



Community Research Fellows Mini Grant Ms. Saundra Hill



Bettye Tyler, Ruby Gray, Saundra Hill, and Mangle Shanks

Dr. Tanya Funchess, Director, Office of Health Disparities Elimination, of the Mississippi State Department of Health, and her accomplished staff, launched the first cohort of the Mississippi Community Research Fellows Training (CRFT) program. This sixteen-week long training program enables community members to become partners with academic institutions and public health professionals to address, not only research barriers in minority communities, but to empower minority communities to become a part of the entire research process.

Ms. Saundra Hill, one of the Community Health Advisors from Clinton, under the guidance of Jackson Heart Study's Community

Outreach Center staff, participated in the CRFT. Upon completion of the training, Ms. Hill and three other CRFT participants, Mangle Shanks, Ruby Gray, and Bettye Tyler, came together as a team. They submitted a proposal to the Office of Health Disparities Elimination. The Office of Health Disparities Elimination awarded the team a mini grant to address hypertension in African American women living in the Jackson Medical Mall area under the auspices of Shanks Health, Housing, Employment, Education, Training and Services (SHEETS), Inc., a local 501 c (3) non-profit organization. The health promotion project title is "Step N2 Life."

The goal of the "Step N2 Life" project is to assist women in the Virden Addition and Bailey Avenue Communities surrounding the Jackson Medical Mall in reducing the prevalence of hypertension and related risk factors among African American women. The overall objective is to promote healthy lifestyle changes and to build protective factors that will deter hypertension in the target population.

The "Step N2 Life" team greatly appreciates the technical assistance of Dr. Clifton Addison and other CORC staff who contributed to the development of the project. The CORC staff will continue to assist the "Step N2 Life" team with data collection and statistical analysis.



Dr. Donna Antoine-LaVigne, Principal Investigator of the Jackson Heart Study Community Outreach Center, has been appointed to the American Heart Association Greater Southeast Affiliate Multicultural Initiatives Committee. This Committee addresses the need to programmatically reach the culturally diverse, high-risk populations within the affiliate by leveraging partnerships and influencing key healthcare and policy decision makers.

Dr. Marinelle Payton, Principal Investigator of the Jackson Heart Study Graduate Training and Education Center, was awarded the Jackson State University (JSU) Faculty Excellence Award in Research for her contributions to the University and Mississippi in spearheading research activities to address health disparity associated diseases in Mississippi. The award ceremony took place April 9, 2015, when Dr. Payton received her award from JSU President, Dr. Carolyn Meyers.



Making Health History in Jackson, Mississippi

Rueben C. Warren DDS, MPH, DrPH, MDiv

Jackson Heart Study, Celebration of Life Guest Speaker

Donna Antoine-LaVigne, MEd, MPH, PhD, PI, JHS Community Outreach Center



The Jackson Heart Study (JHS) **CELEBRATION OF LIFE** is one of the Study's largest annual community participatory events. According

to Dr. Donna Antoine-LaVigne, "the Celebration of Life is purposefully scheduled to coincide with Black History Month, National Heart Month and Women's Heart Month." "Our purpose is to celebrate the lives and legacies of the Black family and highlight the importance of the JHS." Nationally and internationally known and respected speakers who are researchers, educators, community leaders, and other individuals known for their work, presented information relevant to the health status of Black families at this annual event. The February 28, 2015 event was a gathering of JHS participants, community members, investigators and staff, undergraduate and graduate scholars, faculty, staff and students from the three partnering JHS institutions and other Mississippi universities and colleges.

Drs. Rueben Warren, renowned professor of bioethics, and Vanessa Northington Gamble, noted medical historian and ethicist, were the special guest speakers. Ms. Cheryl Nelson, JHS Program Officer, brought greetings from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the JHS funding agency. Additional attendees included representatives from government agencies and others interested in learning more about the JHS's ongoing research and related relevant health information.

The **CELEBRATION OF LIFE** was an extraordinary event that combined research, education, and community engagement, which are the three pillars of college and university life. *The Theme: "What's Going on with My Data"* sparked an interactive discussion between Drs. Warren and Northington Gamble and

the audience. It was emphasized by Dr. Warren that the event highlighted a research effort to improve the health and well-being of the Black population in the state of Mississippi, and Blacks throughout the United States. The state of Mississippi has many of the risk factors, barriers, and other challenges that threaten the health and life of all people in the U.S., particularly in the Black population.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death and serious illness among all people who live in the United States. In 1948, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), through the NHLBI, undertook the Framingham Heart Study to better understand CVD, because little was known about the general causes of heart disease and stroke. The objective of the Framingham Heart Study was to identify the common risk factors that contribute to CVD by following its development over a long period of time in a large group of participants, who did not have symptoms of CVD, or had not suffered a heart attack or stroke. Initially, there were no Blacks among the participants in the Framingham Heart Study. From 1986 forward, studies similar to Framingham and Framingham itself included increasing numbers of Black participants. However, a study like the JHS specifically targeting the Black population was needed to provide a large enough sample size for meaningful research.

The JHS is the largest single site observational study in history to investigate the inherited (genetic) factors that affect high blood pressure, heart disease, strokes, diabetes, and other important diseases among African Americans.



Drs. Rueben Warren and Vanessa Northington Gamble



Dr. Rueben Warren converses with the audience at the Celebration of Life on February 28, 2015.



The Celebration of Life event combined fun activities with serious conversation about the data (information) in the study, who owns the data, different types of Informed Consent, and the power and responsibility of the participants who are in the study. One of the sessions raised the critical question, ***“What Does Opt Out Mean, and Can I Do It?”*** The importance of remaining in any research project until its completion was discussed in terms of the tremendous value and importance of health research to improve life and well-being, but it was made clear that opting out of any research project is always an option. Opt out means - ***at any time, anyone involved in a research project as a participant, has the option to choose not to continue.***



Researchers have the responsibility to inform participants about the benefits and risks of participating in their research through the consent form process. Open, honest, and clear communication between researchers and participants will reduce the possibility of misunderstandings about the research. In response to the U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee (aka: Tuskegee Syphilis Study), federal guidelines have been developed to prevent ethical violations in research from reoccurring; however, constant review and confirmation are always needed to assure violations do not occur.

The Celebration of Life is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how Jackson State University, Tougaloo College, The University of Mississippi Medical Center, the National Institutes of Health, and the Jackson community are working together to improve the lives of the Black population in Mississippi and throughout the country. Dr. Donna Antoine-LaVigne, the Principal Investigator for the Community Outreach Center of JHS/Jackson State University, and her staff, are an essential component of the JHS, and they are poised to lift the JHS to greatness in the research arena with the full support of all of the other stakeholders affiliated with this very important research.

The Lay Summary Project with the Jackson Heart Study Scholars at Tougaloo College

Dr. Wendy White

The Jackson Heart Study Undergraduate Training and Education Center (JHS-UTEC) is continuing the Lay Summary Project which is initiated in the scholars' sophomore year at Tougaloo College. A lay summary is a reader-friendly version of a scientific article. The Project, which began in the fall of 2012, started as an extension of the JHS Translating Research into Practice and Prevention (TRIPP) Subcommittee and the requirements of investigators to submit a lay summary with their completed manuscripts. The Project is being led by Dr. Wendy White, Deputy Director of the JHS-UTEC and Dr. Frances Henderson, former JHS Deputy Director and now consultant. Dr. Donna Antoine LaVigne, Principal Investigator of the Community Outreach Center, serves as the community liaison on the Project, while Ms. Cheryl Nelson, the JHS Project Officer, is a member of the Writing Group which is in the process of writing a manuscript about the Project. The Writing Group submitted an abstract for consideration to the American Public Health Association Conference scheduled for November 2015.

We consider published articles for the students to translate which have a local lead author or co-author who will commit to providing a presentation to the scholars in the Introduction to Public Health and Epidemiology class, and providing input

on the final lay summary. Only one article is given to students to translate individually. Emphasis is placed on understanding the process and its importance to the JHS community. After the lay summaries have been submitted by the students, the JHS Council of Elders (COE) reviews the lay summaries for clarity and understanding. They are interviewed during the process and their feedback is documented. The JHS Scholars are also interviewed after the semester to gather their feedback on the learning experience. The evolution of the Lay Summary Project over the three years is based on the input from the participating authors, scholars and COE. Early findings indicate that the authors who have participated, the COE and the UTEC scholars appreciate the Project.



Tougaloo College JHS Scholars: Kisa Harris, Senior Chemistry major, and Acacia Cooper, Junior Biology Major

Jackson Heart Study Clinton CHAN Feature: Mrs. Tommie Winters



Mrs. Tommie Winters is a busy wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother who made the decision to live healthier. Upon taking a look at where she was headed, she realized that her health affected everyone around her. She loved interacting with her eleven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She decided to make some changes; one of them was to lose weight and start eating healthier. She says *“A lot of this change has to do with being an active participant of the Jackson Heart Study and Community Health Advisor Network.”*

Mrs. Winters revealed that the Daniel Fast changed her life. The Daniel Fast is a partial fast where some foods are eaten, while others are restricted. It is considered a spiritual experience that helps followers develop a closer relationship with the Lord and seek answers through prayer. She along with her church took on the Daniel Fast for 21 days. She herself has done 40 days at a time. As a result, she says that her church received some answered prayers; she became healthier and enhanced her physical fitness and energy level. She lost weight, was taken off cholesterol medication, and now teaches five exercise classes per week. She continues to be an enthusiastic active member in her church. *“The Daniel Fast is a commitment that I took seriously; and in doing so, I got closer to God. I lost two dress sizes; my commitment and motivation increased. It is all in the mind and I told my mind that I can and must do this, and I’m doing it. I’m enjoying every minute of it, and so are the senior citizens. I’m in it for the long haul. I’m seeking persons who are willing to give of their time and talent for the cause of life. Come and join me at the Clinton CHAN and watch God work.”*

Bolton/Edwards Community Health Advisor Network (CHAN) Feature: Mr. Bobbie Vinson



Mr. Bobbie Vinson of the Bolton/Edwards CHAN discussing issues with Marty Fortenberry of the JHS CORC.

Mr. Bobby Vinson is a husband, father, and retired science teacher who graduated in the top 10% from Jackson State University in 1960. He is a native Mississippian and recounts that he had to leave Mississippi because of his association with the civil rights struggle before returning to the state and to Bolton where he now resides. Mr. Vinson has come to understand the importance of physical activity and good dietary practices. He is 76 years young and is an avid gardener who regularly grows fruits and vegetables for Asbury United Methodist Church. For years, he was somewhat fearful of doctors. “When you are afraid of doctors, you always think you are well.” Mr. Vinson is very thankful that his participation in the Jackson Heart Study and its activities enabled him to receive medical examinations and procedures at no cost. Exposure to preventive education that he received along the way motivated him to incorporate lifestyle changes. One of the biggest lifestyle changes he made was to quit smoking. Preventive education also taught him how drinking sodas was negatively contributing to his health, and he made the decision to limit drinking sodas. Nowadays, he rarely drinks any sodas. Mr. Vincent said that he likes the Jackson Heart Study because of the interaction with the staff he has come to know and the trust that he developed in them. He said, “If Marty (Fortenberry) and Darcel (Odom) tell you something, you can believe them. They are friendly and easy to talk to. Darcel is the sweetest person with a pleasing personality.” Mr. Vinson said that he realized that his health is important to the Jackson Heart Study staff, and, because of his interactions, he “fell in love with life.” He is proud of himself for having convinced a longtime friend who was in need of a kidney to quit smoking and become involved with the Community Health Advisors Network.

Transition from Student to JHS Leader: Dr. Wendy White, Deputy Director Jackson Heart Study Undergraduate Training and Education Center (JHS-UTEC)



Dr. Wendy White's journey with the JHS as the first JHS intern at the JHS Coordinating Center (CC)* at Jackson State University to her current position as Deputy Director of the JHS-UTEC at Tougaloo College has been a journey where her numerous and varied interests came together in a unique way. Dr. White was the first unofficial JHS Scholar before the JHS Scholar Program was officially implemented. Her initial experience with Dr. Donna Antoine-LaVigne served as the prototype that later evolved into the Jackson Heart Study Scholar Program. At the JHS Community Partnership Office, she was mentored by the Director, Dr. Donna Antoine-LaVigne, with an emphasis on capacity building for community that includes students at all levels. Dr. White also worked closely with two other JHS CC staff, Dr. Brenda Jenkins and Dr. Clifton Addison. The JHS Scholar Program was initiated on the heels of Dr. White's earlier internship success with the Community Partnership Office. Indeed, this is a remarkable story of a JHS Scholar/Mentee becoming a JHS leader and

creating an impact on the lives of other young African American Scholars forever.



Tougaloo College JHS Scholars

Over the years, hundreds of students from Tougaloo College have received training opportunities, fellowships, and scholarships from organizations and institutions nationally and internationally. Many of these students have gone on to have successful professional careers in the biomedical field, public health, and other professions. Dr. White has clearly used her expertise and experiences gained from her interaction with the JHS CC staff to move other African American youth from obscurity to stardom as they learn through the JHS Scholar Program to develop the drive to achieve in the same manner that she did. Dr. Wendy White has a story to tell about motivation to succeed in spite of obstacles, challenges, personal difficulties, and other life distractions. She encourages "her children at Tougaloo College" to seek and take advantage of the opportunities available in the same manner that she approached her journey and rose to stardom from a student to a leader. It takes a person with a special heart and mind, courage and passion to constantly exhibit the desire to reach out, lift up, and guide our young people in the same manner that we aspire for successes for our own children. Dr. White has guided students who come from a variety of backgrounds to develop and share a common dream to improve their lives and the lives of their communities, all lessons espoused and communicated by the JHS CC team that helped to mold her life-long philosophy.

*More about the development of the Jackson Heart Study Coordinating Center can be accessed from: Campbell Jenkins et al. (2009). Development of the Jackson Heart Study Coordinating Center. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2009 May; 6(5): 1597–1608. doi: 10.3390/ijerph6051597 PMCID: PMC2697930.

Saluting One of Jackson Heart Study's Greatest Treasures: Mrs. Clara Fortner



The Jackson Heart Study (JHS) family salutes the contributions to the study of Mrs. Clara Fortner, a pioneer in research organization management and community engagement. This was evidenced by her remarkable years of dedicated service to the successes noted to date of this landmark study. Throughout the years, Mrs. Fortner helped to provide supreme support to the JHS; serving in diverse capacities from managing the Director's Office under the auspices of The University of Mississippi Medical Center to her many assignments within the Coordinating Center, that was built and managed by Jackson State University. Mrs. Fortner has contributed superb office management, project management, and research support that laid the foundation for the JHS that we know today. She was a great asset to the JHS Community Outreach Center and to the development and production of the semi-annual JHS Heartbeat Newsletter. As one of the original staff members of the JHS, she worked diligently toward the development of the JHS Coordinating Center at Jackson State University. Through her affiliation with the JHS Director's Office, she also engaged with the Exam

Center at The University of Mississippi Medical Center and the Undergraduate Training Center at Tougaloo College. Mrs. Fortner's years of active service to the JHS officially come to an end in April 2015. We greatly appreciate her commitment, and we shine the spotlight on a person who has always stood up for what she believes in and continuously endeavors to do what she believes to be right. Mrs. Clara Fortner is certainly deserving of an award for "Exemplary Service" to the Jackson Heart Study.

JHS Graduate Training and Education Center: Daniel Hale Williams Scholar Program Update

The Daniel Hale Williams (DHW) Scholar Program of the JHS Graduate Training and Education Center (GTEC) is currently training seven scholars from Cohorts One and Two who are engaged in a variety of professional development experiences to sharpen their research and public health skills, and to develop expertise in cardiovascular epidemiology. In October 2014, all seven of the DHW scholars made presentations of their current research at the 14th Annual Conference on Eliminating Health Disparities in Jackson, Mississippi. In March 2015, the DHW scholars submitted five articles for consideration for publication to a peer-reviewed journal. They are now awaiting a response from the journal. In March 2015, DHW scholar Milton Dawkins, presented at the Center for Integrative Approaches to Health Disparities (CIAHD) Junior Investigators' Symposium at Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA and received glowing reviews for his presentation. In March 2015, the DHW scholars participated in a Spring Research Seminar where they received training in quantitative research from Dr. Desta Fekedulegn from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and

qualitative research from Dr. Frances Henderson.

There is no other institution in the United States that offers a graduate certificate program in cardiovascular epidemiology. According to the Program Director of GTEC, Dr. Brenda Jenkins, "the DHW Scholar Program seeks to build a culture of health by investing in the professional development of public health experts (our current and future DHW scholars)." This goal of the DHW Scholar Program is important because health disparities affect the daily experiences of African Americans, and they threaten the prosperity and well-being of entire under-served communities in Mississippi, the United States, and around the world.



DHW Scholars pose with Drs. Keith Norris and Mario Sims.

What is an Event in the Jackson Heart Study? Dr. Karen Winters



The purpose of the Jackson Heart Study (JHS) is to investigate the reasons for excessive cardiovascular disease (CVD) in African Americans and to find new ways to reduce it. Cardiovascular diseases are diseases of the heart (cardio) and the blood vessels (vascular). Examples of CVD include stroke, heart attack, chest pain, heart failure, high blood pressure, abnormal heart beat, and diseases affecting the blood vessels in the arms and legs. An "event" in the JHS refers to a CVD-related condition, such as stroke, heart attack, and heart failure that result in a hospital stay or death. The JHS uses several ways to find out if you had an "event." One way of looking for events is through the three Exam Visits that occurred between 2000 and 2013. A second way is by your answers to the follow-up calls we make to you every year since the beginning

of the study. In addition to finding out about events, the purpose of these annual follow-up calls is to maintain contact with you and to learn about your general health and well-being. If you gave us permission to look at your medical records, we will also use the medical records to look for CVD events. Sometimes, a participant may die as a result of CVD. The JHS collects information about a death from vital records and family members to determine if the death was due to CVD.

So what is the importance of CVD "events?" By comparing the characteristics of those who have experienced an event and those who have not, researchers can identify 'risk factors' and other associations that may lead to medications and other therapies that can treat or prevent CVD in the future. It takes a long time to find these kinds of breakthroughs. Through your participation in the JHS, you are contributing to the future health of generations of African Americans.

JHS Bulletin Board

♥ **COMMUNITY MONITORING BOARD MEETING: STATE OF THE STUDY**

SATURDAY: June 6, 2015, UMMC Conference Center
Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center

♥ **JACKSON HEART STUDY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

SATURDAY: September 26, 2015, JACKSON Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center Stage

♥ **The Center for Integrative Approaches to Health Disparities (CIAHD)**

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH TRAINING (ACADEMIA AND COMMUNITY INVITED)

May 12, 2015 | 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and May 13, 2015 | 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center, JSU College of Public Service Room 148. For more information: **Call 601-979-8736 or 601-979-8709.**

♥ **BECOME ONE OF OUR RESEARCH PARTNERS.**

Contact Dr. Clifton Addison (601) 979-8765 or email Clifton.Addison@jsums.edu. Dr. Clifton Addison will inform you on the details of becoming a community investigator with the JHS Community Outreach Center.

♥ **REQUEST HEALTH FAIRS AND RESOURCES.**

Contact Mrs. Darcel Odom at (601) 979-8709.

♥ **THE JACKSON HEART STUDY GRADUATE TRAINING AND EDUCATION CENTER IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS** from Public Health, Sociology, Psychology, Social Work, Nursing, Medicine, and Dental GRADUATE STUDENTS throughout the year for the Daniel Hale Williams Scholars Program. **Contact Dr. Brenda White-Jenkins at 601-979-8731 for details.**

♥ **URGENT THAT WE HEAR FROM YOU:** This is YOUR Newsletter and you have a voice. Send an article, a healthy recipe, a story, a picture, a poem, a comment or suggestion. Email your articles, suggestions and comments to Clifton.Addison@jsums.edu . **Contact Dr. Clifton Addison at 601-979-8765.**



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Article Submissions

The JHS Heartbeat Newsletter is published semi-annually (Spring and Fall). Its intent is to promote health awareness, provide items of interest to our CommUNity, and publish information regarding cardiovascular related diseases, including diabetes, hypertension, strokes, cholesterol, physical activity, and nutrition by presenting research findings, articles, lay summaries, and reviews. The newsletter is an outlet for communication among the JHS staff and encourages contributions from investigators, cohort members, and partnering institutions.

Article submissions are invited for the upcoming editions of the JHS Heartbeat Newsletter. The submission deadline is February 15th for the Spring Edition and August 15th for the Fall Edition.

Submissions should be approximately 250 words or less. Relevant pictures, illustrations, and charts may be submitted with the articles. Information regarding upcoming educational conferences and meetings is also requested. All material information is subject to copy editing. Include the author's/agency's full name, credentials, mailing address, website (if applicable), telephone, fax number, and e-mail address. The use of all photos is subject to consent approval. All information should be e-mailed to Dr. Brenda Jenkins at brenda.w.campbell@jsums.edu, or mailed to JHS Heartbeat Newsletter, 350 W. Woodrow Wilson Drive, Suite 2260, Jackson, MS 39213.

JHS HEARTBEAT EDITORIAL BOARD

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