

# Unique Perspectives

Celebrating Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the University of Missouri's School of Medicine | Volume 2, Issue 1

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## **Contributor's Notes:**

Brought to you by the School of Medicine Faculty and Staff Diversity and Inclusion Committees. To be disseminated 5 times per year.

-To submit diversity and inclusion news and events, please e-mail: [folkerts@health.missouri.edu](mailto:folkerts@health.missouri.edu) and [wesslerk@missouri.edu](mailto:wesslerk@missouri.edu)

-To find out more about what's going on in the University of Missouri School of Medicine's diversity and inclusion efforts, go to:

<https://medicine.missouri.edu/about/office-diversity-and-inclusion>

## ***In the Spotlight: Robin Clay, M.Ed.***



*Robin Clay is a program manager with Student Support Services in the Office of Medical Education*

### ***What is your definition of diversity and how do you feel like diversity and inclusion relate to one another?***

I define diversity as the unique, individual traits and experiences that each of us bring to various situations. Inclusion, to me, is the recognition and acceptance of those traits and experiences.

### ***How do you encourage others to honor the uniqueness of each individual?***

This is simple. RESPECT. Respect people for what they bring to the table, try to understand the things that you don't understand through respectful conversation and research.

### ***How do you challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity and inclusion?***

As a Black male, I feel that I challenge stereotypes simply by being. As a society, America does not expect much from Black men. In fact, the expectation for many Black men

from certain communities is that we will not live past the age of 19. In a broader sense, I challenge my own implicit biases by listening to the experiences of others without judgement and by immersing myself in learning and experiencing differing cultures, cuisines (I consider myself a foodie) and lifestyles. Taking the time and effort to engage with others while learning their story can truly challenge stereotypes. This can also lead to the understanding that in many cases, we are more alike than we are different.

### ***Describe your role in the SOM as it relates to promoting diversity and inclusion and how you create an environment that is welcoming for everyone?***

I work within the office of medical education in multiple areas. My primary function is within the admissions group, where I work to ensure that we have a diverse pool of applicants for the medical school. I travel, outside of global pandemics, across the country meeting with and recruiting top medical school prospects. Visits to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs), and national conferences provide opportunities to introduce Mizzou Med to those who may not have considered our program or relocating to central Missouri. Another component of my role is to create a community of inclusive excellence. We begin this during the recruitment process by engaging with prospective applicants and connecting with them about their lives. The next step comes in some of our pipeline programs like the Mizzou MedPrep Programs led by Andrea Simmons. This engagement continues during the interview process with our Inclusivity Symposia,

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## Activity Highlights

**Black Men in White Coats**~ The University of Missouri School of Medicine and sponsoring partners hosted an event featuring the film “Black Men in White Coats,” produced by our own alumnus, Dr. Dale Okorodudu (SOM ‘10). Participants were allowed to view the film over a 5-day period that ended with a Q&A discussion (pictured right) with Dr. Okorodudu on February 17. Over 1,000 people registered to see the film. This phenomenal documentary explored the perpetual issue of the scarcity of Black male physicians citing the stark statistic that less Black men applied to medical school in 2004 than in 1978. The documentary dives into the systemic barriers that prevents Black men from becoming physicians and the effects those barriers now pose on society. During the Q&A session, Dr. Okorodudu took questions from an audience of over 100 participants and discussed the film, as well as intentional approaches we can use to help increase the number of Black men in white coats. The Q&A session can be viewed [here](#).



**A Week with Harriet A. Washington**~ The University of Missouri Honors College invited medical science author, ethicist and Cherng Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Harriet A. Washington, to virtually host a series of events focused on healthcare inequities and racism. The message connecting the events focused on how Black Americans have an understandable and long history of distrust in the medical and healthcare field due to centuries of cruel, unethical and controversial medical experiments on them by doctors who practiced according to societal beliefs, not science. A common belief in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was that Black people were “more resistant to disease and do not feel pain” and therefore made ideal subjects. Many other unfortunate societal beliefs during that time would continue to drive American medicine in a direction that undermined and dismissed the health and well-being of Black people for another century, the most well-known and as Ms. Washington states, the most “overburdened” being the Tuskegee Experiments from 1932-1972. On January 26 and 27, two Brown Bag events that shared titles with two of Ms. Washington’s books, “Medical Apartheid” and “A Terrible Thing to Waste,” took place via Zoom with the series wrapping up on January 28 with a keynote lecture titled, “Healthcare Inequities Go Viral: Race, Medical Ethics, and History Through the Lens of a Pandemic.” Click [here](#) for more information and to view the sessions.

**Thoughtful Thursdays**~ MU Health Care and MU School of Medicine diversity and inclusion leaders Nikki Smith-McGruder and Laura Henderson-Kelley, MD, came together on January 28 to present the first installment of the Thoughtful Thursdays webinar series, “Critical Conversations.” Over the noon hour, the two exchanged a refreshingly honest dialogue to discuss productive and respectful approaches to engaging in difficult conversations. The past year has been uncertain and fearful for many and the ability to come together and address these sensitive topics with one another is more important now than ever. Watch the January 28 discussion [here](#). The second installment of the series sponsored by the African Heritage ERG took place on February 18 with an MU Health Care guest panel discussing, “The Distrust of the Medical System Among Black Americans.” With the COVID-19 vaccine now available, it is vital to educate people and address any questions or uncertainties they have so we can work together to protect each other and our communities, now and in the future. Watch the February 18 discussion [here](#).

## Congratulations!

Two graduate students in the Department of Health Management and Informatics have received special recognition for their outstanding efforts relating to disparities and diversity in healthcare. Jessica Osaze, a residential dual MHA/MS student, received first-place in the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME)/Pristine Home Care Student Essay Contest Scholarship with her essay titled, “How Can Home Health Care Organizations Meet the Cultural Needs of Patients in Their Homes, In a Diverse Society With Biases That Are Met at an Individual Level.” Read Jessica’s essay [here](#). Xavier Ransome, a dual MHA/MS student, was featured as a Missouri Scientist for the Missouri Science and Technology Policy Initiative and shares his experiences in an interview titled, “Compassion Behind the Numbers.” Xavier’s interview can be read [here](#). A HUGE congratulations to these students on their amazing achievements and excellence!



Jessica Osaze



Xavier Ransome

## A Look Back...

In honor of Black History Month, we dedicate



Dr. and Mrs. Ingram

*A Look Back* to one of our own diversity heroes, Dr. Ellis Ingram. Ingram is well-known to us as a committed advocate and active champion of diversity and inclusion efforts at the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

Dr. Ingram came to the School of Medicine as faculty in the Department of Pathology in 1974 after completing both his undergraduate and medical school degrees at the University of Michigan. From the beginning, he realized the need for active diversity pipeline programming and recruitment of diverse students and faculty. Ingram started his efforts with the younger generation establishing the Caleb Club in the early 90s. The Club started as a small group of his children's friends meeting at his house discussing how to develop the drive to excel. Over time, the program grew and he moved the Caleb Club to campus where it began to focus on exposing minority children to science and medicine.

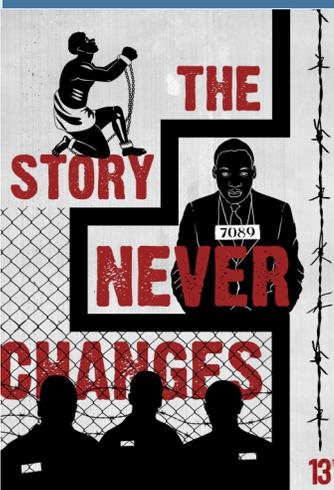
The program is still active today and touches the lives of so many Columbia-area youth with the enthusiastic involvement of many of our medical students, faculty and staff.

Continuing to actively champion diversity and inclusion efforts, Ingram became the first Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion at the School of Medicine under Dean Robert Churchill in 2009. Ingram worked with Dr. Churchill to reconnect with Black alumni and form meaningful relationships with the student body. Ingram worked from the belief that, "Diversity work is highly relational. Having a relationship with students and their families, faculty and administrators is what makes the difference in this work".

Dr. Ingram has also been very involved in the Columbia community working with his wife, Pam, who started the well-known, Granny's House. The vision for Granny's House was initially started in Columbia Public Housing, after routinely visiting the residents for support and referrals to social service agencies when needed. They noticed during the home visits many of the kids in the area would follow them around. Realizing the children also needed a place to go for support, Dr. and Mrs. Ingram rented a few apartments from the Public Housing Authority and started Granny's House. They opened after school and provided mentoring groups, bible study and nutritious snacks for the children. Dr. and Mrs. Ingram are affectionately known as "Poppi" and "Granny" by the children. Medical students have also become very active in volunteering at Granny's House which is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of existence.

Dr. Ellis Ingram is a powerful force at the School of Medicine and in the Columbia community. His vision is that we work to actively and intentionally reframe our identity as an institution to become a more diverse and welcoming place. Ingram helped pave the way and open doors for us to continue to move toward becoming a diverse and inclusive environment where everyone has a space and a voice. We thank him for his leadership and ongoing presence in our community.

## Brain Food



If the truth wasn't hard to hear, everyone would be telling it. The complete history of our nation is certainly hard to swallow and it's simply not enough to be aware of the basic narrative we've been told and accept it entirely. The United States of America holds the title of the world's oldest and longest-running democracy and within our 200+ years of existence lie countless stories and experiences of injustice, racism and a constant struggle by Black Americans who simply want to be treated as equals. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution was passed in 1865 and "abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime." The documentary, "13th", takes a deeper look over the decades of laws, policies and groups that have disenfranchised Black people resulting in a bulging US prison population, corporate prison labor and a reality of despair for those criminalized. We must acknowledge their experiences and take action to correct the system for those in our past, present and future. This film can help us understand the inhumanities that Black people have always faced in our country and still face today. It would be wrong to argue that Black history isn't American history. The sooner we all come together in this realization, the sooner we can exemplify our Constitution's words to be a nation of true equality, with liberty and justice for all, as we were intended to be.

13th can be viewed on Netflix or click [here](#)



*Lionelle Miller is a system administrator with the Missouri Kidney Program and Emergency Medicine. To get to know Lionelle better, we asked him these 5 questions:*

## Give Me 5!

### 1. If you could live anywhere or do anything, where/what would it be?

I would like to live in Australia to experience the wildlife and climate there.

### 2. What is your favorite food or restaurant?

My favorite food is Buffalo Chicken Wings.

### 3. What is a favorite cultural/family tradition you celebrate every year?

Simply getting together and connecting with family on holidays.

### 4. FUN FACT!

I am a street musician. I play music at the corner of Ninth and Broadway downtown during the warmer months.

### 5. If you could make one change in the world, what would it be?

For everyone to be a little more tolerant of each other and spread more love. (Also NO MORE COVID!!!)

*\*E-mail the contributors to nominate faculty, staff or a student who works to exemplify diversity and inclusion in the SOM.*

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providing interviewees opportunities to further connect with deans, students, staff, and faculty. After students are admitted, I organize the JumpStart program. JumpStart offers a PBL experience to a select number of students in the week prior to orientation. A by-product of JumpStart has been the sense of community that is fostered among the participants. Finally, I serve as a mentor, advisor, and counselor to many students. I am grateful that my role transcends the admissions process affording me the ability to build relationships with the students along their entire medical education journey. Hopefully, we, the entire Mizzou Med community, will be able to create an environment where students feel valued so much they want to stay here for residency and practice!

### **What have been your most successful activities or programs with respect to increasing diversity and inclusion in the School of Medicine?**

I am most proud of the Inclusivity Symposia. This initiative was born in early 2016 to address concerns of a lack of diversity in our student body. The symposia has been successful in highlighting Mizzou Med's commitment to inclusion, diversity, and equity (IDE). Survey results of participants show that interviewees believe in our commitment to IDE more than they did prior to their interview day. The most rewarding element of my work has taken a long time to come to fruition. What has made me most excited is to see how, as a team, we have begun to shift Mizzou Med culture towards inclusive excellence.

## Calendar of Events~

Upcoming events on campus and in the Columbia community



\*On Saturday, **February 27** from 9am-5pm, join us for a virtual Women's Health Telethon to benefit the MU Institute for Women's Health Research. Local entertainers, top researchers and physicians will come together to raise money for women's research. There will also be a raffle and auction that includes custom jewelry from KT Diamond Jewelers. Click [here](#) for more info.

\*WIMMS next First Friday Empower Lunch is, "[The Science of Women's Leadership](#)," by Alexa Kanda-Olmstead on **March 5**, 12-1pm via Zoom. E-mail [Kate Wessler](#) to RSVP. [Click here](#) for more info about WIMMS.

\*The Confronting Racism series continues with a session scheduled for Tuesday, **March 16** and one on Monday, **April 5**. Both sessions will be held from 5:30-7:30pm. Watch your inbox for more details.

\*Thoughtful Thursdays continue on the third Thursday of every month. On **March 18** from 12-1pm, join us via Zoom for, "Championing Gender Equality in the Workplace," sponsored by the Women of MU Health Care ERG. Watch your inbox for more details.

\*The School of Medicine Office of Diversity and Inclusion and WIMMS will present the film, "Picture A Scientist," from **March 19-21**. A group discussion about the film will take place at 5:30pm on **March 22**. Watch your inbox for more details.

\*In honor of Women's Month, the City of Columbia is hosting a movie night at the Armory Sports Center on Wednesday, **March 10** at 6:30pm featuring the film, "Joy", starring Jennifer Lawrence. "Joy" is the story of inventor, entrepreneur and self-made millionaire, Joy Mangano, who invented the Miracle Mop in 1990. Click [here](#) for info.

**Event dates and times are subject to change. Thank you!**