

**In Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of
The Founding of
The Black Students Union at MIT
Journey Towards Making a Better World
The Washington DC Leg of Our Trip, 5-7 October 2018**



Written by Dr. Judy "JJ" Jackson and
Submitted with Appreciation to the trip supporters
On behalf of the Black Students Union and the trip participants

CONTENTS

Acknowledgment of Donors	Page 3
Acknowledgement of Gifts in Kind	Page 4
Report	Page 6
Day 1: At Howard University and the National Portrait Gallery	Page 6
Day 2: At the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture	Page 28
Day 3: At the Metropolitan AME Church of Washington DC	Page 39
Appendix A: Impact Statements	Page 42
Appendix B: Detailed Trip Itinerary	Page 88
Appendix C: List of Howard University Speakers	Page 89
Appendix D: List of Alumni & Supporters Panel Members	Page 90
Appendix E: Brief History of the Metropolitan AME Church	Page 91

Grateful Acknowledgment

This historic trip was made possible through generous support from several sources. The contributors funded the round-trip air fare for the multicultural group of 44 participating MIT undergraduate students, two nights in a strategically located Washington DC hotel, chartered ground transportation, and dinner for everyone on the evening of our first day. Costs for participating faculty and staff were kindly paid by their respective departments or units. We offer very special thanks to our major sponsors (indicated **in bold type**), each of whose contribution exceeded \$3,500.

MIT Internal Contributors

Committee on Race and Diversity (Alyce Johnson)

Department of Chemical Engineering (Prof. Paula Hammond)

Department of Materials Science (Prof. Donald Sadoway)

Institute Community and Equity Office (Beatriz Cantada)

MindHandHeart (Maryanne Kirkbride)

Office of Dean for Student Life (Vice President & Dean Suzy Nelson)

Office of the Vice Chancellor (Prof. Ian Waitz)

School of Humanities Arts and Social Science (Dean Melissa Nobles)

MIT Departments/Units Funding the Participating Faculty and Staff

Department of Biology (Prof. Hazel Sive)

Department of Materials Science (Prof. Donald Sadoway)

Office of Dean for Student Life (Dean Gustavo Burkett)

Office of Minority Education (Dean DiOnetta Jones Crayton)

MIT Medical (Dr. Michele David)

Music and Theater Arts (Prof. Matthew Schumaker)

Provost's Office (Dr. Judy "JJ" Jackson)

Contributing Corporate and Individual Supporters

Chevron (Ms. Cynthia Murphy)

Lockheed Martin (Mr. Kevin Oskroba)

Praxair (Vanessa Abrahams-John)

Mr. Berdell Knowles, MIT'94, CEO The Knowles Companies, Inc.

Mr. Gerald Baron, MIT alum

Dr. Robert Kurtz, Chair OME Industrial Advisory Council

Priceless Contributions

The value of this trip for the participating students, faculty and staff is a sum immeasurably greater than the dollars that paid for it. We are deeply grateful for the generous funding that enabled this trip, and even more for the lasting impact on our now deeper knowledge and appreciation of African American history and culture, and their honorable place in the history of the United States.

Kind and generous individuals gave us the precious gifts of their time and the benefit of their wisdom to make this a meaningful experience. Incredibly, all of these individuals volunteered their time and expertise, which intensified our appreciation for all that we experienced. Thanks to them, what we learned has fueled our passion, commitment and the rededication of our efforts to nurture MIT's inclusivity and help make a better world. The names of all of the volunteers are listed in Appendices C-D. In the space below, we offer special acknowledgement to the following individuals:

Frank Matthews and Maya Minter, partners in planning for the BSU 50th events We extend a very special and heartfelt *thank you!* to Frank Matthews (co-founder) and Maya Minter of *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* magazine. From the onset of our brainstorming and event planning for the major events of the BSU 50th anniversary celebration, Frank and Maya joined our Friday morning planning team meetings for most of the year until all critical details were set. It was through them that we connected to Dr. Leslie Fenwick, and the genesis of the idea to explore Howard University's graduate research offerings came from them. They made MIT students and the BSU celebration success their own.

Anthony Wutoh, warm Howard University Welcome
Dr. Wutoh was appointed Provost and Chief Academic Officer of Howard University in June 2015. He previously served as the university's Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Assistant provost for International Programs. Dr. Wutoh's passion for research has resulted in more than \$50 million in grants from several sources, including NIH, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, USAID, Health Resources and Service Administration, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards.

Gary L. Harris, welcoming remarks on behalf of Howard University
Prof. Harris is Dean of the Howard University Graduate School. With BS, master's and doctorate degrees in Electrical Engineering and Electro Physics from Cornell University, Dean Harris currently also serves as Director of the Howard University Nanoscale Science and Engineering Facility in the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Computer Science. His research focuses on the growth and characterization of electronic and optical materials, the fabrication of semiconductor devices with special attention on wide band gap and compound semiconductor materials, and applications of nanotechnology. While a student at Cornell University, Dean Harris was a co-founder of the National Society of Black Engineers and of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

Mina Marefat, our personal guide at the National Portrait Gallery

Dr. Marefat is a registered architect, urban designer, and an architectural historian practicing in Washington as principal of Design Research, an architectural/urban design and research/education firm where she consults on urban revitalization, cultural projects, disaster mitigation and sustainable design. Among her many accolades, she served as the curatorial advisor to the Guggenheim Museum's 2009-2010 Frank Lloyd Wright retrospective in New York and Bilbao and is the curator of a traveling exhibition: Eero Saarinen: A Reputation for Innovation. She holds a Ph.D. from MIT and a Masters in Architecture and Urban design from Harvard University.

Leslie Fenwick, our personal guide at the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC)

Dr. Fenwick is Dean Emerita and Professor of the School of Education at Howard University. She has served as a presidentially appointed Visiting Fellow at Harvard University and a Senior Fellow at West Point Academy. She is a member of the Scholarly Advisory Committee of the Smithsonian NMAAHC, which is charged to help set the museum's intellectual agenda. Dr. Fenwick has volunteered time to lead Rhodes Scholars and other groups through the museum, sharing her intimate knowledge.

Berdell Knowles, MIT '94, Convener of the Alumni Finance & Civic Engagement Panel
Mr. Knowles is CEO & President of The Knowles Companies, Inc. with concerns in Los Angeles, Seattle, Miami and Washington DC. He convened a panel of MIT Black alumni currently active in financial and civic engagement in the greater Washington DC area. These men and women delivered caring words of wisdom and encouragement to the group that—as cited by some of the MIT undergrads in their impact statements (see Appendix A)—ignited their sense of civic duty and financial responsibility on both a personal and public service level, and the importance of Black-owned banks and businesses and the wisdom in supporting them.

Reverend William H. Lamar, Pastor of the Metropolitan AME Church

Pastor Lamar and the Metropolitan AME Church historian, Sister Louise Knowles, and Sister Thelma D. Jacobs, scheduled special time before the Sunday service to provide our group with a warm welcome and informative facts about this historic church, the role of the Black church in African American history and in Black culture in general. In their impact statements, some of the students and faculty attending the Sunday talk and service expressed deep gratitude for the history messages.

**In Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the
Black Students Union (BSU) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**

**On Our Journey Towards Making a Better World
Report of the DC Leg of Our Trip—5-7 October 2018**

“Progress lies not in enhancing what is, but in advancing toward what will be.”

~Khalil Gibran

Renewing Our Commitment and Fueling Our Spirit

Early on Friday, 5 October 2018, 44 MIT undergraduates and seven faculty and staff lifted off on a flight from Logan International Airport, bound for our nation’s capitol. This historic trip to Washington, DC, was conceived as one of four major events in 2018 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Black Students Union (BSU) at MIT. While no one on this trip was at MIT 50 years ago, the Institute’s history is an often-told story of discovery, knowledge creation, and innovation that everyone knew well, and that many personified.

The history of Blacks at MIT is intricately woven into the Institute’s rich fabric. With the founding of the BSU, MIT increased successful efforts at growing diversity and inclusion across the campus constituents of students, faculty and staff. The BSU endeavored to make this trip a journey of discovery that would increase participants’ appreciation of African American history and culture and strengthen their dedication to join forces with other groups on campus to further the notion of OneMIT and—in the words of President Rafael Reif—to help “make a better world.”

The weekend was meant to emphasize for this multicultural group that in the embrace of community, every member's culture and background enriches the collective, resulting in a better world. Increasing our knowledge and understanding of African American history and culture on this trip was an empowering experience that nurtured that goal.

Many students and faculty on the trip attested to this fact and more in the impact statements that they wrote, which are found in Appendix A of this report.

Day 1: At Howard University and the National Portrait Gallery. Striking revelations, new-found respect for an HBCU—and for each other

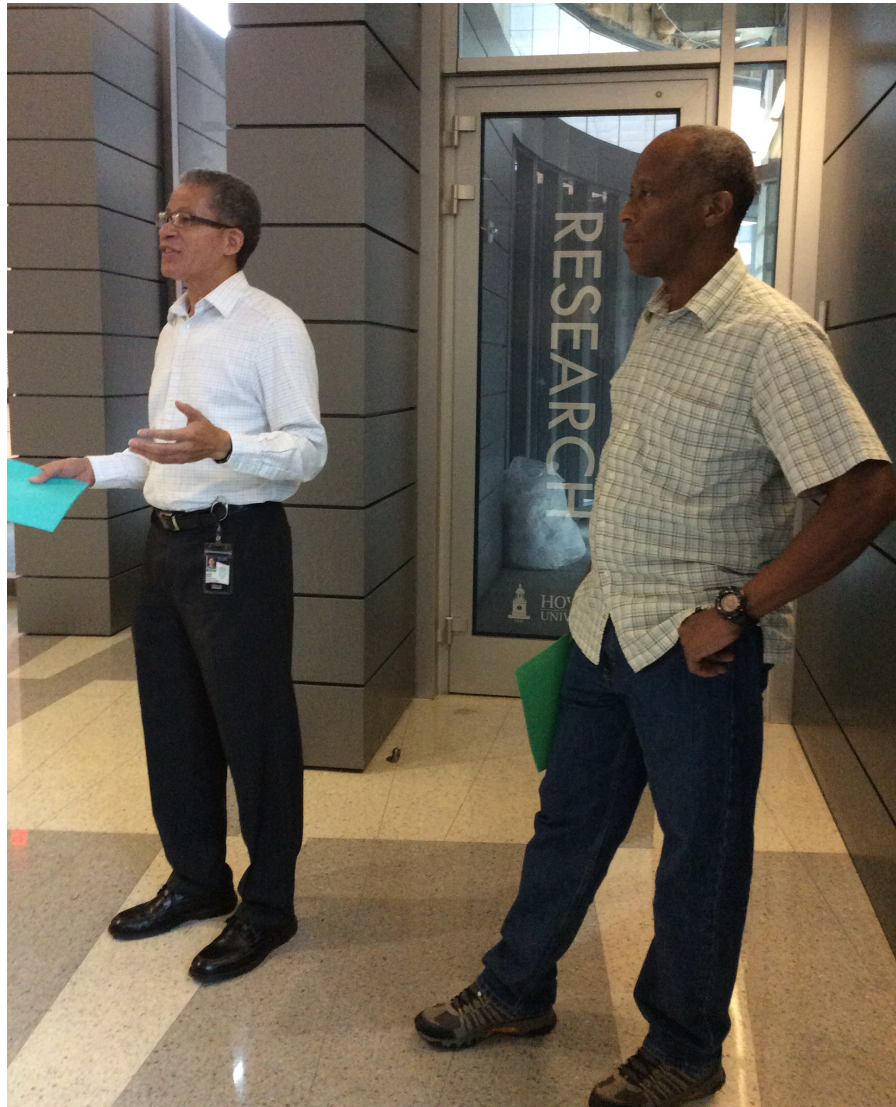
We arrived at Reagan National Airport just before 10:00 on Friday morning and promptly boarded a chartered bus to the Howard University campus, just a few minutes away. Ms. Alveta Addison, coordinator of our campus visit, greeted us with great enthusiasm and a rousing and passionate declaration that Howard is the original “HU”

and immediately taught the group the popular call-and-response cry—“You Know!” Then came what was for the students eye-opening and unexpected revelations. As a major research institution, Howard University wins millions of dollars annually in sponsored research and participates in collaborations that include MIT, Harvard University and other institutions.

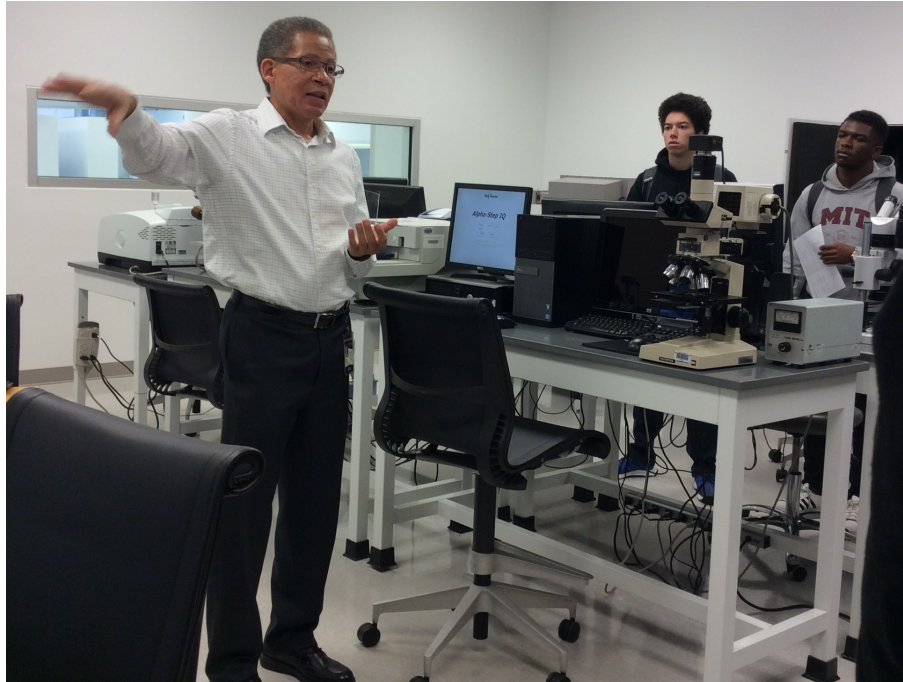


Immediately off the bus, the group is ready for a tour of the research labs and activities at Howard University’s Graduate School.

We began with an in-depth tour of the Graduate School and its research facilities. The group was divided into two and each led by research faculty to see various laboratories and state-of-the-art equipment. The group learned of research activities from the labs to the rooftop.



Dr. James Griffin (left) welcomes the MIT group to the Howard University Graduate School Research Center and reviews the tour stops.



Above left, Prof. Griffin explains uses of the lab equipment.

Below, third from right, MIT Professor Hazel Sive and a subgroup of the students enjoy the view from the top of a research building.





Above left, before seeing parts of Howard University's Medical School labs, Prof. Don Sadoway listens along with a subgroup of the students, as Dr. Robert Kurtz (3rd from left) snaps a shot of the group. A surgeon, Dr. Kurtz, chairs the Industrial Advisory Council of MIT's Office of Minority Education.

Below, students prepare to head to Simulation Lab.





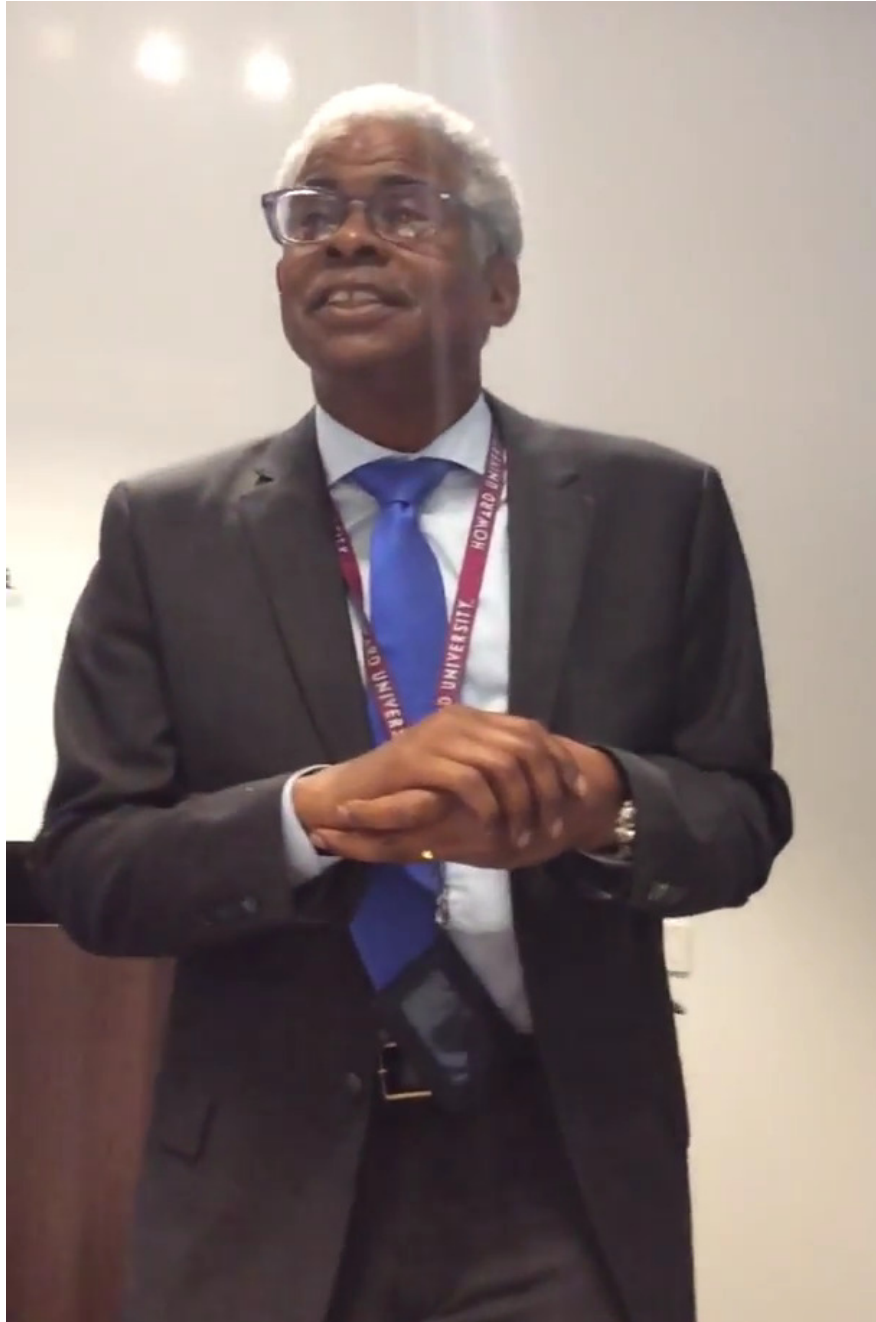
In the Medical School's Simulation Center, students listen intently as a high-tech mannequin serves as an unexpectedly life-like human proxy.

After an extensive tour of the research facilities, the Medical School Clinical Lab and its Simulation Center, the chatter of the students was lively as they exclaimed about all of the state-of-the-art equipment. The high-tech mannequins in the Simulation Center left them spellbound as they watched the mannequins breathe, groan in pain, gasp for air and talk (through pre-programmed dialogue) with the staff. Although we didn't get to see it, we were told that some of the high-tech mannequins even simulated bleeding. Learning that Howard University graduates one of the largest number of African American nurses, trained in these very labs, many of the students found the graduate research and Medical Clinic Lab tour to be one of the most striking parts of the Howard visit, rivaled only by the experiences and insights that the panel of faculty and graduate students shared, which was preceded by other warm welcomes.



Provost Anthony Wutoh led a long list of welcoming Howard University faculty and staff.

Although we were honored and very grateful for the enormous amount of time that so many at Howard University happily volunteered to us, it was Provost Anthony Wutoh who expressed feeling honored that our group had chosen to visit this premier HBCU. He warmly welcomed us all, touted collaborative research with MIT, and briefly and cleanly described the many academic opportunities that Howard has available. He made it clear that Howard would love to see MIT undergraduates entering its graduate programs—a message not lost on many of the students who willingly received it.



Prof. Gary Harris, Dean of Howard University Graduate School

Founding member and former Regional Chair of the National Society of Black Engineers, Dean Gary Harris gave us some interesting history about Howard's founding as a school to educate people from every background, shared his ties to MIT, including Howard's collaboration with MIT and Harvard, and thus welcomed the students "home."

All attention then turned to the faculty panel as the group listened closely to the stories about the highest standards of work, community-building philosophies, and nurturing

that left so many of the students wondering why HBCU's are so often undervalued. One speaker after another proudly regaled the group about Howard's strengths, their personal experiences, and illustrious alumni. From the pages of history to current headlines, they recounted stories of Howard giving good people to the world, including noted STEM professionals, public figures, actors, artists and humanitarians.



Faculty panel members: From left, Dr. Jonathan Smith, Atmospheric Science; Dr. Richard Sakai, Atmospheric Science; Dr. Thomas Searles, Physics; Mr. Daniel Plummer, graduate student in Math; Dr. Robert Efimba, Engineering and MIT alum.

The panel captivated the students with the revelations of knowledge, discovery and nurturing that are hallmarks of this premier institution. The group listened very closely and made their own decisions, many saying afterwards that they would seriously consider graduate study at “the real HU!” Everyone left Howard’s campus on an intellectual high as we boarded our bus and headed for the National Portrait Gallery.

National Portrait Gallery

Dr. Mina Marefat was waiting eagerly to greet us. A Washington DC architect, MIT alumna and our personal guide through this amazing gallery, Dr. Marefat prepared us for the tour. She provided the group with thoughtful context for so many of the pieces on display, and informed us of the architecture of the gallery and neighboring buildings.

Dr. Marefat (wearing the black hat) greets the group upon our arrival in front of the National Portrait Gallery.



The group moving through the halls of the National Portrait Gallery, taking in the awe and beauty of portraits and building.



With intermittent time on our own, the group wandered through the gallery’s halls filling holes in our knowledge of American and Black history, some aspects of which we previously had not given adequate thought. Students chatted energetically about the “surprises” in portraits in the gallery by Titus Kaphar that provided evidence of blatant omission of critical parts of African American history, portraits that suggested the hypocrisy of historical figures who have for centuries been revered and immortalized as heroes in our history books.

Darkened National Histories

Whose history is told in our textbooks, classrooms, and beyond?

In this gallery, Titus Kaphar imagines a retelling of the stories of some of the most widely recognized figures in American history while revealing the complicated ways in which their lives intersected with African Americans and Native Americans. He copies famous portraits of renowned men and physically shapes the material of the canvas to add another viewpoint.

In his re-interpretation of John Vanderlyn's depiction of Christopher Columbus's landing, he chose to shroud the crew with fabric and leave the natives in the background as they were: uncovered. In his portrait of Thomas Jefferson, he seemingly ripped half of the president's portrait off the stretcher to reveal the image of a young woman who evokes Sally Hemings. President Andrew Jackson's portrait has been cut into strips and pinned to the wall, conjuring the violent consequences of the Indian Removal Act, which he signed into law. The rolled-up portrait of Thaddeus Stevens discloses the body of an African American woman, a nod to the congressman's common-law relationship with Lydia Smith, behind the shades so to speak. With all of these works, Kaphar destabilizes our understandings of these well-known figures and exposes the lesser-known facets of their biographies.

Hist

¿De q
de tex

En
revisa
históri
compl
los afr
famos
lienzo

En s
Colón
lación
estaba
el artíst
del lien
evoca a
cortado
las viol
de los I
de Thad
ver el cu
relación
las corti
desestab
expone

Placard displayed in the Titus Kaphar section of the National Portrait Gallery.



Kaphar's portrait of Thomas Jefferson and the evocation of Sally Hemings. National Portrait Gallery.

Deconstructed Portraits

What can a portrait tell us about social codes, stature, and power?

The works in this gallery show how Titus Kaphar manipulates the rules of portraiture to expose the marginalization of African Americans. He emulates, in painstaking detail, the fashion, settings, and poses of historical Anglo-European portraits but chooses African Americans as his subjects. He then assaults these paintings through physical interventions, enacting a powerful critique of how so many African Americans have been literally left unseen in traditional museums and art historical narratives.

Kaphar employs a variety of techniques to underscore contributions that have not yet been adequately honored. He smeared tar over the faces of Billy Lee (1750–1828) and Ona Judge (c. 1773–1848) to emphasize how they were never commemorated in official portraits. In an otherwise typical Grand Manner portrait of a dignified lady on her horse, he veiled the woman's identity. His image of a black Union soldier is covered in swaths of white paint, and in another portrait of a black man, he has cut the canvas to suggest the sitter's voicelessness.

By pushing how far one artist can go in undoing a portrait, Kaphar pushes us to confront and uncover the absences in our history.

Placard displayed in the Titus Kaphar section of the gallery preparing the viewer for the several works that move viewers to question what they thought they knew of American history and its African American insets.



Portrait of the tar-smearing faces of Billy Lee (1750-1828) and Ona Judge (c. 1773-1848) mentioned on the placard shown above.



Kaphar's dignified but veiled woman on horseback, mentioned on placard (see above).



Kaphar's image of a Black Union soldier covered in swaths of white paint, suggesting an example of the marginalization or ignoring of African Americans.



Kaphar's depiction of the Black, 54th Massachusetts Regiment, with information placard below.

*The Gallant Charge of the Fifty-Fourth
Massachusetts (Colored) Regiment*
Robert Gould Shaw 1837-1863
Born Boston, Massachusetts

When Massachusetts Governor John Andrew organized the North's first regiment of African American troops, Robert Gould Shaw was offered the commission of colonel to head the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry. After a brief period of training, the novice regiment of black volunteers was thrown into action in the occupation of the Sea Islands off South Carolina. The regiment did not perform well, and its role in the subsequent burning of Darien, Georgia, aroused controversy in the North and outrage in the South.

On July 18, 1863, the Fifty-Fourth made its reputation with a courageous and doomed frontal attack on Fort Wagner, outside of Charleston. Shaw was killed, one of 272 casualties. Nevertheless, the attack validated the African American presence in the military and was a powerful propaganda tool against the South. Shaw became a legendary figure, admired for his selflessness and sacrifice.

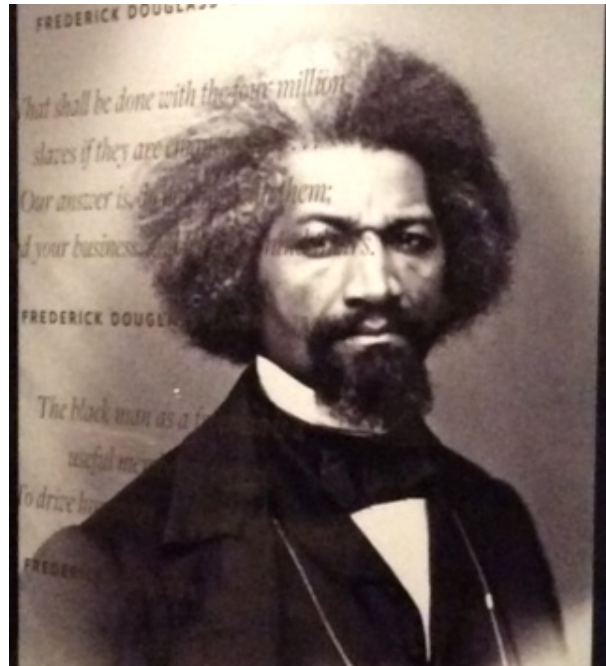
Currier & Ives Lithography Company
(active 1857-1907)
Hand-colored lithograph, 1863

NPC. 2016.104

As the students' eyes moved over the Kaphar exhibits, they became visibly concerned. U.S. history books tell a woefully inadequate story of slavery and its impact on American economic and political systems, and of the desecration of Black culture. The students seemed to feel again the historical rejection of Blackness when they came upon the portrait of Frederick Douglass. They shared shock and dismay with each other as they compared portraits of the well-known abolitionist, who is an especially popular topic during Black History Month. Born into slavery in Maryland, at age 20 Douglass escaped to freedom in New York, where he began his activism, writing, traveling and speaking against slavery. He is considered one of the great anti-slavery leaders of the 1800s.

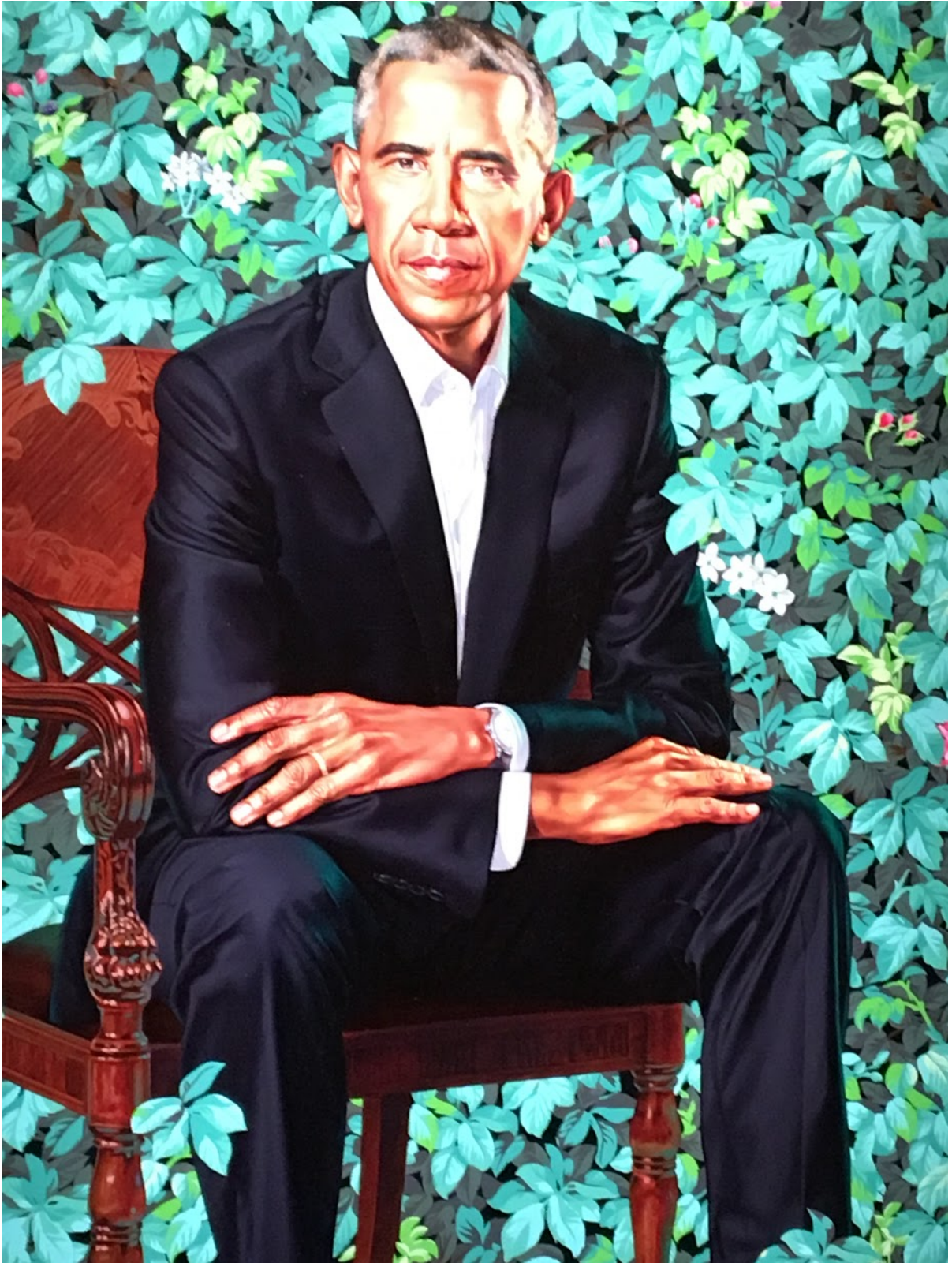


Frederick Douglass portrait on display in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC.



Frederick Douglass portrait in the Smithsonian Museum of American History and Culture

The portrait of this beloved historical Black figure that hung in the National Portrait Gallery depicted him with very Anglicized features. Several of the students whipped out their phones to google other portraits of Douglas, which showed him with the unmistakable features of dark skin and kinky hair. Their senses now primed, the students continued through the gallery with renewed interest and more questioning. The contrast of these portraits seemed like a travesty that weighed on them. If we are to build community—they might have thought—then our existence and who we are cannot be denied or “white washed.” The fact that Black and non-Black students alike noticed the contrast seemed to signal that their bonding would survive history writers’ missteps. As the students continued through the gallery, they seemed to walk now closer to each other as if in rejection of the denial of Blackness they saw in some of the Gallery portraits. Perhaps some of these students will give truth to the African saying, “When lions have historians, hunters will cease to be heroes.” Perhaps the story they tell of OneMIT will be of true inclusivity and belonging. So it seemed in that moment.



Portrait of President Barack Obama on display in Washington DC's National Portrait Gallery



Portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama on display at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC.

Of course, no one is likely to conclude a visit to the National Portrait Gallery without marveling over the portraits of the beloved former first couple, President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, shown above.

The election of America's first African American president represented a moment that many thought they would never see in American history or their lifetime. President and First Lady Obama's legacy has given many people of all backgrounds renewed hope in the American Dream and the belief in the pursuit of happiness. Members of the group dealt with long lines of visitors from numerous backgrounds both domestic and foreign, waiting to get a chance to pose in front of the portraits.



MIT student poses in front of portrait of former President Barack Obama.



MIT student poses in front of portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama.

We concluded an amazing tour of the National Portrait Gallery that left the group at times in reflective silence, basking in clear admiration of the Obamas but wondering with growing doubt about the portrayal and characterization of African Americans in the annals of American history. Chatter coursed through the group and out the door as we literally closed the museum and boarded our bus for the Bombay Club restaurant just a few blocks drive away. Dr. Marefat joined us for a lively dinner where everyone seemed to bond over the shared experiences of the day, with Black and non-Black group members finding common ground, mutual concerns, and unifying energy in their connectedness. We were OneMIT!



From left, Dr. Mina Marefat, an MIT undergrad, Prof. Hazel Sive, Dr. JJ Jackson, Dr. Robert Kurtz

Below in foreground, student Braden Cook is chatted with other students at Friday's dinner.



Day 2: Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Confronting the “unvarnished truth” of Black history

We peered from our seats through the windows of the bus, gazing at the building as the driver pulled up to the front. We were awe-struck before we even stepped out onto the sidewalk. It was obvious that we were about to experience something powerful in this place. We fell suddenly quiet as our eyes moved from the ground to the sky, scaling the magnificent edifice. It was a good thing we had arrived here early in the morning, for as the day waxed on we found we could barely tear ourselves away from one exhibit to the next.

As virtually everyone on the trip later testified (noted in the striking comments in some of the impact statements in Appendix A), the major impact of this historic trip was the daylong visit in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.



Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington DC



Welcome desk at the Smithsonian National Museum for African American History and Culture. It is reported currently to be the most visited of the Smithsonian museums, with visitors lingering on average over four hours.



Dr. Leslie Fenwick (foreground), member of the Scholarly Advisory Committee of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Dean Emerita of the Howard University School of Education was our guide.

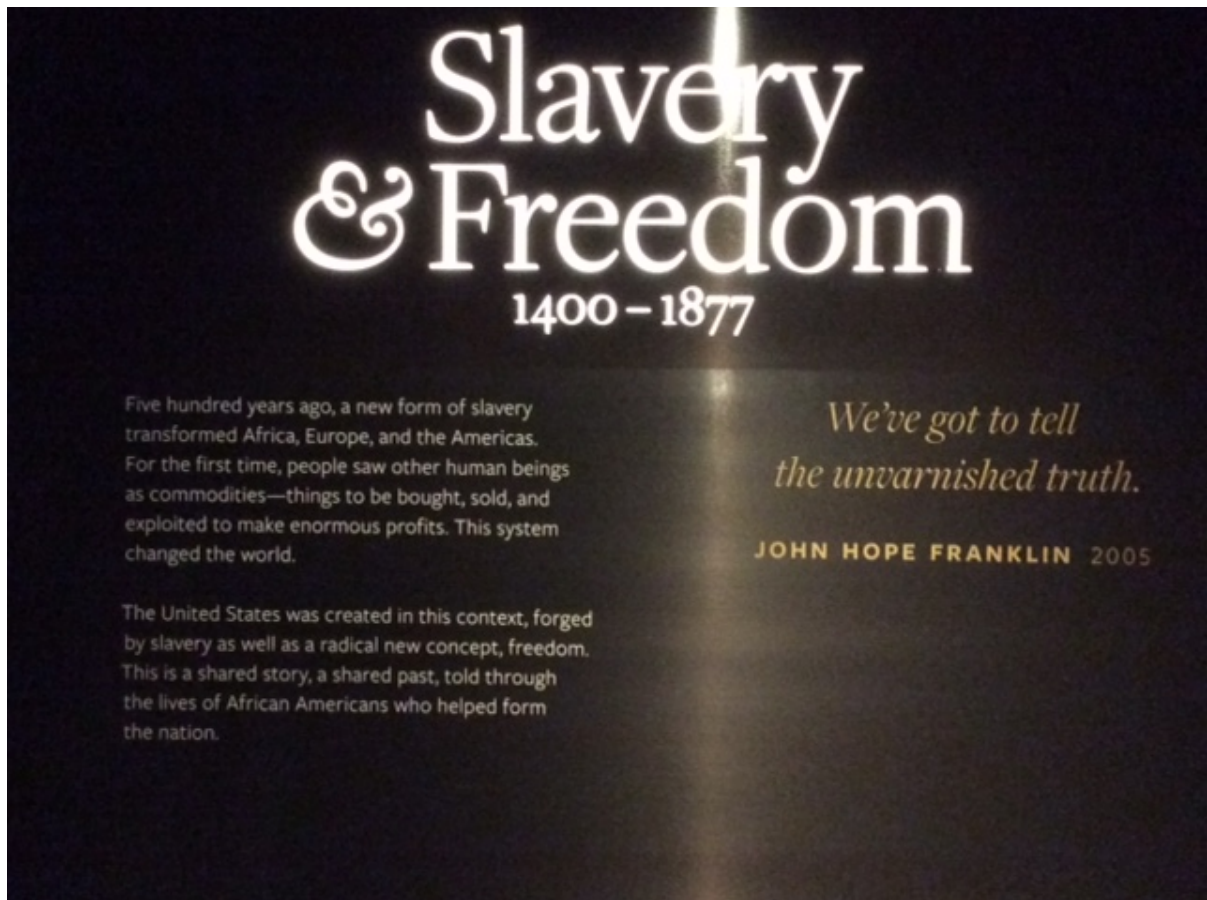
Our waiting guide, Dr. Leslie Fenwick, greeted us warmly upon our arrival and got us off to a great start. With a preface of some museum background, she explained where we would begin on our tour and gave us information on the import of the strategic way in which the museum exhibits were laid out. Each level was designed to invoke themes of African American history and its inextricable weave within successive periods in American history. Quoting the beloved Black historian and scholar, John Hope Franklin, she noted that the very existence of the museum was designed “to tell the unvarnished truth” of Black history in America.

We started our soul-searching trek through the museum with the exhibit on the history of slavery, which was located on the windowless bottom level, intentionally inducing a sense of the terror and despair in the slave ships that transported millions of Africans across the Middle Passage to death or bondage.



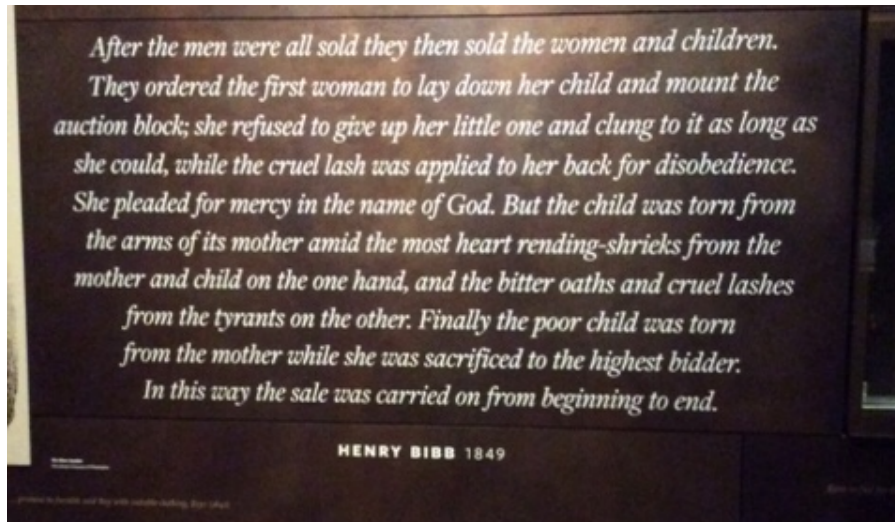
The group begins its sojourn through the Smithsonian National of African American History and Culture in the Slavery & Freedom exhibit.

As we moved through the exhibit, “the unvarnished truth” was plainly laid out: slavery meant wealth for enslavers and bolstered the country’s economy. “For the first time,” as inscribed on one plaque, “people saw other human beings as commodities—things to be bought, sold, and exploited to make enormous profits. This system changed the world.”

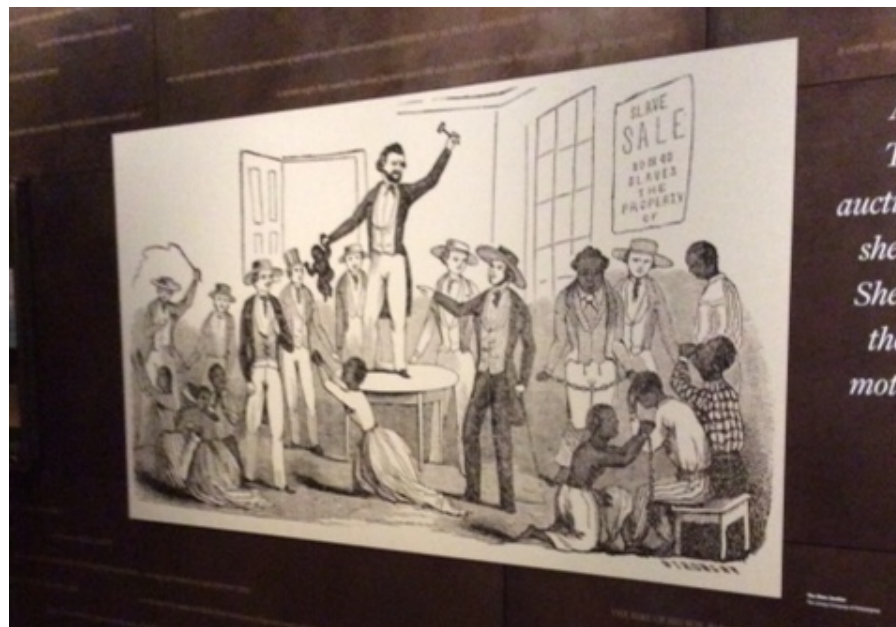


Plaque displayed on the lower level of the National Museum of African American History and Culture

One display after another offered data and depictions of the cruelty that enslaved Africans had suffered at the hands of the slave traders. Plaques documented the names of scores of the ships that carried their human cargo across the seas to an unwanted life. The ships’ logs showed the number of enslaved persons that had been put on board, and the number that had survived the passage upon arrival. We involuntarily shuddered when Dr. Fenwick pointed out the log entry of one ship that set sail with almost 200 African men, women and children aboard bound for foreign shores, and it arrived with one single survivor to be sold and enslaved.



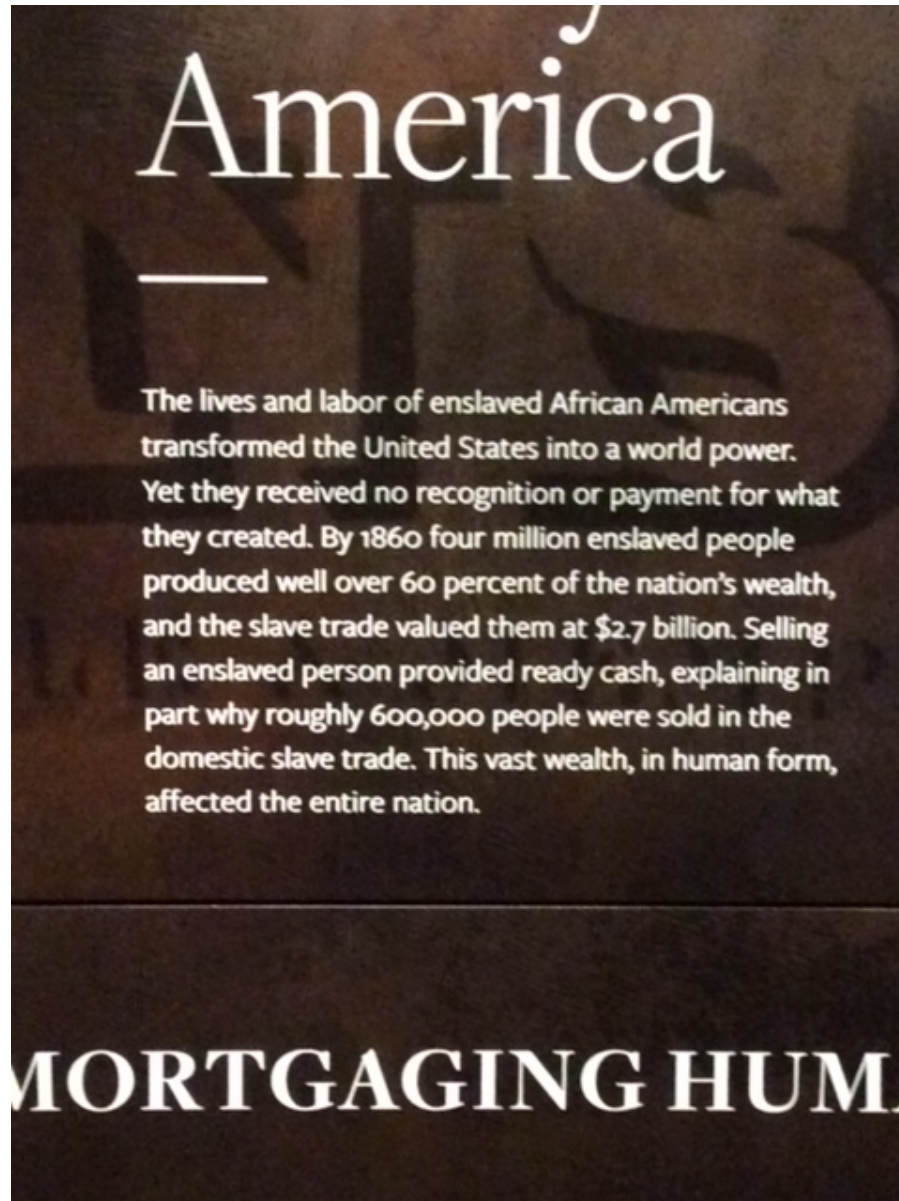
The process of the purchase and sale of human beings is described on this plaque in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.



Depiction of an African woman and child being mercilessly ripped apart and each sold to the highest bidder.

Slave traders cruelly and inhumanely tore African families apart, selling men from their wives and children from their mothers, rendering each to the highest bidder. The high-

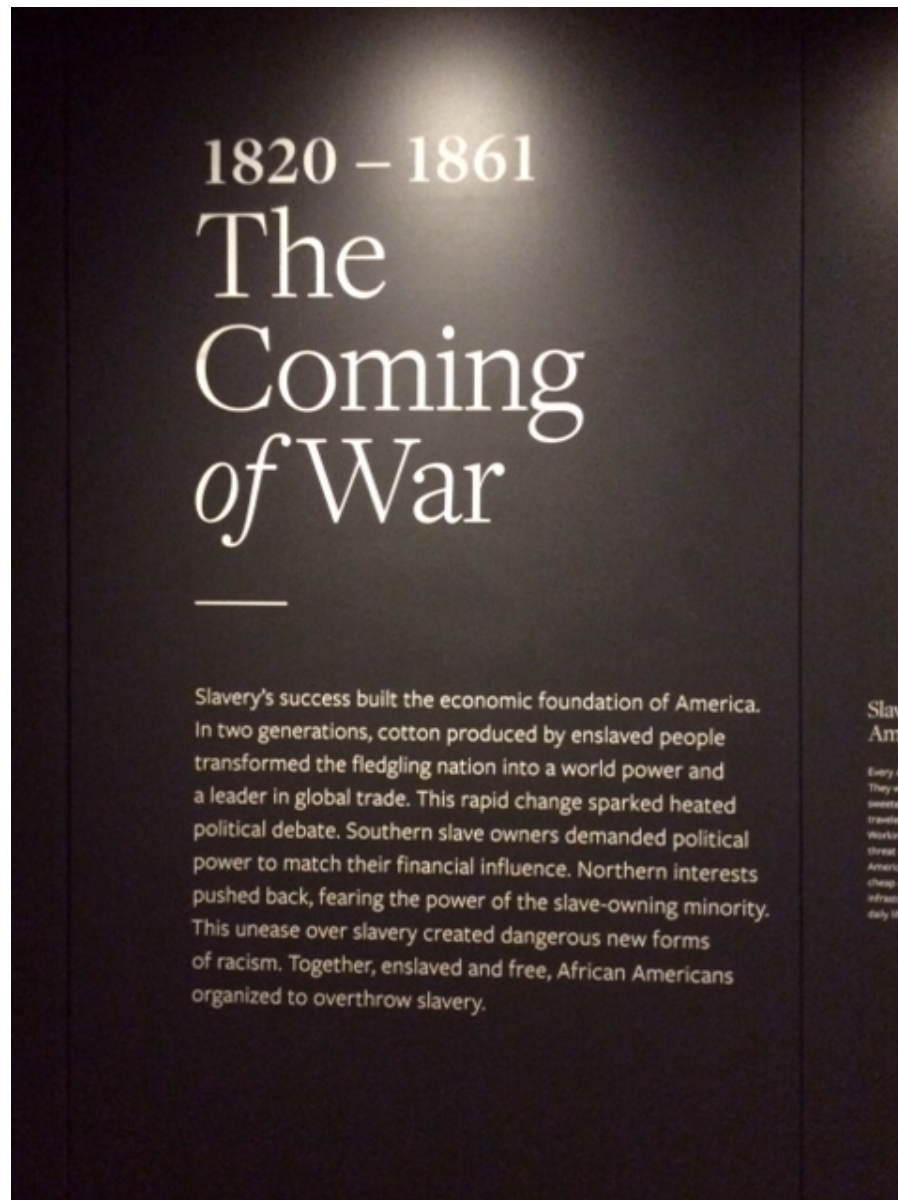
pitched fever of acquiring wealth and dominance seemed so hot that slave traders' and slave owners' could not contemplate that they were engaging in human trafficking.



One of several plaques explaining the economic and political impact of the slave trade in America.

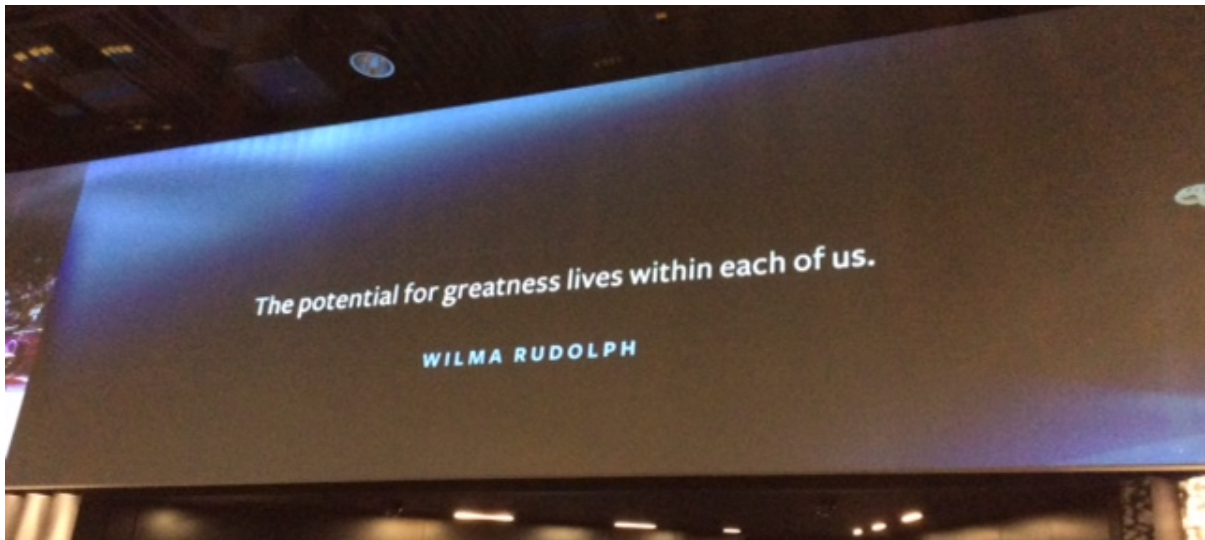
As is the eventuality of most things, however, slavery too had to end. There was documentation in the museum that told of cases of enslaved individuals using states' own laws to argue for and win their freedom. Other cases of freedom won recounted more violent means toward that goal. Either way, as one sage put it, "*Progress lies not in*

enhancing what is, but in advancing toward what will be.” And Blacks were determined that what was to be was their freedom.

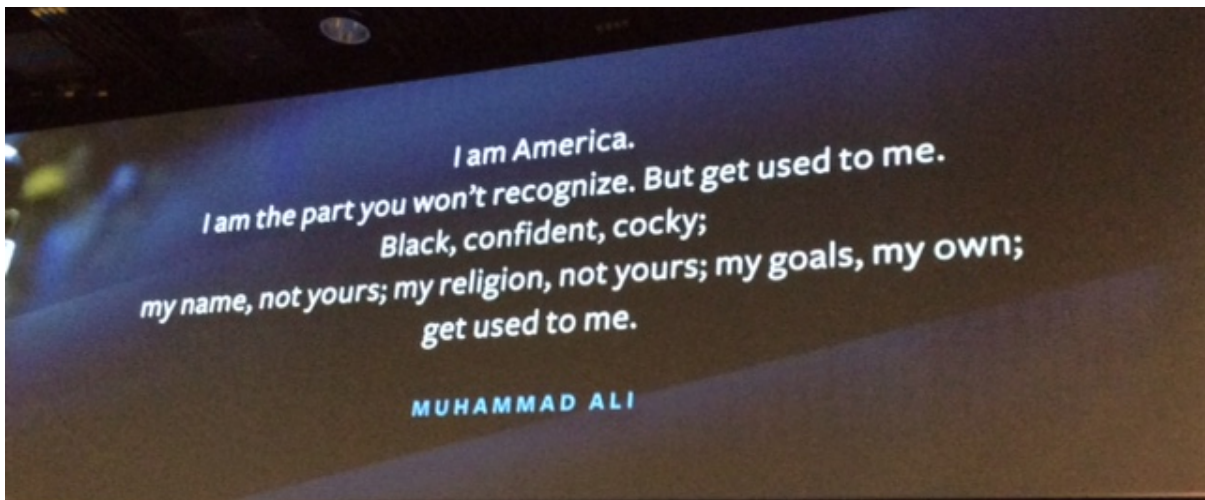


Following the strategic layout of the museum’s exhibits and themes, the group moved “up from the gloomy past” (to cite the words of the Black national anthem) with the burden of slavery lifted, in a way, to upper floors of the museum and the displays of advancement in African American history. As we segued into more modern times, the story of African Americans continuing to rise against all odds came to life in the different exhibits. The rich history of countless accomplishments of African Americans filled the walls and display cases. One striking, unmistakable and remarkable thing that

we began to notice through the progression of the exhibits was the humanity that has survived despite the inhumane treatment that African Americans have endured through time. From arts to sports, politics to religion, or science to letters, the lust for life shared was evident. A quote from Wilma Rudolph captured it:

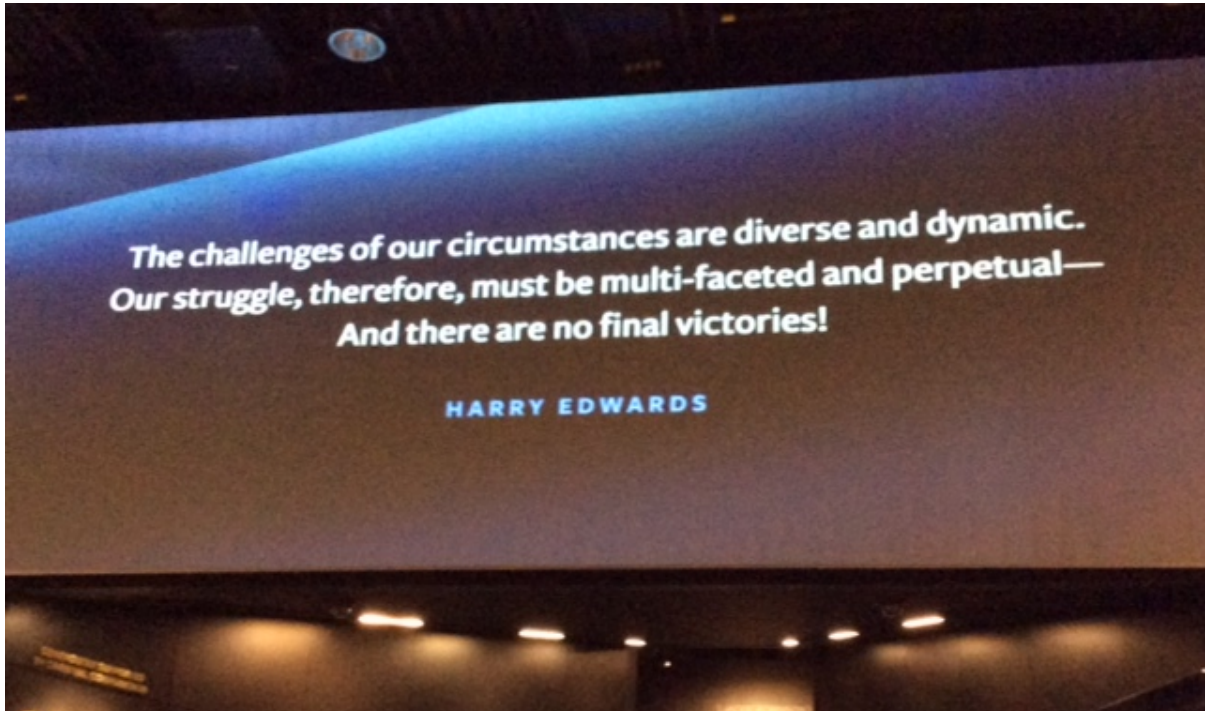


Recovering our vigor from spirits uplifted, a certain sense of reaffirmation of human ability and promise, and the matter-of-fact declaration of our determination to reach towards our potential seemed to settle over the group, felt strongest perhaps by the Black students on the trip and best captured in the words of a champion:



It seemed, though, that any measure of cockiness that momentarily might have been felt by members of the group was tempered by the realization that we share this country

and this planet with others who also dream of a better world. The bonding obviously taking place on this trip seemed like a testimony to this realization, and seemed best summed up by the sociologist and civil rights activist Harry Edwards:



Having dispersed to the many captivating exhibits all over the museum, we suddenly were reminded by a voice over the loudspeaker that—once again—we were closing the place and it was time to leave. We quickly reassembled for a group photo, below.



Quite a few members of the group rejoined each other in a meeting room of our hotel to receive continued wisdom, renewal and inspiration from a panel of Black alumni and other supporters. Invited and convened by Berdell Knowles '94 to give the students inside views and insight on building personal wealth and exercising civic responsibility, they were entrepreneurs, scientists, bankers and public figures. The students were quite engaged and ready to hear what the alums had to say. Their stories were varied; their advice was clear; and their encouragement was strong. The students greatly appreciated the valuable time that the alums so willingly and lovingly gave that evening.

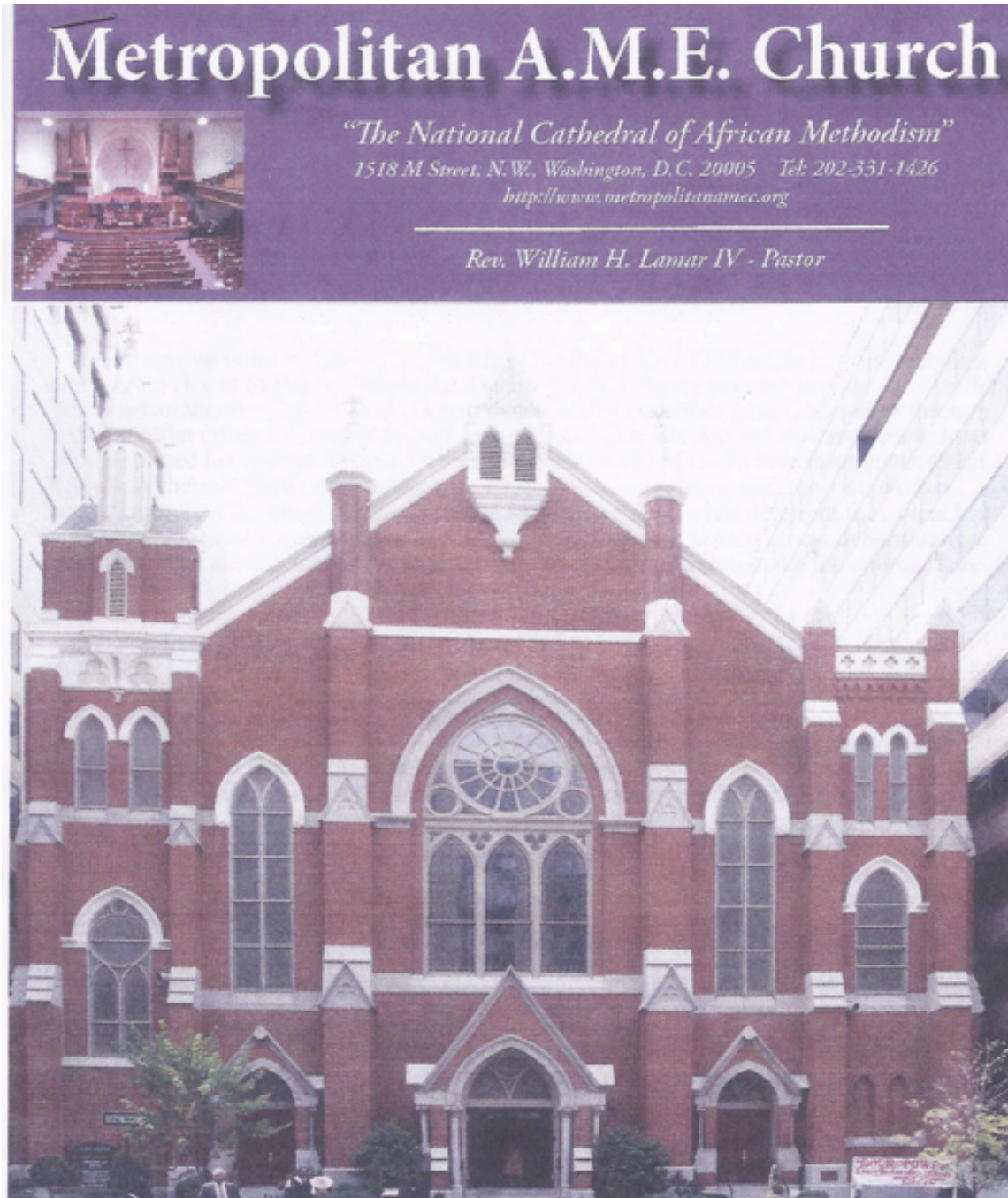


Left, Kim Saunders, president of the National Bankers Association, addresses the students. Alumnus Berdell Knowles convened the panel.



Students listening to good advice and strong guidance from the panel while enjoying dinner.

Day 3: At the Metropolitan AME Church of Washington DC.
A Church With A History



We chose to spend Sunday morning and the final hours of our DC visit at the Metropolitan AME Church. We wanted to consider the role of the Black church in the Civil Rights Movement and in African American history and culture in general. Since the 19th Century, Metropolitan has been a major center of worship and an institution in the forefront of the civic, cultural, and intellectual life of African Americans. The church is recognized and respected as a welcoming place of religious and secular intellectual thought and discussion (see a brief history of the Metropolitan AME Church of Washington DC in Appendix E).

Church history records that through the years Metropolitan AME Church has welcomed numerous civil rights figures to her podium including: Frederick Douglass, Mary McLeod Bethune, W. E. B. Dubois, Ida B. Wells, Booker T Washington, Winnie Mandela, Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., Dorothy Height and others. The church has provided a concert platform for musical artists such as opera singers Todd Duncan and Leontyne Price. Several US Presidents have either worshipped or spoken at Metropolitan. William (Bill) J. Clinton and Albert (Al) Gore, Jr. in 1993 and 1997, held their inaugural prayer services at Metropolitan after their election as President and Vice President of the United States, respectively.

During his time as head of our nation, President Barack Obama spoke and worshipped in the Metropolitan AME on different occasions, including before his swearing-in ceremony. He attended Sunday MLK, Jr. holiday services on at least two occasions, delivered the address at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance on at least one occasion, and he and the First Family worshipped at the historic church after the mass shootings in Tucson.



The First Family visits the Metropolitan AME Church of Washington, DC. From left, older daughter Malia, President Obama, then church pastor Rev. and Mrs. Braxton, First Lady Michelle Obama, and younger daughter Sasha.

Current pastor, Rev. William Lamar and the church historian had set aside a special pre-service time for the MIT visitors and recounted notable facts about the church's history. They pointed out pews designated or named for such figures as Frederick Douglass and the late Gwen Ifill, political reporter and co-anchor of the PBS NewsHour. After the history lesson, most of the group remained for the regular church service, enjoying the message and the music. We had the unexpected good fortune to see and chat with Dr. James Turner, renowned MIT alum; and MIT alum Dr. Julianne Malveaux, author, journalist, and former president of Bennett College in Greensboro, NC.



The group posed for our history lesson at the Metropolitan AME Church on M. Street NW.



Members of the group pose with Reverend William Lamar, center.

We left the church in high spirits and dispersed to various locations of our choosing for a bite to eat. At mid-afternoon we reconvened at our hotel, collected our bags and boarded our bus to the airport. It was indeed a historic trip. We learned a lot, we broadened our world outlook, we grew closer, and we left Washington with renewed focus on OneMIT and our power to help make a better world. •••

APPENDIX A: Impact Statements

The journey of this historic trip to Washington, DC was unforgettable. The impressions it left and the memories it made are indelible. Students and faculty and staff alike had moments of surprise, of reflection, of sorrow, of laughter, and of wonder as the bond grew stronger that makes a group feel like OneMIT.

The students were asked to write a one- or two-page impact statement about the strip, and a couple of the faculty chose to do the same. The following are their reflections in alphabetical order by the author's last name.

BSU 50th Anniversary Trip Impact Statement

Sheila Baber

I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to visit so many different locations in DC that symbolize African American struggle and triumph--from Historically Black Colleges and Universities to AME churches and of course, the Museum of African American History and Culture. As someone who is mixed-race and grew up abroad, I felt that I was disconnected from the racial problems of the United States. For a long time I placed the question of my own ethnic identity on the backburner, and chose ignorance when it came to the political climate back home. It was a shock to me when I came to MIT and learned about assumptions that other made regarding my race, and the assumptions that *I* made regarding race, despite my belief that I was somehow a neutral outside observer.

The BSU 50th Anniversary trip not only educated me about African American history and culture, but helped me claim ownership over my identity and take part in the story.

Of the many places that we visited, I feel that the Museum of African American History and Culture made the most impression on me. Walking through the bottom floor of the African American History and Culture Museum, we were funnelled into a very narrow passageway that emulated the galleys of slave ships from the Middle Passage. I came across a pair of child-sized shackles and thought of how painfully thin the wrist that fit through them must have been. Outside the galley was a wall inscribed with the names of ships and numbers detailing how many came on board, and how many had survived. Dr. Fenwick pointed to a name, the St. Michel, which had no numbers next to it. The ship had set sail from Africa carrying hundreds--and arrived in the Americas with only one survivor.

One survivor.

I know that on my father's side of the family, there were plantation owners in Virginia. There is no doubt as to whether they held slaves. The thought that there are people out there bearing my last name, who were enslaved, tortured, and raped by my ancestors--haunts me.

I am not sure what I could say if I met one of them. I'm not sure how meaningful an apology would be at this point. The least I can do is to acknowledge this part of my identity. To acknowledge that I have an indelible connection to slavery, and that my cultural heritage has been shaped by people whose names and stories have been lost, on whose backs this country was built on.

What I would like to aspire to, however, is more than acknowledgement. The sense of duty towards community was a theme that came up multiple times during this trip. It came up during the lunch lecture at Howard, it came up during the dinner discussion with the BAMIT alumni, it came up in the hallowed hall of the AME Metropolitan. The confirmation of Kavanaugh during our stay at D.C. just emphasized the sense of urgency in this political climate. The words of Reverend Lamar, that America was built for white males and will revert back to its original state if there is no impulse to oppose it--and that we with our privilege of education cannot simply "walk out the door and melt away into middle class nothingness"--seemed directed right at me.

I need to figure out the part I need to play to do to oppose the wave of racism, violence, and hate that permeates through our country--and I thank the BSU for giving me the push needed to start searching.

Sheila Baber

Braden Cook
October 12, 2018

Reflection on the BSU Trip to Washington D.C.

I am very grateful to have gone on the BSU's 50th Anniversary celebratory trip to Washington D.C. For me, the BSU's trip to Washington D.C. was in many ways a return to my own "roots" or a return "home" because I lived in the D.C., Maryland, Virginia (DMV) area for 15 years of my life. Since I no longer live in the DMV, simply being in the DMV area felt special to me. This trip was also very special to me because it was an amazing learning experience. Each day of the trip was insightful and unforgettable, and I am excited to use what I learned from this trip as I continue to grow and mature.

Our trip to Howard on the first day of the trip was incredible. I learned so much about Howard's graduate program, so much so that I will most definitely consider them when thinking about plans post-graduation. I was extremely impressed and extremely proud to know that such a high-quality institution existed that is geared towards the success of people of color in America.

Our visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture was also inspiring and thought-provoking. Learning about my history as an African American is so important to me: it is important to know, understand, and appreciate the many sacrifices that people made in the past so that I could be where I am in the present. This trip to the NMAAHC made such an enlightenment possible.

Our trip to the Metropolitan AME was also a great experience. I also felt at home at Metropolitan because I grew up in the black church. I was also able to make connections with some of the church members, one of which who even offered to take my resume and search for job opportunities in the area on my behalf.

Overall, this trip was an amazing experience and a unique opportunity to revisit my roots and learn about my own history. This is vitally important to me because when I understand the sacrifices that people made for me to be where I am today – when I understand that I am not a “self-made man”, but the product of many efforts, seen and unseen – only then will I live with purpose and live with excellence. Once again, I am extremely grateful to have been able to join the BSU on this historic trip, and I look forward to using what I learned from this trip as I continue to grow and mature as an individual.

Braden Cook

Zehreen Etwarooah
MIT BSU D.C. trip impact statement
Wednesday, October 10, 2018

I cannot possibly express enough gratitude for the D.C. trip that I was given the opportunity to go to, simply because the amount that I learned on this trip does not even compare to the amount I would have learned just by staying here on the MIT campus. I am an international student from Mauritius, a small island nation in East Africa. I have not been to many places in the United States apart from Boston, so having the opportunity to go to D.C (which I refer to as the 'Rome of the U.S') along with other incredible MIT students was something I could not miss.

Without doubt, the best part of the trip for me was Saturday – we visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture throughout the entire day and were fortunate enough to have Dr. Leslie Fenwick give us a tour. Without her guidance, I would have missed many of the important points and links between the artifacts displayed in the museum and its architecture. Because we were allowed a lot of free time, I made the most of it by visiting several other museums, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. To me, as an international student, this was truly a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Some of my favorite parts of the National Museum of African American History were its architecture (based on the Yoruban statue). The transition from darkness to light as one moves from the slavery era to the post-slavery one is a work of architectural and design genius. On the very first concourse level, the juxtaposition of the slaves' quotes versus the colonizers' quotes had a profound meaning and impact on me.

The island of Mauritius has a long history of colonization, slavery, and indentured labor. Right after visiting the National Museum of African American History, I sat on the National Mall lawn, thinking about how my country does not have a museum to showcase all the artifacts from the slavery and indentured labor era, although we do

have so many of those, scattered in different families and tribes around the island. We have a tremendous amount to showcase – from the living quarters of the indentured laborers from when they first arrived on the island, to the caves where slaves used to run to and commit suicide because they did not want their masters to catch them.

Inspired by the museum, I am now thinking about the process it would take to create and curate a museum of slavery and indentured labor back home in my island of Mauritius. A place where the story of slaves is told through their own artifacts and words; an interactive space where Mauritian people can reconnect with their roots and international visitors can learn about the brutal institution of slavery that was such an ingrained part of the island's history – that would be the ideal. Trained by MIT and inspired by trips such as this one, I am certain that with rightly chosen architects, designers, historians, and social scientists, I can make the dream of a slavery and indentured labor museum in Mauritius possible. I am incredibly grateful to Dr. JJ Jackson, the BSU, and all the other donors who made this trip possible. This opportunity has inspired me to create something tangible, as I mentioned above. Thank you for this eye-opening adventure.

Zehreen Etwarooah

Ricardo Gayle Jr.

DC Reflection

The trip to DC was definitely an eye opening experience for me. The trip allowed for me to question my future, past and present; truly a complete experience.

The first part of my enrichment came from the visit to Howard University. Prior to this visit I had no desire for grad school. I plan to major 6-3 and did not believe grad school was necessary for a career in this path. However, after listening to many Howard researchers and grad students I have come to better realize positive outcomes for going to grad school, even as a 6-3 major.

The next day we experienced the National Smithsonian African-American Museum. The mood of each exhibit gradually lightening as we moved out of slavery and into a celebration of the different aspects of culture we have touched; reading hidden truths about the many historical figures in American history; learning how American rock-and-roll and jazz is really African-American rock-and-roll and jazz. All of these revelations of our past touched me, and gave me a new appreciation and pride in what it means to be black in America.

The final experience of the trip was not initially planned; however, came about more last minute. The panel of MIT alum we spoke to in the hotel was an unforgettable experience. My life was put more in perspective. Listening to these entrepreneurs' stories and advice was different from other talks we have had. This seemed more genuine. We were talking to people currently in the thick of their business or who have recently become "comfortable" in their business. This panel was able to give more

relatable stories that could further resonate with me. Since then, I have found myself keeping up with my work better and doing better in class.

Overall, the trip put my life in better perspective. I can better see where I came from, where I am, and how to get to where I want to be.

Ricardo Gayle

Visiting Washington, D.C. with the MIT Black Students' Union was a transformative experience that changed my perspective on black history and my place in it. The opportunity to learn about the hard-fought path to today's society against the backdrop of our nation's capital was eye opening and thought provoking.

Our first stop, Howard University, was striking to me. I had never visited a historically black university before; I had never previously given them much thought. Seeing laboratories filled with people who looked like me was powerful. I have always been aware of being the only underrepresented minority when I enter a laboratory. Being in spaces where black people are not only excelling in STEM research, but are leaders in their field, was incredible and inspiring. I anxiously await the day when seeing black individuals pursuing advanced STEM degrees is commonplace in all universities.

Visiting the National Portrait Gallery was also a wonderful experience. I love art museums, so the visit would have been enjoyable in any case, but seeing the portrait of President Obama was incredible. There is no one I look up to as much as President Obama. He inspires me to no end; seeing his portrait hung with so much reverence, as well as the line of people waiting to take photos with it, filled me with pride and admiration. It means so much to see the achievements of black leaders and artists proudly displayed in such a prestigious location.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is a beautiful building that houses a complicated history. I did not really expect to be shocked by

anything I encountered in the museum, but I was floored by a display, which showed the names of slave ships chartered by European countries. The names of the ships, titles like “Happy” or “Hope”, were sickeningly innocuous. The exhibit also showed the number of people who boarded these ships and the number of people who arrived in America; the discrepancy was staggering. It is incomprehensible to me that people could see the brutality and death that resulted from the Middle Passage and still continue the practice for hundreds of years. My visit to the NMAAHC was sobering yet enlightening; I look forward to going again.

One of my favorite parts of the trip was having the opportunity to connect with black MIT alums and learn about their various paths to success. It’s easy to feel like there are only two post-graduation options: graduate school or industry. These alums reminded me that my future can be whatever I want it to be as long as I am prepared to take risks and chase my goals.

A success for one black person is a success for all of us. The incredible accomplishments of those who have come before me inspire me to find my own successes that can help both our community and the world at large. Being in Washington, D.C. during one of the most controversial Supreme Court appointments in our country’s history was notable. It reminded me of the importance of voting and the fact that African Americans are the among most disenfranchised groups of voters in our country. In returning to MIT, I feel a renewed passion to encourage my peers to take a vested interest in politics and our country’s future. If we are not actively

making decisions to guide our government in the direction of greater equity and justice, it will undoubtedly move the opposite way. I feel a deep sense of gratitude to the BSU, Dr. Jackson, and everyone who made it possible for me to have such a fulfilling experience. I am excited and motivated to use all that I have learned to make a positive impact in whatever way I can.

Danielle Grey-Stewart

Stephon Henry-Rerrie

MIT Black Students' Union

My name is Stephon Henry-Rerrie and I am a senior at MIT studying chemical engineering and physics. I live in Chocolate City, a living group in New House, which brings together students of urban culture. Our mission is to do good for the MIT and greater global communities by embodying principles of our brotherhood such as character and leadership. I had the great opportunity to attend the Black Students' Union trip to Washington D.C. to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the historic group. Leaving D.C., I felt refreshed getting back to campus and empowered with a much deeper understanding of the history of blackness in America.

One of the first things that we did was visit Howard University to see various parts of the school. We got a tour of a couple of the labs there and they were impressive. I also learned about the connection between Howard and MIT, notably a recent initiative between Howard, MIT, and Harvard to have a quantum materials lab. This partnership is so, so that they can get their hands on the best materials to push quantum computing further, a field that is of immense interest to me as a physicist. This was surprising because I did not think that Howard would be in the same league as MIT and Harvard when it came to material science, but the collaboration shredded that notion.

The most impactful experience that I had during this trip was the visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The first thing I noticed was the beautiful outside architecture, which was nothing like the other Smithsonian

museums. We were blessed to have a great tour guide to show us the museum and provide some questions to guide our experiencing of the exhibits. The exhibit on the African Slave Trade was the first part of the museum that hit me deeply. I appreciated seeing the thriving of African people before the slave trade because you usually do not see that in books. I felt a pride in myself that I came from a people that had (and still have) so much culture and beauty. The transition from that point in time where we were flourishing to the slave trade was evoked an emotional

Stephon Henry-Rerrie

October 13, 2018

Asia Hypsher

Department of Chemical Engineering (Class of 2021)

BSU 50th Anniversary DC Trip Impact Statement

The BSU 50th anniversary trip to Washington, D.C. was one of the best things I've done during my time at MIT. It was an overall incredible experience for me to get closer to my MIT community and my roots.

Starting with the graduate school presentation at Howard University, I really enjoyed touring the research labs and hearing about the work that is being done at the university. Further, the presentation was very eye opening and I appreciated being able to hear about the history behind the work that was being done and MIT's relationship with Howard. Hearing about historical figures, whom I probably never would have learned about otherwise without seeking out such information, really meant a lot to me and made me proud to be black in STEM.

At the National Portrait Gallery, I particularly enjoyed seeing the portrait of President Barack Obama. I had been to the museum previously, but Obama's portrait had since been added. In addition, having the opportunity to interact with local MIT alumni made me feel more at home.

The National Museum of African American Culture & History completely blew me away. I spent about 7 hours in the museum, while I expected to leave after 5 hours. But there was so much to take in and I wanted to see all of it. So much of the information was new to me and I experienced such a range of emotions moving through the museum that day. Lunch at the Sweet Home Café was incredible and Dr. Leslie Fenwick's guided tour was incredibly informative and helped me move through the museum more efficiently on my own. Overall, it was a moving experience and made me so incredibly proud of from where and from whom I come.

Finally, the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church service was a great way to end the trip. Pastor William Lamar IV addressed us beautifully before the sermon and the MIT alumni who were members of the church made me feel especially welcome. I don't regularly attend an A.M.E. service, so being able to see and interact with all of the tradition throughout the service was a lot of fun to be a part of.

I also really appreciated the ample amount of free time that we had during the trip. Being able to explore the surrounding area without a guide or a group was a valuable experience. It gave me time to explore places to eat and sights to see in DC. I was even able to reunite with a couple of my friends who attend Howard University. I was also able to take a break or a nap as needed, so I could make the most of the trip.

Overall, I really enjoyed the BSU 50th Anniversary DC Trip because I networked with alumni, learned more than I could have ever hoped for about the history of my family, and got to experience DC in an intimate way.

Asia Hypsher

BSU 50 DC Trip Reflection

Zion Moore

I'm not really a museum person. That being said when I *do* go to a museum, I usually spend about an hour there before the boredom starts to set in. I know, shameful. However, I also tend to force myself to stay and learn more about whatever the theme of the museum is. However, I can say with confidence that this did not happen on this trip. I went into the Museum of African American History and Culture and did not emerge until more than seven hours later, because the museum was closing. This is one of the most engrossing places I have ever been; with so much incredibly relevant history, audible testimonies, and evolving culture, I found myself discovering whole new meanings to being black. The NMAAHC takes you on a trip, one with a story of prejudice and resistance, heartbreak and hope; and it's a trip I believe everyone should take.

The journey starts in the basement, three floors underground, in a dark room made to resemble environment inside of a slave ship. In this room the tragic reality of slavery is awakened. Stories passed down from generation to generation are told by those still alive to tell them, while the walls are lined with artifacts from their homelands. Staggering numbers and statistics are engraved in the stone, telling a story that no words are necessary to explain, as slave ship voyages bring over Africans by the millions, with millions more dying en route. These dark rooms are reflective of the dark time in history that was the Transatlantic slave trade. Nobody talked in these rooms as the crowds moved through, we all simply listened to the terrifying truth being told by the descendants of those who were taken from their homes many years ago.

As one continues on in the journey of the NMAAHC, the next area is the American revolution, which discusses how a nation was built on slavery. The museum does an excellent job of shedding light onto the dark sides of our founding fathers, revealing some secrets that we as modern Americans might not be so proud of. Continuing on, we see the story of how people began to fight against slavery, black and white alike, and

what was done governmentally and independently to make change. What really put things into perspective for this part were the artifacts. Clothes, shoes, tools, and more used by slaves were on exhibit, revealing just how terrible their living situations were. What's more, there were also whips and other devices on display, showing the cruelty of owners, as was discussed in one of many testimonials. Once the civil war was reached, the museum began to shift in feeling. Since slavery was no longer permitted in the United States, things began to change.

The period following the civil war and leading up to the civil rights movement has always been the most intriguing to me, as this is the time period where nothing is heard about African Americans in American History class. At the NMAAHC it was covered extremely in-depth. I was able to explore two whole floors that covered this period ranging in topic from segregation (and desegregation) of the military to the rise of the KKK and Birth of a Nation. Afterwards, there was an extensive section covering the Civil Rights Movement and a short ode to more modern black history such as Obama and Black Lives Matter.

The rest of the museum focused on culture rather than history, which was still very interesting to see, it's just that I', more of a history guy. Learning as much as I was able to from this trip was truly amazing and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I think that everyone in the United States should visit this museum, if not for the culture then to simply gain perspective. The NMAAHC (in my opinion) is the best Smithsonian, and I hope that if you haven't visited it before, you will be able to soon, so you can experience all of this for yourself.

Zion Moore

Impact Statement

Zaina Moussa

I had a wonderful experience during this trip. The National Museum of African American History and Culture allowed me to learn more about the impact that the African American community has had on the development and continuation for the United States. The history of the US was shown from another perspective, including the black contributions that were not downplayed at all. I was able to experience the presence of the black community in all aspects of American life including art, music, religion, sports, inventions, and legislature. It was a huge bonus having someone leading us through the Museum and pointing out important pieces of history. Although we spent over 7 hours at the Museum, I only wish we had more time because I still did not get to see everything! I am inspired when I think about the work that was put into searching for and compiling all the artifacts and information housed in this Museum, and the dedication to searching for the truth. At the National Portrait Gallery, I was struck by the images of the Obamas and the way they stood out from all the other images there, as if making a statement that they were there to stay. I am very appreciative of the alumni that led us through the gallery and spoke to us about various people we saw in the building. I enjoyed hearing about the graduate school opportunities at Howard. As a prospective MD/PhD student, I was very interested in the simulation labs and research facilities, which surpassed my expectations. The panel was very lively and gave amazing answers to all of our questions. The location of the hotel was amazing, as we could easily access all of the famous monuments and Smithsonian museum in close proximity.

I met and spoke to so many new people on this trip, whether they be students or professors. This showed me that although I have attended MIT for over a year now, there are still so many amazing people I have yet to meet who share similar interests and passions about equality as I do. This has further pushed me to want to fulfill my goal of forming connections with more people inside and outside of the black community.

This experience will allow me to impart the knowledge that I have learned onto other people as I go through my life, starting with my fellow students at MIT. In addition, I had the chance to further understand the gravity of the role of African Americans in US history and to view this history in a new lens. I would like to thank everyone who made it possible for me to have this experience, such as the BSU executive board, MIT alumni, JJ Jackson, and everyone who financially supported this trip. In the future, I hope that others also get the opportunity to experience the trip like I did and have it leave a lasting mark on their lives.

Zaina Moussa

For the longest time the black community has been divided. After centuries of being exploited and enslaved, taught to hate the features that unify us and find divisions where they don't exist, the partitions have stuck. I want to learn about Black history so that I get a chance to learn about the tactics that outsiders used to instill seeds of distrust in the black community. It is so important that we know what weakened our community in the past in order that we may avoid the same pitfalls in the future. Especially now in a time when our country is in a state of disarray and blatant discrimination, we have to avoid those cracks that were placed in earlier times. These things may be sad to learn about, but it's a necessary pain choosing to learn about what could potentially destroy us.

Being a Nigerian-American or any child of immigrants can be confusing. I find myself seeking ways to remain connected to my Nigerian culture in anyway I can. I read books about the history of the country, try to keep up with current events and attempt to learn the language my family speaks. In all of these endeavors I find one half of myself, but often forget to explore the other half. I am Nigerian-American, but I am also African American. People looking at me in the street don't draw a distinction between me and people whose lineage was taken from them. At the end of the day we all face the same discrimination, and we have so much to learn from each other if we are willing to set aside the differences that others have placed among us. I want to use this experience to finally explore the other half of myself through learning more about the history of African-Americans so that I can be more nuanced in my conversations concerning the place that we have in this country and the progress we have and haven't made. This experience will allow me to connect to more people because I will have a deeper understanding of the place that their thoughts and opinions are coming from. I see this as a chance to contribute more to the black community at MIT as well as black communities' worldwide by becoming part of the bridge between the gap that has arisen between Africans and African-Americans.

The black women on campus, with their everlasting fountain of support and hair products are my community. The friends I've made through the OME are my community. Sakata Afrique, who gives their all to the enjoyment of dance are my community. NSBE who works to place people of color in positions that haven't been available to them before is my community. BSU where people find creative ways to discuss and display their experience as black people at a PWI is my community. The ASA where I find a larger variety of Africans than I have ever seen in one place is my community. There are other communities that I have encountered in my time here and outside of this campus that have done so much for me, but in this moment these are the groups that allow me to feel warmth in what can be a (literally) cold environment.

This year I am hoping to be more involved with hosting students for various weekend events. I know that when I was a senior MIT wasn't on my radar for the longest time, until I came for WISE and Ebony Affair and realized how much I felt at comfortable with the groups of people I interacted with. I want to do the same for people who are in the same space that I was in.

I also plan to work with the PKG center this year. All throughout middle and high school volunteering was a big part of my life and it was something I was definitely lacking in this past year. I want to apply for the PKG Healthcare program and get a chance to volunteer in Boston and suburbs of Boston. I think it would be a great way to use the knowledge that I have gained since coming here to benefit the community and reawaken that part of myself that I have been neglecting.

Another thing I'd like to get involved in on campus is the global teaching labs. We are so privileged on this campus to receive the education that we do and to share this style of teaching and problem solving with parts of the world that may be struggling to educate efficiently seems like the only right thing to do.

Andrea Orji

Kate Oteng-Bediako

I had the privilege of being a part the BSU's 50th Anniversary trip to Washington D.C. Having grown up in primarily Caucasian neighborhoods, I was looking for opportunities to learn more about African American culture and history. I was looking to gain a better understanding of Black history to make myself a more effective contributor to conversations on race, and to be able to share what I learned with others around me and promote a more just society. I also wanted to learn more about myself as a Ghanaian American. This trip provided all that I had hoped for and more.

I was introduced to Howard University's groundbreaking history as a historically Black University and its opportunities for graduate study. Touring graduate labs and simulation department of Howard Medical school was a valuable event for me since I am premed and looking into MD and MD-PhD programs. The graduate students in the lab, a high percentage being black like myself, were asked to spontaneously describe their work and life as a PhD student. Hearing these students passionately explain their research and its real-world impact reaffirmed my aspirations of doing meaningful research. A female researcher gave priceless insight on pursuing a PhD as a woman with a family, and how her life goals have shaped her journey to earning a PhD and become a successful scientist.

Touring the medical school was very eye opening for me as a premed student. The nature of how technologically advanced health care training has become was shocking. The simulation dolls were extraordinarily impressive in their ability to give feedback. It showed me another side of medicine that I had not previously given much thought to. There is an industry around creating more advanced medical technology to allow for the even better training of physicians and other medical related applications. Seeing where medical students are trained, learning more about the actual patient skills they need to develop, and a better sense of the nature of medical school in general showed me the areas in which I need to develop more as a person to pursue this goal. Becoming a doctor had always been a wonderful thing in my mind, but I am thankful to have learned early that it is a messy and challenging on physical and emotional levels in ways I had not thought seriously about up to that point.

The Howard University alumni panel that followed the tour of the medical school provided a rich history of Howard's role in the Civil Rights movement, Black people in academia, and higher education advise. Seeing how successful each alumnus had become and hearing of how they are working to help the next generation of African American youth was inspiring. The idea of being prepared to take on the world's greatest problems after MIT, and seeing individuals doing that, was very powerful.

The most meaningful part of this trip was visiting the National museum for African American History and Culture. Even after getting in early and staying until closing time, I still felt there was more I wanted to explore. The tour guide was a Black MIT alumnus who personally contributed to the creation of the museum. Her insight into the museum, historical knowledge, and the external resources she informed the group of made going through the exhibits such a rich experience. Being Ghanaian came to mean so much more to me seeing what happened to the Africans living in countries names the Gold Coast. I recognized the name of my father's tribe as one of the major sources of enslaved people. Working my way up from the pre-colonial Africa exhibit to through the timeline of Black history up to the present, moved me to tears as I considered where I came from and what I should do now as an African American woman.

I felt Attending the African Methodist Episcopal Church was the perfect way to end the trip. It helped in answering the important questions I had on what I should do moving forward. One of the biggest takeaways I got from the sermon was to not forget about those who worked hard to help me get where I am once I become prosperous. I will not fall into the mindset that everything is fine regarding the African American community just because I personally am doing well. I plan to take full advantage of the opportunities available to me thanks to the work done by the African Americans and other people who came before me and become more involved in combating injustice. I am already making plans to go back to the National museum for African American History and Culture with some nonblack friends of mine and have passionately told other MIT students about my experience since returning.

This is a cultural lesson and experience I feel every college student should have, and it has changed the way I see myself for the better.

Kate Oteng-Bediako

Holly Rieping

Impact Statement on the BSU 50th Anniversary D.C. Trip

I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. with MIT's Black Student's Union this past weekend. I've never visited an HBCU, so visiting Howard was a unique experience for me. I especially found their medical school's simulation area very interesting as it included so much technology I'd never been exposed to before. This was also my first time visiting a graduate school, so it gave me a new outlook on that aspect of education.

The visit to the National Portrait Gallery was a highlight of the first day for me. It was very exciting to have an alumna give us some insight on both the architecture of the Gallery and the history of the portraits within. The portraits of the Obamas were especially great to see since the lines surrounding those portraits just made me realize how important they are to our history and current political climate.

I want to specifically address my gratitude towards Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz for so graciously providing our entire group with dinner on our first night. It was such a fun way to end the very long day just by sitting down at a table full of friends and talking about anything and everything.

The National Museum of African American History was an amazing experience. Having someone from the scholarly advisory committee of the museum take us through some of the museum and show us these hidden details that we wouldn't have noticed before was absolutely incredible. I remember looking at the wall with all the ship names and statistics of the number of enslaved people they carried and having a moment of realization that my history is rooted in multiple numbers on that wall, and that those

numbers were survivors. I remember looking at the sack that a girl's mother had given to her right before she was torn from her family and sold off to a different master and immediately thinking of my mother and how much I wished I was sharing this experience with her. Of course, I texted my mom all through the experience because I just needed to be close to my family while I was learning more about the history that shaped our family. The historical floors of the museum were incredibly powerful, and the top floors were just as awe striking. I definitely feel like I need an entire extra day in that museum just to take the time to read and appreciate everything.

The AME Metropolitan Church was absolutely gorgeous, and I loved learning about all of the history behind the building. It was also an amazing opportunity to meet one of the founders of our BSU and hear some stories from him. Although I did not stay for the service, many of my friends told me how powerful a sermon the pastor gave.

I'd like to thank everyone who had a part in making this trip possible, from planning it to financing it. It was such an incredible opportunity to get off campus, learn about some history, talk to alumni, and get the chance to sit down and talk to people in my own community here on campus that I've never gotten the chance to talk to before. I feel so much closer to my own history and my community on this campus after this trip.

Holly Rieping

Nikodimos Sendek

BSU Reflection Statement

Culture plays a huge part in defining one's identity. Many people are primarily tied to one home culture that they have always grown up in. Many others have the unique opportunity of developing with multiple cultures. I was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. My parents wanted something better for me and my sister, and that opportunity came in the form of that diversity visa. My heritage has had a great influence on my identity and life as I have grown up in Colorado; however, that perspective on things like African American culture and history. Growing up in Colorado, I often was the only black kid in my math or science classes, and my friends primarily wanted me to hang out with the kids of their friends, who were also African immigrants. Because of this growing up, I felt a big disconnect from myself, and black culture until I began my freshman year at MIT.

By going on the BSU trip to Washington D.C., I was able to rekindle my connection to black culture that I had missed out on a lot growing up. The visit on Saturday to the National Museum of African American History and Culture was what really made the trip for me. The exhibit for pre-slave trade Africa, really exposed me to a part of history that I had always missed out on growing up. When I was younger, in school, all I really learned was European and American history, almost all-western civilization history, with eastern history brought up infrequently. Other than Ethiopian history taught to me occasionally by my parents, African history was the most ignored type of history around me and I had built the internal connection in my mind that nothing important happened in Africa at that time; it hurts me now that I used to

believe things like this when I was younger. My growth at MIT and in the BSU has greatly changed my perspective for the better.

Another aspect of the trip that I loved was the exploration of black culture in the upper levels of the museum. Growing up in the west had instilled a love of all things popular culture in me. I was fascinated by it. I loved popular movies, songs, trends, aesthetics, from the 70s, 60s, 80s, any decade. What the upper levels of the museum did that many other AAH museums don't do is show such a focus on black influence in popular culture. The exhibits showed many black musicians, athletes, actors, politicians, and so many more. It really was amazing to see all these figures and their influences across all forms of media. It was a great experience and one of my favorite parts of the trip. I was so interested by it that I also bought a museum guide on black history and pop culture while I was there, and I wish to continue learning more about black influence in popular culture.

Overall the trip to DC was a great time for me to reflect on my past and the perspectives I have relative to others. The trip to the NMAAHC was the best part for me and I hope that it continues every year, so that others can enjoy the experience as well.

Nikodimos Sendek

October 14, 2018

Prof. Matthew Schumaker

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to express deep gratitude for being included in this extraordinary trip to Washington, D.C. to mark the 50th Anniversary of MIT's Black Students' Union. First and foremost, I appreciated the opportunity to be surrounded by so many wonderful and bright MIT students as well as to have the chance to meet with many distinguished MIT faculty and administrators during this truly remarkable trip.

On our first stop at Howard, I appreciated seeing this vibrant and large community of Black professors and students, which was in stark contrast to my last experience at UC Berkeley, where the student body is only about 3% African-American and I too rarely encountered these students in my teaching. I was impressed to learn that Howard has the distinction of producing the most African-American PhD's per year. I also felt struck by their history of inclusion, upon seeing the first University seal, which included images of students with Asian and Native American backgrounds as well as African-American. I hadn't been previously aware of their history of educating such a diverse group of people, from Jewish doctors to Japanese people who'd recently suffered the indignity of internment camps after World War Two.

At the National Portrait Gallery, we were treated to a wonderful tour by an MIT alum, Mina Marefat. In addition to the many historical portraits, I was excited by the recent addition of Barack and Michele Obama portraits by contemporary African-American painters. In prints, I hadn't been nearly as taken by these paintings, which in real life were so much more vibrant and arresting than I had expected them to be. I also appreciated seeing work by other African-American painters included in the portrait gallery, including Jean-Michel Basquiat. I am a composer, but my father is a painter, and he communicated his interests in visual arts and architecture to me, so these are things

that inform my own creative work, and which I found particularly stimulating on this trip.

The following day, Dr. Leslie Fenwick, a Dean Emerita of Howard University, provided us with a powerful tour of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Her astute and deeply felt presentation took us from pre-colonial Africa and the Middle Passage up to the present day. At each step of the way, she pointed out how the museum's documents and artifacts give vibrant testimony to the humanity of a people that was constantly denied and denigrated in our country's history. Of the many, many examples in this regard, I remember a simple brass ring, which was briefly worn by as many as 400 enslaved African Americans, who were not allowed to marry by law but did so illegally, fighting a dehumanizing force and establishing meaningful personal bonds despite the tyranny of their times.

With vibrant bolts of inspiration and creativity, the architecture, art, and music of the National Museum also countered these painful historical truths. I was eager to go to the museum, in part, because I wanted to experience the architecture of David Adjaye, a Ghanaian British "starchitect" and one of the few black architects provided the opportunity to design and realize large, cultural structures. The building of the museum did not disappoint. The structure of the building is brilliantly designed to move upwards, becoming ever brighter as it grows out from a dark, subterranean space that evokes the deep despair of the experience in the holds of slave ships and the Middle Passage as a whole. Taken in its entirety, however, this marvelous building transforms itself. Its tiered structure at once refers to the headdress of a woman in an ancient Yoruban sculpture even as it also engages with Greco-Roman classical notions of architectural form, reflecting a new heterogeneous form of beauty that can only be reached through a recognition of the value of diverse perspectives.

In terms of art, the museum also opened my eyes to a cadre of fantastic Abstract Expressionist African American painters, including Felrath Hines and Hale Woodruff.

With all the documentation and mythology that surrounds the work of other American Abstract Expressionists, why had I never been exposed to these artists? I was also pleased to see a strong tradition of fantastic, avant-garde black sculptors represented in the museum's holdings, some of whom were new to me: from B. K. Adams to Chakaia Booker to Art Smith. When I was growing up, outside of the sculptor Martin Puryear, I really did not know about the Black artists pushing the limits of expression in these forms.

Finally, I was so happy to see a wonderful display of the huge, on-going contributions of African Americans in music. Again, so many wonderful artifacts spoke to this history and I was struck by many that resonated for me: from Dizzy Gillespie's curved, "Pudgy," trumpet, to displays on the free jazz of Ornette Coleman and on the music of Tina Turner, my favorite singer. Of special significance to me was a handwritten score of music by John Coltrane. It's hard to explain why this document, a short piece from early in his career, affected me the way it did. Somehow, the handwriting of genius composers transmits something ineffable about the perfection of their work. I experienced a similar feeling once before while looking at the original handwritten score of *Requiem Canticles* by Igor Stravinsky in the Morgan Library in New York City.

This wonderful trip came to a close the following day after an uplifting visit to the Metropolitan AME Church in D.C., where the pastor provided an insightful talk about the role of the Black Church through American history and welcomed us to a passionate church service which confirmed that this potent conflation of spiritual and political awareness continues to flourish in these institutions today.

Sincerely,

Matthew Schumaker

MIT MLK Visiting Scholar, 2018-19

Impact Statement

Prof. Hazel Sive

50th Anniversary Black Students Union Trip to Washington DC
October 5 – 7, 2018

Honored

I was honored to be invited on the trip, and found it a joyous, moving, profound experience. My pride for our students who came along is enormous. You all carried the banner of MIT as true ambassadors. Well done.

Howard

After some early morning bonding at Logan, I found our visit to Howard University interesting on multiple counts. I had had hosted a top Howard student in my research group, so had a good impression of their trainees. It is an innovative, excellent university with top-notch facilities and faculty. What was most profound for me, was understanding that this is a university where black students feel they belong and the specter of being a minority group does not exist. I think our students felt that way, watching them react to faculty guides and speakers, but especially to an African American physics grad student who offered sage advice. 'Best advice I've ever been given' overheard.

Portraits

I had never visited the National Portrait Gallery. What a fine museum and an honor to be guided by MIT alum Dr. Mina Marefat. Some of the women students and I searched for portraits of women among the older paintings, a frustrating exercise, but were then transfixed by the work of Titus Kaphar. I was not familiar with his striking, pointed work, in an exhibition so timely for our visit. The Obama portraits. Encapsulating our greatest president and first lady. I asked one of the students what she thought. 'I never thought I would see this in person, she responded. It is incredibly moving for me.' Me too.

And that was just the first day. (Thank you for dinner VC Waitz!)

Museum

How to pull out the emotion attached to the National Museum of African American History and Culture? I am from South Africa, and grew up in the apartheid era. The era remains abhorrent. And one does not want to compare atrocities. But I do think that any black person on this side of the Atlantic has the right to be angry at the hundreds of years of slavery, and the oh so very slow granting of rights to African Americans.

That museum pulls emotion out so easily. We were honored to be guided in this, by Dr. Leslie Fenwick, former Howard Dean and member of the museum Scholarly Advisory Committee. Her thoughtful and unusual perspectives added insight and depth.

And how brilliant is the design! From the basement of slavery, the exhibits progress upward and uplift. Through architecture grand but welcoming. What pride our group had of the MIT contribution through alum Philip Freelon, and MIT awardee David Adjaye!

Let us talk about lunch in that excellent themed cafeteria, where Dr. Michele David and I explored feminism and racism, growing up in Apartheid South Africa, after my ancestors escaped persecution in Lithuania, her growing up in Haiti part of an eminent family, the Haitian slave trade and retribution by France to Haiti for freedom of slaves. Deep, open and important conversation, fueled by the deep, open and important atmosphere in the Museum. And some pleasant hellos with a friendly person sitting next to us.

Church

What a surprise to meet that same pleasant person, Hosiah Huggins Jr. again next morning at the door of the historic AME Church! We exchanged greetings and business cards. That is a good and clearly important church. A place Presidents should more often visit. I am Jewish, but it is easy to connect through faith anywhere, to transcends the specifics of a religion and fill the soul. Really good to have alum and BSU mentor Gerry Baron and Lorraine Baron joining us at the museum and at church.

Historic trip

The trip was advertised as 'historic' and it was indeed; the most unusual, provocative and mind- expanding visit to DC I have had. Taking it with this top group of MIT students, was a great pleasure. Some of them want to visit Africa and I am delighted to send them through the MIT- Africa internships.

[Thank you to the organizing group, especially Dr. Jackson.](#)

Prof. Hazel Sive

Mayowa Songonuga

D.C. Trip Impact
Statement

This trip has impacted my view of my own culture and my place in the world. The African American Museum was an empowering experience. Walking through the beginning of the exhibit was so sobering. The atmosphere was heavy and dark, and it automatically put me in the mood to learn more about black history in America. The wall with the number of enslaved Africans who died on each ship was especially shocking. It added an extra layer of horror and cruelty to the slave trade. I really appreciated the way the architecture opened up as you got closer to the present, and the beautiful Langston Hughes, "I Too Am America," poem on the wall by the exit from the slavery era. It was almost like foreshadowing, and it was expertly done.

I also appreciated experiencing Howard's campus. It was amazing to see so many successful black people in one place. I know I should've expected it, since Howard is an HBCU, but it was still shocking. I've lived in predominantly white communities for my entire life, so seeing all those happy, thriving black people in one place was both shocking and comforting. I'm only a freshman and graduate school was not even on my mind, but it is now, thanks to the panel that presented to us. I still don't know what I want to do with my life, but I at least know that Howard is there as an option to help me succeed.

Mayowa Songonuga

BSU 50th Anniversary DC Trip Reflections

I highly anticipated the opportunity to travel on this trip and be a part of this celebration, and it surely did not disappoint. Before the trip, I wanted to be better educated on the development of African American culture in this country. Out on the other side, I feel so much more informed on the subject and invigorated to continue this learning experience. The trip provided the perfect opportunity to engage with the Black Student Union on scheduled visits to cultural landmarks and then explore other sites independently. I cannot be more thankful for this opportunity to take part in promoting the history and future of the Black community.

Though I enjoyed all parts of the experience, the one that stood out the most to me was the visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture. From its introduction, as the information on its financing and support were detailed, I immediately sensed the great pride and passion of the community for the museum effort. From its elegance and thoughtfulness, the museum provided means through which the black community could share its history. When we started the initial descent to the lower levels of the museum, the starting point that was chosen for this story, I endeavored to prepare myself for the experience that I was about to take part in, but I could not. Once the group turned the corner, and we stepped through the doorway, I finally understand what Dean Jackson mentioned earlier about the emotion the museum justifiably provokes.

The lower levels are dark and brimming with information of the sorrow and terror that the black community had to endure. It provided insight to why the oppression

propagated. It further validated the Black struggle that still so many do not believe in. It literally and figuratively spoke to crowds of people that walked through on the pain and burden of simply being born a shade darker than others. The walk was maturing and encompassed a valuable experience.

As we ascended to the upper levels of the museum, more gaps of information were filled as my eyes skimmed across all the information I could perceive. All throughout the museum, the theme of the courageous, intellect, and perseverance of the Black community was made obvious through its videos, pictures, and simply the fact that the community still stands today with a tremendous love for others and the world. It could not be more inspiring how tirelessly to they worked to secure the interracial relationships that exist today. Altogether, the NMAAHC successfully brings an awareness of our history that is often overlooked.

I also greatly enjoyed the trip to Howard University and the National Portrait Gallery. During the visit to Howard, we got to see firsthand the promotion of the excellence and success of the Black community and how we have thrived academically. In the National Portrait Gallery, we observed in several exhibits another way in which the tension and terror of the oppression of the black community entwined in the history of this country. Both visits, paired together with the trip to the NMAAHC, undeniably invoked in me a will to more thoroughly engage with the fight for the success of Black community, and to both share my experiences and listen to those of others.

Mofeyifoluwa Oluwalana

DC Impact Statement

First of all, I would like to thank the all of the officers of the Black Students Union for putting this trip together and allowing so many of us to experience Washington DC like this. I cannot speak for the experiences of my peers, but I definitely have returned from the nation's capital with a brand new understanding of the impact the U.S. has had on black people and the impact we have made on it.

I have found exploring the National Museum of African American History & Culture to be the hallmark of the trip for me, because I honestly have never felt so moved by a museum before. While I can go through an art museum or gallery and acknowledge the talent of those who created the pieces, or maybe even understand the underlying message, the NMAAHC was different. Through many of the exhibits I couldn't help but feel something, be it pride or uncomfortableness or honest sadness. The museum did a great job of displaying the mountains that black people had to traverse and overcome as much as the accomplishments made on the way and after. They were raw, and honest about the darker side of history, which I can appreciate because for a long time the truth has been sugarcoated or outright omitted.

This D.C. trip also gave me a renewed sense of what I have the potential to accomplish through MIT and beyond with the meetings at Howard graduate school and with black MIT alumni. The tours of Howard's facilities along with the informative panels gave me insights to the possible opportunities I can pursue once I achieve my degree. Further, the talks with alumni like Berdell about the career paths they have taken and their experiences in the professional world.

The trip was extremely educational, and an experience I am glad that I did not miss out on. I am deeply grateful to the BSU, JJ and all faculty involved in making this happen.

Jonathan Tagoe

Reflections on the MIT BSU Trip
to DC
Josiah Washington

As my first trip with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I was pleased with the entire experience. Being a part of the strong community that is the BSU made this trip even more memorable, especially as it was the 50th anniversary of its creation.

Visiting Howard University allowed me to see the level of education that historically Black institutions have to offer. Last year during the college application process, I chose not to apply to historically Black schools because I allowed the negative stigmas associated with these institutions to stop myself from applying. After touring the school and meeting the many faculty members, researchers, and students, my eyes were open to the wonderful academic atmosphere that Howard offered.

What stood out the most to me was the deepening of my knowledge when we visited the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. I was born and raised in the South, more specifically South Carolina. My family has had roots in the state for centuries, as was made evident to me during a visit to my great grandmother's grave. I was able to see ancestors with birth and death dates in the 1850s and 1860s. Having this deep connection to a state and region with a volatile history resulted in me being told many stories of segregation, racism, sharecropping, violence, and radicalism.

When I visited the museum, I was expecting to see many artifacts, photos, and stories from the South. My expectations were confirmed, but I was genuinely moved, more so than the many stories and lessons I had over the years. While there, one image left me speechless. It was a photo of a young boy who was lynched in Orangeburg, South Carolina. This truly moved me mainly because Orangeburg, South Carolina is where my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins were born and raised. Even more shocking was the fact that the photo was taken when many of my relatives were living their lives in Orangeburg.

Visiting Metropolitan AME Church was the perfect finale for a wonderful weekend. Meeting the founder of the MIT Black Student's Union in one of the most historic places of worship in Washington, D.C. It was a highlight to meet the founder of the Black Student's Union at MIT. Especially it being the 50th Anniversary of the BSU, meeting him served as the perfect visual of the impact and legacy that the BSU has had on thousands of students.

All in all, this trip was truly one that I will never forget. I feel as if participating has allowed me to become an even bigger part of the MIT community. This trip has had a massive impact on my life, and if made an annual tradition, it will strengthen the MIT community and most importantly, the Black Student's Union.

Josiah Washington

Alyssa Wells-Lewis
Class of 2021

Impact Statement

On Friday, October 5th, 2018, I set off on what would be an amazing trip, and possibly one of the most important trips of my lifetime: the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Black Student Union's 50th Anniversary Trip to Washington, D.C. Even before leaving the state, I knew this was going to be a special trip. This was the first time an event of this magnitude had been undertaken by the Black Student Union, and its impact was sure to be great. I am still so honored that I was one of the 44 MIT students chosen to participate in this life-changing opportunity, and I'm excited for the chance to talk about how it impacted both me and my life here at MIT!

When we landed in D.C., we took the charter bus directly from the airport to the Howard University Graduate School campus. Once there, we received a tour of their brand-new Interdisciplinary Research Building (IRB) as well as their comprehensive Simulation Center for their medical students. Afterwards, we had enjoyed an educational presentation about Howard University as well as a panel session with various Howard University administration, professors, graduate students, and affiliates alike. It was amazing getting to walk through the many labs available in the IRB, from those dealing with nanotechnology, to analyzing the effect of removing specific proteins from plants and concluding any possible effects in human medicine. I definitely enjoyed the panel as well; before this trip, I wasn't exactly sure whether or not I wanted to go on to graduate school after getting my undergraduate degree from MIT, because I just didn't know enough about the opportunities available to me. After hearing so much more information about the graduate school experience, I feel like it'll definitely be easier for me to make an educated decision about further schooling when the time comes for me to choose what I'd like to do in the future.

That same night, we took a tour of the National Portrait Gallery. It was absolutely beautiful! The numerous paintings and sculptures were gorgeous. There was one specific series of paintings that were especially impactful, and that was a set of paintings by the young artist Titus Kaphar. His works were all paintings of familiar images from the 18th or 19th centuries—for example, a portrait of Thomas Jefferson, or the *Landing of Columbus*—but modified so as to emphasize the African-American or Native American presence in the painting, or in the life of painting's original subject. All of his paintings presented such a profound juxtaposition of black and white throughout the past few centuries, and also the importance of making sure that we acknowledge the ignorance that was spread about all races in the past and reject it so as to move forward socially, on both a national and international level.

Saturday was spent entirely in the newest Smithsonian, opened in 2016: The National Museum for African-American History and Culture. We were able to get early access to the museum for the purpose of our large group tour, led by Dr. Leslie Fenwick,

Dean Emerita of the Howard University School Education and a member of the NMAAHC Scholarly Advisory Committee. This museum was set up in a chronological fashion, where you began in the late 15th century in pre-colonial Africa, and moved through colonialism, enslavement, the Civil War, Reconstruction, segregation, and several exhibits going into much more depth about African-American culture up until this day. I don't think there could've been a better place to visit on a trip such as this: I learned so much from this one visit, and I didn't see even a fraction of all of their exhibits, or the thousands of artifacts on display. One of the most important rules that was followed in the construction and planning of the museum was based on a quote by the great African-American scholar John Hope Franklin: "We've got to tell the unvarnished truth." And that was exactly what they did. Yes, I already knew about the history of African-Americans from the past few hundred years—we went over it every year in history for all my years of grade school—but to see it in front of me? To see the images showing the horror in the faces of African-Americans before they were hosed down by the police, just for drinking from the wrong water fountain? To read all of the exhibits detailing just how much enslaved Africans suffered both on the voyage to America, and then even further while here? To hear about how Thomas Jefferson, one of the most celebrated presidents in American history, was actually the person to establish the hereditary aspect of enslavement, condemning the enslaved Africans under his charge to enslavement into perpetuity and eternity? It was heartbreaking, and an extremely intense (but necessary) experience.

Then, to move through the museum and see the exhibits showing the successes of groups like Black Panther and the NAACP? To walk underneath one of the original planes flown by a Tuskegee airman, poised above us in such a way that it looked as if it was still flying towards freedom? To be presented with a giant image of Barack Obama at his Presidential Inauguration in 2009, standing in solidarity with his family and in front of over a million onlookers, all excited and proud to see the first African-American President of the United States sworn into office? It was *far* beyond encouraging. They all served as signs of how far we've come as a people, and the fact that we have the potential to go even further in the direction of equality. The fact that I can say that we've removed enslavement and Jim Crow from our federal laws, and have had an African-American president, is unbelievable, and I know we will only accomplish more in the years to come as long as we remember where we've been.

Alyssa Wells-Lewis

AudreyRose Wooden
BS 50th year: DC Trip Impact Statement

I went on the trip with the BSU to DC to celebrate our 50th anniversary and it was an amazing experience. I think there was definitely something about being part of this community outside of MIT that made it feel real for me. My favorite part of the trip that was planned was going to the NMAAHC. There was something really beautiful about being surrounded by my culture on a large scale that made me feel invincible. I felt loved and respected and that was really all I could ask for from this experience. But then it was so much more!

Other things I enjoyed was being able to bond with fellow members of the community. It's cool being on campus and recognizing that we're all connected, but when we were in DC it was very obvious that we were becoming part of the legacy. Before, I would look at alum doing amazing things and think "wow, one day I will be on the same level of greatness as them." But this weekend affirmed that we were already inextricably tied to one another through our education and through our blackness, and that was so powerful for me. Also, being able to meet a founder of the BSU, and for him to speak to me as if I was a real person and we were worthy of each other's time was incredible. I felt like I often thought of the founders as these super strong and powerful people that wouldn't pay me any mind, but I realized that they see me as an extension of their efforts, and extension of their dreams.

Similarly, I also really enjoyed being able to recognize the fact that we could eventually end up in DC as young professionals. Being able to experience the city as a college student for a weekend helped me visualize myself in the city as a young black professional. In terms of my goals for the future it helped revitalize my passions and prioritize my path toward success. And I got to see my friends that go to Howard, which was really great to see that group of people mesh so well with my friends from MIT. Moving forward, I'm really excited to bring back this positive energy from the trip to my communities here at MIT. I think it was really worthwhile, and I gained a lot in terms of personal growth from the trip. I'm proud to be part of this legacy, and will do everything in my power to uphold the values of the BSU that make this community great. Onward and upward!

AudreyRose Wood

APPENDIX B: Detailed Itinerary
BSU 50TH ANNIVERSARY TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC --- FINAL ITINERARY
FRIDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2018

- 7:00 AM** Find your way to arrive at Logan Airport
Clear security; Board flight **(Jet Blue flight #255)**
- 8:25** Flight Take-Off
- 10-10:30** Washington (DCA)
Retrieve Luggage; Board chartered bus to first destination
(Luggage remains on bus. For added security, driver remains with bus.)
- 11:30** Howard University Graduate School (2201 Georgia Avenue NW)
Detailed Howard Itinerary in Separate Document
- 4:00 PM** Board chartered bus to second destination
- 5:00-7:00** National Portrait Gallery (btw F&G and 7&9th Streets NW)
Group Reception, hosted by MIT Alum Dr. Mina Marefat
- 7:00** Board chartered bus to restaurant (address TBD)
Dinner. Sponsored by MIT Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz
- 9:30** Arrive, Check-in at Courtyard Washington DC/Foggy Bottom

SATURDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2018

- 8-9:00 AM** (Breakfast on your own in hotel.)
- 9:00** Board chartered bus to museum
- 9:30** Smithsonian National Museum--African American History & Culture
Greeting by Tour Guide: Dr. Leslie Fenwick, Dean Emerita, Howard U.,
NMAAHC Scholarly Advisory Committee
- 9:45** Museum Guided Tour with Dr. Fenwick
- 12:00 PM** Lunch on your own in Museum's Sweet Home Café
- 12:45** Conclusion of guided tour
- 1:30** Independent Exploration of NMAAHC exhibits
- 5:00** On your own for dinner and evening activities
- 6:00** MIT Black Alumni Panel: Financial Planning & Civic Engagement

SUNDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2018

- Before 8:45** Check out; Store luggage with hotel Concierge/Bell Hop
- 9:00 AM** Take Metro to Metro Stop (TBA)
- 9:50** Arrive Metropolitan AME Church, 1518 M Street NW
"The Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement and in Black Culture"
- 10:30** Service (optional)
- 12:00** Lunch on your own; Return to hotel to board bus
- 2:30** Board chartered bus to DCA airport
- 3:30** Check-in and Clear Security
- 5:35** Depart for Boston-Logan Airport **(Jet Blue flight #890)**
- 7:08** Arrive Boston

By Monday, 15 October 2018: Submit 1-2 page "Impact Statement" to jj@mit.edu.

APPENDIX C

Speakers Addressing the MIT Visiting Students Howard University Graduate School Friday, 5 October 2018

Tour		11:30 a.m.
HUIRB	James Griffin	jagriffin@howard.edu
Medical School		12:15 p.m.
Clinical Lab	Ms. Yvette Johnson	Yvette.Johnson@howard.edu
Simulation Center	Ms. A. Catherine Wright	agnes.wright@howard.edu
Lunch		1:15 p.m.
MC	Ms. Pamela Clarke	pamela.a.clarke@howard.edu
William Spriggs, Economics		wspriggs@howard.edu
Welcome	Dr. Anthony Wutoh	awutoh@howard.edu
Programs & Research	Dean Gary Harris	gharris@howard.edu
Admission	Assoc. Dean Connie Ellison	cellison@howard.edu
Certificate Programs	Dr. Kamla Deonauth	KDeonauth@howard.edu
Funding	Ms. Gloria Lloyd	glloyd@howard.edu
Panel		2:00 p.m.
MC	Pamela Clarke	pamela.a.clarke@howard.edu
<u>Panelists</u>		
Dr. Robert Efimba – MIT Alum, Engineering		refimba@howard.edu
Mr. Daniel Plummer - Grad Student, Math		daniel.plummer@howard.edu
Dr. Thomas Searles – Physics		thomas.searles@howard.edu
Dr. Charles Ichoku – Atmospheric Sciences		charles.ichoku@howard.edu
Dr. Ricardo Sakai –Atmospheric Science		iakas2002@hotmail.com
Dr. Johnathan Smith – Atmospheric Science		jwsmith9@gmail.com
Closing		3:15 p.m.
Remarks	Teneele Bailey	Teneele.Bailey@howard.edu
Other staff		
Glenn Griffin		glenn.griffin@howard.edu
Youlander Greene		youlander.greene@howard.edu

APPENDIX D: Panel of MIT Alumni and Supporters
Saturday, 6 October 2018

Host and Convener

Berdell Knowles, Jr. (MIT/CC '94)
Chairman and CEO, The Knowles Companies
berdell@knowlescompanies.com,

Panelists

Stephanie Mickle (Smith'94; UF Law, Harvard Kennedy School)
CEO, Mickle Public Affairs Agency and Author of *Follow the Leader*,
stephaniemickle@gmail.com

Kim Saunders (Penn '82)
President, National Bankers Association
kdseades@gmail.com (Penn '82)

Malcolm Augustine (Harvard '91)
malcolm@malcolmaugustine.com

Troy R. Bundy (MIT/CC '91, UMBC)
Managing Principal, Avid Technologies
troyb@alum.mit.edu

Patrick De Suza (MIT/CC '05)
CEO of Grain Technologies
patrick@graintechnologies.com

La Shaun Berrien (MIT/McCormick '95, VaTech)
Managing Member, The Berrien Caldwell Group, LLC
lashaunj@alum.mit.edu

Muyiwa Oni (MIT/CC '06, Case Western)
Consultant/Software Engineer/Entrepreneur
muyiwa.oni@alum.mit.edu

(Unable to Attend)

Calvin Sizer (MIT/CC '06)
Nuclear Engineer, Dept of Energy/US Navy
cgsizer@gmail.com csizer@alum.mit.edu

Gregory Anderson, Sr. (MIT/CC '93, '96)
VFX Supervisor / Head of Production, FuseFX
rnaissance@alum.mit.edu,

APPENDIX E:
**Brief History of the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church of
Washington, DC**
1518 M St NW Washington DC

A. History of Methodism

In Great Britain in the 1730s, brothers John and Charles Wesley organized a "Methodist Society" within the Church of England. The two clergymen aimed to improve the spiritual life in their denomination. The term "Methodist", described their structured, ordered or methodical way in living a pious life.

The first Methodist workers (who were Church of England clergymen) came to the American Colonies in 1760s. After the Revolution ended the American Methodists, in 1784, severed ties with the Church of England and formed a separate denomination - the Methodist Episcopal (M. E.) Church

B. History of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

The parent African Methodist Episcopal (or AME) Church grew out of an anti-segregation protest at a predominately white St George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia in late 1780s. One Sunday, the Black members of St George's were told that they would no longer occupy their pews on the main floor of the sanctuary. Henceforth the Black members must sit in the church balcony. Upon hearing this directive, a group of Blacks withdrew from St George's with Rev Richard Allen as a leader. Rev Allen had been born enslaved in 1760. By early 1780s he had purchased his freedom and become a Methodist clergyman.

By 1794 Rev Allen and the group of protestors had purchased property and erected Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. It was the first Black Methodist congregation in the city.

In 1816, Rev Allen called a conference of Black Methodists in the middle Atlantic region who were interested in religious autonomy from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Delegates from Black Methodist congregations came from Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland to Philadelphia. When the conference concluded, the African Methodist Episcopal Church had been organized and Bishop Richard Allen was elected and consecrated the denomination's first prelate.

C. History of the AME Church in the District of Columbia (DC)

In the District of Columbia because of racial segregation, Black members of Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal withdrew from that church in 1820. In 1822 these Black members petitioned to become part of the AME connection. This first AME Church in the city was named Israel Bethel AME. A few years later Israel Bethel AME Church was worshiping in an edifice at the foot of Capitol Hill – the Rayburn House Office Building is now on that site.

In 1838 members of Israel Bethel AME, residing west of 14th Street Northwest and in Georgetown, organized an AME church in their neighborhood. These members felt it was a hardship for them to walk on unpaved (muddy or dusty) streets from their homes the one to two miles for services at Israel Bethel AME on Capitol Hill. The new church, located on M Street, between 15th and 16th Streets was named Union Bethel AME Church.

D. Metropolitan AME Church

In 1870 it was proposed that a Metropolitan, a “National AME Church” be constructed in Washington DC. In 1872, Israel Bethel agreed to build the new church and adopt the name “Metropolitan AME”. After Israel Bethel left the AME connection in 1873, Union Bethel assumed responsibility for the project. The Old Union Bethel church was demolished in 1881 and construction of the new Metropolitan AME Church building began. In 1884, when the cost of the new building exceeded local resources, an appeal for financial assistance was sent to AME’s across the connection. Each Annual Conference that donated at least \$100.00 (this is equivalent \$15,000 in 2016) was honored with a stained glass window in the sanctuary. The edifice was completed and dedicated in May 1886.

E. Significant Events and Notable Members

- 1) US Presidents: Taft (1910), Carter (1979), Clinton (1993 & 1997) and Obama (2011 & 2013) have either spoken or worshipped at Metropolitan AME.
- 2) Notable current members are:
Vernon Jordan, Jr. attorney; Dorothy Gilliam (Journalist; Rodney Slater (former US Secretary of Transportation) and Ernest Green (one of the Little Rock Nine).
- 3) Speakers: Frederick Douglass, Mary McLeod Bethune, Booker T. Washington and Dorothy Height.
- 4) Musical artists: Marian Anderson; Roland Hayes; Leontyne Price; and the Wilberforce, Allen and Howard University, choirs.

F. 178th Anniversary Celebration: July 2016

- 1) Metropolitan is the oldest, continuously operating, and largest AME church in the city of Washington DC.
- 2) Metropolitan AME church sits on the parcel of land that is the oldest piece of property in Washington DC continuously owned by Blacks.