

Posters on the Hill Address

"Philanthropy is about ideas and values as well as action [. . .] it is always an effort to blend the ideal with the practical." — Robert L. Payton

Good afternoon. My name is T'Sey-Haye M. Preaster. I am a senior Ada Comstock Scholar and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow (MMUF) at Smith College majoring in Sociology and African American Studies.

My research examines Black women's leadership in philanthropy in the U.S. (c. 1896-1920). I chose this topic because while history shows that Black women have worked for the uplift of their gender and race, scholars have not fully examined, nor clearly articulated, the meaning and impact of their philanthropic work. Black women organized and gave of their time, energy, and resources in unprecedented fashion during the turn of the twentieth century. Their philanthropy set the tone for the modern Civil Rights and women's rights movements, prompting new discourse on the philanthropic contributions of Black women today (Hine, 1990).

My experience in the field, [I worked for eight years in philanthropic services prior to attending Smith.] coupled with my academic studies in African American Studies (AAS) and Sociology, shaped my desire to add my voice to this emerging discourse through undergraduate research.

In spring 2009, I was awarded a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship to research my topic in consultation with my faculty mentor, Professor Dr. Riché D. Barnes, in AAS at Smith. I focused my work on the early history and leadership of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACW), and during summer 2010, I conducted archival research at the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College and the Moorland-Spingarn Archives at Howard University. I reviewed original papers and manuscripts on the NACW and its first president, Mary Church Terrell (1896 to 1900).

Through hands-on archival work, I developed a mini-case study on charitable giving for and by Black women during the club era. I learned how to organize and code archival manuscript data (e.g., letters, journals,



Mary Kathleen Caulfield, College of the Holy Cross T'Sey-Haye M. Preaster, Smith College John Churchill Sada Marie Hotovy, University of Nebraska-Kearney Sarah Fuller, Bridgewater State University field questions from the audience at the 1st Humanities Luncheon at Posters on the Hill 2011.

pamphlets, etc.) to extract meaning from the writings of Mrs. Terrell and other club women who spoke of philanthropy in terms of community "uplift," "beneficence," "charity," and "volunteerism." I discovered that at age ninety, Mrs. Terrell established a charitable fund to end segregation in D.C., and the early work of the NACW revealed a strategic and large-scale philanthropic agenda as the Association successfully administered a \$15,000 campaign to preserve Frederick Douglass' home in Anacostia.

Through my research, I have had the unique opportunity to explore what it means to "blend the ideal with the practical" and enhance my studies as an undergraduate in Arts and Humanities. The resources and support that I have received throughout this process have been invaluable to my development. Consequently, I have the opportunity to continue my research at the graduate level as doctoral student in American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. I will be moving to Maryland to begin my first year of graduate studies this fall (2011).

My undergraduate research experience has played a critical role in shaping my future. When I started this project, I never imagined a career in research and teach-

ing, but I now have a wonderful opportunity to fully enact today's theme of "preserving knowledge and creating knowledge" through Arts and Humanities research toward my Ph.D. After graduate school, I look forward to a long and rich career giving back, and helping others, through research and teaching in higher education.

Hine, Darlene Clarke. 1990. "We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: The Philanthropic Work Black Women." In *Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power*. ed. Kathleen D. McCarthy. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 70-91.