

My name is Dr. Headley White, Associate Professor in the College of Arts and Humanities, School of Education at Bethune-Cookman University. How do I draw inspiration from historical Black events, movements, and leaders?

I have had a unique opportunity to be involved in the tail end of the “modern civil rights movement. As a child in New York in the 1970s, my sister and I were bused to school; at the time we did not realize that busing was a direct result of the struggle. Living in New York City, allowed us access to people who knew Malcolm X, Andrew Young, and various civil rights activists. I always read voraciously, my mother would take me to Manhattan, where there were a plethora of wholesale bookstores. I started reading books on the Civil Rights Movement; Martin Luther King, Marcus Garvey, DuBois and Booker T. Washington. This supplemented the education that I was not receiving in the public school system. Flash forward 15 years and I was in Tallahassee, Florida and participating in marches with a young and “locally famous” Ben Crump. I continued my activism and decided one of the best ways that I could do my best work was to properly educate those who want to teach others. After completing my PhD in Social Science Education, I eventually landed at the historic Bethune-Cookman University. My position has given me the opportunity to continue to pursue Social Justice Education and to work with historic leaders, including the late great John Lewis, whom I marched with in 2016. It is incumbent upon all of us to continue the battle for equality, equity, and universal fairness. The African American struggle should be ingrained and intertwined into the American curriculum, and until that happens the struggle will continue.