The Statue That Taught Me About the Power of Black Women and Democracy" *Time*, July 23, 2024

"Renisha McBride and the Evolution of the Black-Female Stereotype" *Time*, Nov. 14, 2013

— RACE, EDUCATION & PUBLIC LIFE

"As Trump Moves to Dismantle the Department of Education, We Need a Constitutional Amendment" *Time*, July 16, 2025

"The Pendulum Has Swung Away from Social Justice: Trump Is Destroying the DEI Regime Using the Same Tools That Built It" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 23, 2025

"HBCU Graduates Are Finally Getting the Respect We Deserve: We've Always Been Vanguard of Excellence, and It Didn't Start with VP-elect Kamala Harris" *Medium*, Nov. 13, 2020

"Cindy Hyde-Smith Is Teaching Us What Segregation Academies Taught Her: The Campaign Gaffes of Mississippi's Newly Elected Senator Reveal the Way That the Past Is Always Present" *The New York Times*, Nov. 28, 2018

"Are Cyber Elementary Schools Coming to New York? While These Schools May Be Cheaper to Run, They Haven't Demonstrated a Record of Success" *CityLab*, March 2018

"How 'Segrenomics' Underpins the Movement to Privatize Public Education" *The Washington Post*, January 2018

"The Biggest Barrier to Elite Education Isn't Affordability. It's Accessibility." *Time*, Feb. 27, 2013

"MLK Day: It's Time for a Second Emancipation Proclamation" *Time*, Jan. 21, 2013

"Is Obama's Cabinet Too Male?" *Time*, Jan. 16, 2013

"The Problem with Food-Stamp Challenges" *Time*, Nov. 28, 2012

"What Would Lincoln Think About Laws That Deny Felons the Right to Vote?" *Time*, Oct. 25, 2012

"Why It's Time to Get Rid of Standardized Tests" *Time*, Oct. 11, 2012

"The Myth of Bootstrapping" *Time*, Sept. 7, 2012

SELECTED LECTURES, KEYNOTES & PANELS

— RACE, BEAUTY & VISUAL CULTURE

Pretty Politics: How Beauty Impacts Electoral Politics for Women, Cornell Club of Boca Raton/Fort Lauderdale, Cornell Office of Alumni Affairs and Development, **March 2019**

The Race for Beauty, Distinguished Guest Lecturer, UC Consortium for Black Studies, UC Santa Barbara, **May 2018**

— RACE, EDUCATION & PUBLIC LIFE

Writing Black Women's Biographies, Schomburg Center, Conversations in Black Freedom Studies, **December 5, 2024**

A New Education Is Possible, Data for Black Lives III, Miami, FL, **November 19, 2024**

A Passionate Mind, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C., **November 14, 2024**

Rosa Parks and Mary McLeod Bethune, with Jeanne Theoharis, Hunter College, Roosevelt House, **October 30, 2024**

I Leave You Love. I Leave You Hope. I Leave You Faith: Mary McLeod Bethune in Our Time, Keynote, Salve Regina University, **October 28, 2024**

Black Educational Histories for Contemporary Action, Harvard University, **October 21, 2024**

McLeod Bethune: Growing a Global Heart, United Way Worldwide, Arlington, VA, **October 17, 2024**

The Life and Legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune, African-American Research Library and Cultural Center, Fort Lauderdale, FL, **October 4, 2024**

A Woman of Substance, a Person of Consequence, ASALH National Convention, Blassingame Lunch, Pittsburgh, PA, **September 28, 2024**

Introducing Bethune, Roosevelt Reading Festival, Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives, **June 22, 2024**

Anti-Racism and Public Education in the United States, Annual Anti-Racist Book Festival, Boston University, **April 2021 (Virtual)**

Activists and Academics, Teens Take Charge Youth Summit, The Civil Rights Project, UCLA, **February 2021 (Virtual)**

An Ethic of Care and Reimagining Higher Education, President's Panel, Social Science Research Council, **December 2020 (Virtual)**

An Election, The Aftermath, The Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH-TV), **November 2020 (Virtual)**

Racism in America Webinar Series — Education and Housing, College of Arts and Sciences, Cornell University, **December 2020 (Virtual)**

Black Studies at 50, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, **September 2020 (Virtual)**

Racism, Teachers, and Public Education in America, Keynote, American Federation of Teachers–Massachusetts, Annual Conference, **May 2021 (Virtual)**

You Tried to Kill Us With Your Democracy, So We Fought You With Our Own, SNF Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University, **March 2021 (Virtual)**

Black Children, Courage, and Creating the Beloved Community in Schools, Keynote, University at Buffalo, Center for Diversity Innovation and Graduate School of Education, **March 2021 (Virtual)**

Litanies for Survival: Black Education in the Past, Present, and Future, Africana Studies, Brown University, **February 2021 (Virtual)**

Racism in America, American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, Black History Month, **February 2021 (Virtual)**

Indigenous Nations, Apartheid, Education, and the Founding of the United States, Black Studies Department, Amherst College, **February 2021 (Virtual)**

A Killing Cure: Education, Segregation and the Meaning of Health When Black Communities Disappear, Ilene Katz Lowenthal and Edward Lowenthal Lecture, Washington University in St. Louis, **February 2021 (Virtual)**

- “Legalize It?” A Story of Cannabis, Race, Global Capital and Civil Wrongs*, Society for the Humanities, Cornell University, December 2020 (Virtual)
- The Price of Integration: Toward a Fully Loaded Cost Accounting*, Goethe-Institut New York, Fictive Witness Series, December 2020 (Virtual)
- We Have Full-On Integration Fatigue: The Brewing Fight to Return to Separate but Equal Schools*, Wesleyan University, College of Education Seminar Series, December 2020
- In Support of Neighborhood Schools*, Keynote, Network for Public Education Annual Conference, November 2020 (Virtual)
- From Slavery to Segrenomics*, History of Capitalism Faculty Panel, Cornell University, November 2018
- Crisis of ConFORMity: The Material Dimensions of Race and the Built Environment*, American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 9, 2018
- Madam C. J. Walker in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Indianapolis, IN, October 4, 2018
- Jim Crow as Friend and Foe*, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Indianapolis, IN, October 5, 2018
- Race and Public Education in America*, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, November 18, 2017
- The Crisis in Black Education*, Plenary Session, 102nd Annual ASALH Meeting, Cincinnati, OH, September 28, 2017
- Full-On Integration Fatigue: The Resurrected Fight for Separate but Equal Schools*, Program in Education, Inquiry and Justice, Georgetown University, February 2020
- Segrenomics and American Public Education*, Graduate Student Conference on Poverty and Inequality, Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA, February 2019
- White Supremacy/Black Education*, Keynote, Randolph College Black Alliance Conference on Social Justice in Education, Lynchburg, VA, February 2019
- Black Students, Billionaires, and the End of Public Education*, Inaugural Lecture, School Solutions Series, The Impact Empowerment Group, Denver, CO, January 2018
- Why Segregated Schools Are Too Lucrative to Fail*, Allison Davis Lecture, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, October 2018
- Segrenomics.Food.Cannabis.Justice*, Fall Colloquium, Environmental and Sustainability Studies, Cornell University, October 2018
- Apartheid Education in America*, Keynote, Transfer Schools Annual Conference, NYC Dept. of Education, June 2018
- Privatization, Segregation and Underfunding*, New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, Albany, NY (with Chancellor Betty A. Rosa), February 2018
- Black Resistance in the Age of Trump: An Education Story*, Conversations in Black Freedom Struggles, Schomburg Center, New York Public Library, February 1, 2018

SELECTED GRANTS AND AWARDS

New York Public Library Best Book of the Year	2026
PEN/John Kenneth Galbraith Award for Nonfiction	2026
NAACP Image Award, nominated	2025
Amistad Award for Civil Rights and Social Justice	2022
Angela Davis Lifetime Achievement Award, American Studies Association	2021

Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, Non-Fiction	2018
Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future, Faculty in Residence Fellowship	2017
Kaplan Family Distinguished Faculty Fellowship, Cornell University	2016