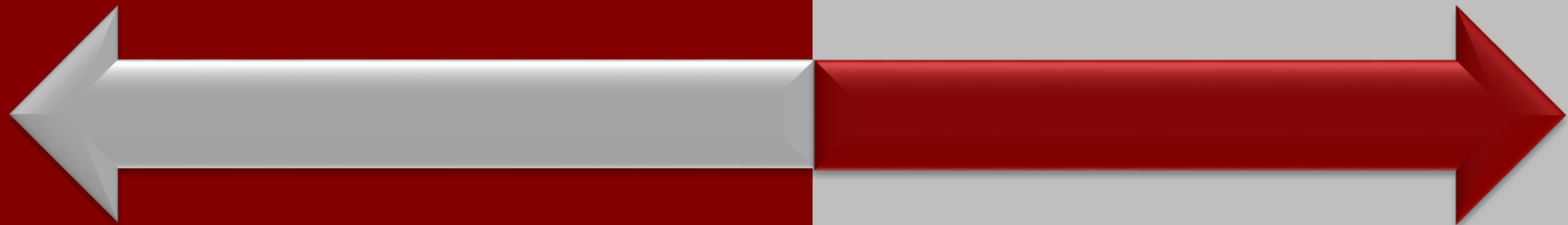


URBAN RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTER, INC. ANNUAL REPORT

MOVING FORWARD

2019



LOOKING BACK

2018



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LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dr. Michael O. Adams



The Urban Research and Resource Center, Inc. has stayed on the pathways to excellence as it worked diligently to enhance student success and completion, provide strong high-quality academic programs and first-class research, advance the growing culture of scholarship, develop strategic partnerships all while maintaining stellar financial records.

This annual report will highlight some of the many achievements of the Center. It will also address some of the challenges the center faces as it strives to move forward to reach even greater heights of success.

The board of directors has actively participated with the URRC staff to ensure it has the tools it needs to meet its goal of being one of the premier centers for urban problems solving. Our work is advanced through five areas that we have identified as the most crucial and immediate needs for the community. Those areas are public education reform; housing, community and economic development; the history of African Americans in Houston; urban resources and criminal justice reform.

The URRC has designated 2019 as the Year of Criminal Justice Reform, a designation that has significant support from a growing number of community stakeholders who have agreed to work with us to ensure fundamental reforms are pursued through national, state and local legislatures and policy makers.

The Center's work in developing and working with strong community partners is unparalleled in the history of the university. This work will certainly increase the university's visibility throughout our constituent communities while ensuring that the city's residents recognize the significant resources TSU houses within its facilities, not the least of which is a highly accomplished and dedicated faculty and able willing students to engage in providing the type of assistance our communities desire.

The URRC also produced and e-published the *Our Story: The History of Thurgood Marshall School of Law*, parts I and II by the end of 2018. Part three will be released in January 2019 and Part IV: The Coffee Table Book will be released in February 2019. These publications provide insight into the development and maintenance of the law school as a formidable school at Texas Southern University.

2018 has been a remarkable year and we believe through our sustained efforts, 2019 will be even better!

LETTER FROM THE URRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marcia Johnson



It was an honor to be asked by Texas Southern University President Austin Lane to develop a program that would help the university fulfill its mission as an urban institution. When we began our work informally in 2017, the new Center was enthusiastically embraced by co-founders, Thurgood Marshall School of Law and the Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs. By October 2017, the Center was awarded its first funds from Title III and by January 2018, we were able to start spending those funds to hire our staff of three, Alan “Aswad” Walker, as associate director and Andreience Fields as office manager. We were also able to hire students from throughout the campus to help with research and writing. We began with 6 law school students, 7 graduate school students and 3 undergraduate students. Students were assigned to various research and writing projects that included criminal justice, prisoner reentry, public education assessment and reform, housing and the fair housing act, the history of Camp Logan, Imperial Sugar Prison Farm, Third Ward, Fifth Ward and Thurgood Marshall School of Law.

We were also able to work with experts campus-wide to assist in our work. These experts include Dr. Lillian Potts (Education), Dr. Carla Brailey (Psychology), Dr. Kenneth Jackson (Sociology), Dr. Reginald Todd (Education), and Professor Tomiko Meeks (History) who serve on the public education research task force.

The URRC also engaged faculty to serve as advisors to student researchers. Those faculty members worked directly with the students on their assigned research projects to provide guidance and advice toward writing publishable papers. Those faculty advisors included Dr. Johnnie Williams, Dr. Charlene Evans, Dr. Michael Berryhill, Dr. Vera Hawkins, Dr. Jay Aiyer, and Professors Mary Kelly, Asmara Tekle, Sarah Guidry, Lucinda Daniels, Algenita Davis and Carlton Perkins.

Along with our partners, we launched several new initiatives in 2018, including the Smart Justice Program that featured the TSU Anthony Graves Smart Justice Speakers’ Bureau, the TSU Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Revitalization (TIEER), the Housing and Community Development project in North Houston, and the Humane Investigation Project (HIP). We developed partnerships and collaborations with numerous community organizations, individuals, religious centers, service providers, banks, non-profit organizations and others; all as part of our vision of “Communiversality.”

Our work at the Center has allowed us to work with the phenomenal men and women of Texas Southern University. We are proud to be a part of this incredible university and we look forward enthusiastically to what we will accomplish in 2019. Join us. We encourage your comments and insights. Visit our webpage at urrc.tsu.edu and follow us on twitter @TsuUrrc and facebook @TsuURRC.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION



URRC RESEARCHERS worked to provide high quality research and publishable papers on the five focal areas for the Center. Academic research is an area that African Americans and other minorities are poorly represented in the marketplace.

The experience that students gain by conducting the research along with the valuable interaction with their faculty advisors help to enhance the students' knowledge, analytical skills and problem solving so that they are more engaged independent learners who will leave the Center with experience and skills needed to enhance their effectiveness in their careers. Among the various goals for hiring students is to offer them real-world work experience that allows them to develop strong work ethics that increase their marketability. The students are also exposed to self-sufficiency skills that enhance the quantity as well as the quality of their production.

Students are required to submit their work product as well as their research weekly. Their work is reviewed with feedback and returned to the researchers within two days. They use that feedback to help guide to more effective and more exhaustive research as well as more highly skilled writing.

The URRC provides rigor and maintains high expectations of the students. While we seek to provide guidance, the Center encourages students, through intellectual inquiry and initiative, to locate the sources and resources they need to excel. This strong experiential approach has been generally well received by the students who are often surprised at the wealth of information and resources available to their searches for evidence to draw on for developing proposals and solutions. It is demanding work and we are proud of how capable students prove themselves to be.

While we want our students to be independent learners and thinkers, they are not alone, we also want them to know that they are not alone. When one of our graduate students faced the likelihood of having to drop out of school during her last semester because she lost a scholarship, the Center solicited outside funds to pay for her lost scholarship so that she could complete her graduate studies. She successfully argued her master's thesis in fall 2018. In total five of the Center's law students and three of its graduate researchers completed their studies and graduated by December 2018.

We began publishing our student and other URRC papers online at urrc.tsu.edu



Student and URRC Publications

January 2018 through August 2018

Researchers begin working for URRC and receive their research assignments

June 2018-August 2018

Students assigned to faculty advisors to help facilitate their research and help prepare the papers for publication

Publication Calendar

September 2018

Third Ward Resource Guide

October 2018

Fair Housing Part I
The History of Pleasantville

November 2018

Criminal Justice
Our Story Part I
Central Prison/Convict Leasing

December 2018

Our Story Part II
Fair Housing Part II

The Center's Director and Associate Director conducted training sessions with URRC researchers to help them frame the center's broad reach and their individual contributions to its and their success. These forums were designed to help students understand research foundations, review each other's projects and to spur meaningful intellectual discourse.

We believe that a major component of our students' post graduate success depends on their ability to recognize, dissect, analyze and solve problems.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUALITY AND RESEARCH



Part One: “*The Long Journey Home*” (1776 – 1947) recounts the centuries of horror and the resistance to those horrors that paved the way for the new school.

Part Two: “*In the Beginning: The Building Years*” (1947 – 1960) reveals the herculean challenges and triumphs involved in opening the doors to and building the foundations of Texas Southern University’s law school



The URRC worked with experts throughout the campus and community to ensure the highest quality of multi-disciplined academic research. Projects like:

Dissecting The Promise: Dr. Johnnie Williams of the Jesse Jones School of Business teamed with one of the student researchers, Blessing Ananti, to examine the Texas law of 1946 that promised Texas State University for Negroes (TSUN) would be treated equally to the University of Texas. Under critical review is the funding of the two universities to determine whether the state funding mechanism has resulted in equality or disparity. Their report is anticipated in the spring 2019.

Smart Justice: In partnership with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU-Texas), the URRC worked with the iconic ACLU to develop programs and platforms to reduce incarceration by 50%. The reduction in incarceration is only one of the initiatives that this partnership will engage during the coming year. The Center works directly with ACLU director, **Terri Burke** and ACLU consultant, **Anthony Graves** as well as with ACLU's Director of Political Strategies, **Sharon Watkins Jones**.

Public Education Reform: One of the center's more aggressive initiatives is its Public Education Reform Project. Through collaborations with experts, **Drs. Lillian Potts, Reginald Todd, Kenneth Jackson, Carla Brailey, and Professor Tomiko Meeks**, the Center embarked on the mission of developing a successful model for educating urban students from K through 12th grade. Community partnerships with the **Varnett School** and **Yellowstone Academy** provided resources for establishing learning laboratories that would be established once the Center completes its initial research that includes modeling best practices. By the fall 2018, the project took on new momentum, when working with **Professor Asmara Tekle** and **Dr. Raijanel S. Crockem** we were able to identify and witness academic success models that can be developed to address the specific needs facing urban students.

Black Girls Initiative: The Center began serving as a facilitator for the Earl Carl Institute's Black Girls Initiative. This initiative targets the disparity in treatment, particularly the "adultification" of black girls in American society. Working with ECI Director **Sarah Guidry** and **Morgan Owens**, the Center incorporates ECI research into media responsive campaigns to enhance mentorships and awareness that is slated to lead to resolution.

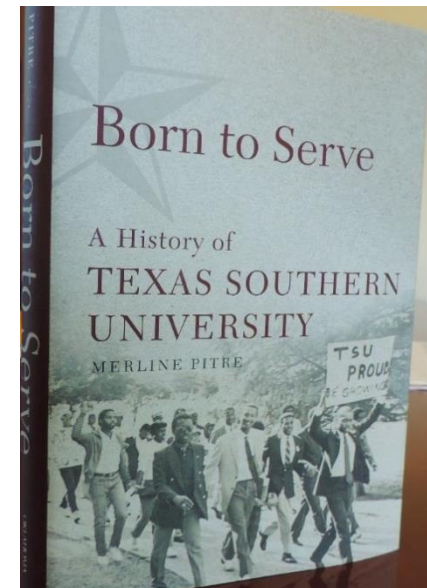
Our Story: The History of Thurgood Marshall School of Law: Working with living deans, interim and acting of the Thurgood Marshall School of Law as well as through interviews with law school faculty, the Center worked to recount the law school's magnificent history. From reviewing the historical struggle African Americans faced in this country for equality, to the struggle in Texas for education to the work the law school performs today as it continues to make history, the four-part series invites the readers to experience the school's remarkable story from the perspective of those who lived it. The series begins with Part I, *the Long Journey Home (1776-1946)* and continues with Part: II *In the Beginning (1947-1960)* both of which have been released online. Part III, *Protect It, Improve It, and Pass It On (1961-2019)* is scheduled to be released on January 25, 2019 along with a bonus release of all the school's graduates

since the school's beginning. Part IV is a coffee book that is scheduled to be released in February 2019. This project will be on-going as we are able to acquire more information and conduct more interviews throughout 2019.

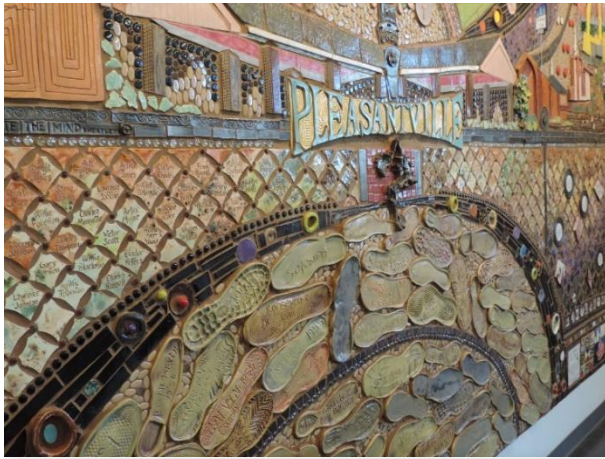
Criminal Justice Reform: Working with community organizations, the URRRC began developing a legislative information and education agenda in advocacy of criminal justice reforms. The targeted areas for reform include: Juvenile Justice in criminal justice and schools arenas, bail, sentencing and incarceration, diversionary programs, indigent defense, reentry and recidivism, policing, crime labs and prison environments. In furtherance of this effort, the URRRC declared 2019 as The Year of Criminal Justice Reform.

History of African Americans in Houston: During 2018, the Center gathered information about the history of African Americans in Houston. Fascinating stories included interviews with **Dr. Merline Pitre, Professors Darnell Holley, James Douglas, McKen**

Carrington, L. Darnell Weeden and Gary Bledsoe; the historical overview of the Pleasantville community, the Camp Logan insurrection, Central Unit Prison located on the Imperial Sugar Plantation, and the Third Ward story to name a few.



Left: URRRC Associate Director interviews the iconic Dr. Merline Petrie, Historian who recently published her book on the history of Texas Southern University, *Born to Serve* on right.



Pleasantville mural by artist Marsha Dorsey-Outlaw



Unveiling of Painting of First African American Woman judge in the City of Houston, Hon. Alice Bonner, far right. From left: The Artist Ted Ellis and Antoinette Jackson



Judge Willie Blackmon and Mary Fontenot



Pleasantville icon Talmadge Sharp and Judson Robinson III

Did You Know?

The Pleasantville community was officially founded in 1948, the year residents began moving in, though plans for the neighborhood were said to have hatched the previous year by two Jewish-American builders and developers, Melvin A. Silverman and H.M. Cohen. Silverman and Cohen sought to create two Houston-area master-planned communities for U.S. military veterans, particularly those returning from the recently ended World War II. The pair planned to create one of those communities for Jewish-American military veterans and the other for African-American servicemen. Silverman and Cohen are said to have chosen these two populations because of the systemic discrimination both African Americans and Jewish Americans faced in the U.S., particularly around securing housing.

TSU Institute of Entrepreneurial and Economic Revitalization (TIEER) was launched in 2018 with plans for beginning operations in early 2019. The TIEER project is a two-track program designed to boost entrepreneurial endeavors and thereby economic enhancements to the Third Ward community. Track One is an 18-month incubator program that provides newly licensed lawyers with a \$5,000 loan, office location, support and education to help facilitate successful law practices. Track Two is TIEER's seminal program. It provides funding, education, mentoring to start-up and growing businesses in the Third Ward. The program is the vision of the benefactor, himself a successful entrepreneur who has committed to providing and or raising \$5,000,000 for the project.



Left to right: Photo of Judson Robinson Sr., Houston Area Urban League President Judson Robinson III and City of Houston Director of Parks and Recreation Department Steve Wright

Formerly Riverside National Bank, first and only black bank in Texas



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



On August 2, 2018, TSU's URRC and the ACLU-TX hosted a kick-off reception announcing their partnership and the launch of the URRC's *TSU Anthony Graves Smart Justice Speakers' Bureau*.

Seated from left to right: Provost Kendall Harris and ACLU Chief Terri Burke sign MOU between TSU's URRC and ACLU-TX
Standing from left to right: Professor Carroll Robinson, TSU Student Regent and former URRC Researcher Kernard D. Jones, Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis, Activist Anthony Graves, U.S. Congressman Al Green, URRC Executive Director, Professor Marcia Johnson, Chair, URRC Criminal Justice BrainTrust, the Hon. Craig A. Washington, ACLU-TX Director of Political Strategies, Sharon Watkins Jones



From left to right: ACLU-TX Director of Political Strategies Sharon Watkins Jones, URRC Executive Director, Professor Marcia Johnson and United States Congressman, Alexander Green at reception marking the partnership between URRC and ACLU-TX

The URRC has worked with community stakeholders to generate a culture of cooperation and ensure that all voices are at the table. Our strategic partnerships include in alpha order:

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

ACLU-TX

Acres Home Chamber for Business and Economic Development, Inc.

African American News and Issues

Anthony Graves Foundation

Barbara Jordan Institute-TSU

Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs

Black Girls Initiative

Blodgett Urban Gardens

Brass Facts

CATCH Foundation

Change Happens

Earl Carl Institute

Emancipation Economic Development Corporation

Faith in Action Work Group

Greater Zion Baptist Church



Shape Center Founder and Director, DeLloyd Parker and Pleasantville Historical Society President Mary Fontenot

Harris County Commissioner, Precinct One

Harris County Racial and Ethnic Disparities Committee

Houston Area Urban League

Houston Area Urban League CDC

Houston Business Development, Inc.

Houston Defender

Ministers Against Crime

Muhammad Mosque #45

NAACP-Houston

PACE

Pan African Orthodox Church

Re-Ward Third Ward CDC

SER

Shrine of the Black Madonna

Texas Appleseed

Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

Texas Southern University

The Pleasantville Historical Society

Thurgood Marshall School of Law

Varnett Public School

Yellowstone Academy

TO BECOME A COMMUNITY PARTNER WITH THE URRC
SEND AN EMAIL EXPRESSING YOUR INTEREST TO URRC@TSU.EDU

GETTING THE WORD OUT



Left to right: KPRC Channel 2 Host of Houston Newsmakers Khambrel Marshall with Anthony Graves and Smart Justice Speakers' Bureau graduate Sybil Sybille making a difference

2019: LOOKING FORWARD

In December 2018, the Center declared **2019 as the Year of Criminal Justice Reform**. This requires the URRC to focus special attention on reforming the criminal justice system to substantially reduce incarceration, to provide effective diversionary programs, to substantially reduce reliance on pre-trial cash bail, to investigate cases to reduce the amount of wrongful convictions, to provide avenues for persons in prison to be exonerated on proof of actual innocence, to redesign the juvenile justice system to encourage prevention rather than imprisonment, to work with our partners to address the serious problem of black girl “adultification,” to work toward community reunification to help ensure safer sustainable communities, to provide evidence-based research and to serve as advisors to public and private sector interests. The Center will launch the year with a day-long **Criminal Justice Reform Symposium** to be held on January 17, 2019 on the campus of Texas Southern University.



Jack Yates High School Scholars from left to right Camren Williams, Andrea Brown, Mahdi Bey, Kazsia Cose and Di'Avolique Dunning

Smart Justice Graduates: In 2019, graduates from the inaugural class will tell their stories across the state and beyond. They will meet with legislators with proposals for transformative bills. They will lift their voices in courtrooms and in boardrooms, in school rooms and in prison cells all in order to positively impact our system of criminal justice.

In the fall 2019, we plan to convene our second class of Smart Justice Speakers' Bureau students.

Humane Investigation Project: 2019 should see significant work with strategic partners to help ensure conviction integrity, to identify where the convictions were not supported and to help reduce wrongful convictions going forward.

Public Education Reform: We are on target to begin presenting our findings related to public education reform. We expect 2019 to spotlight significant partnerships that will boost our goal of providing high quality, adequately funded education to urban school children.



History of African Americans in Houston: We look forward to a fruitful partnership with Jack Yates High School and the Third Ward's Emancipation Economic Development Council (EEDC) to celebrate the history of African Americans in Houston through videocasts and other visual as well as audio and written media.

Housing, Community and Economic Development: We are working to formally launch our TIEER initiatives in 2019. Interest in the programs are already swelling in our incubator and entrepreneurial support projects.

Telling our story of African American Ancestry in Houston

Financial Integrity

Join Our Financial Supporters:

Texas Southern University—Title III

The CATCH Foundation

Thurgood Marshall School of Law

Barbara Jordan Mickey Leland
School of Public Affairs

eMPA, Texas Southern University

United States Congressman Al Green

Howard Jefferson

Marcia Johnson

ACLU-TX

Rita Houston Gantz

Beatrice Ann Marquez

Kendall T. Harris

Kimberley R Baker

Serbino Walker

Jerome S. Wald

Richard Clark

Your generous donations have supported more than twenty urban research projects, five of which have been published, eight student scholarships, certification of seven smart justice advocates, community engagement and capacity building

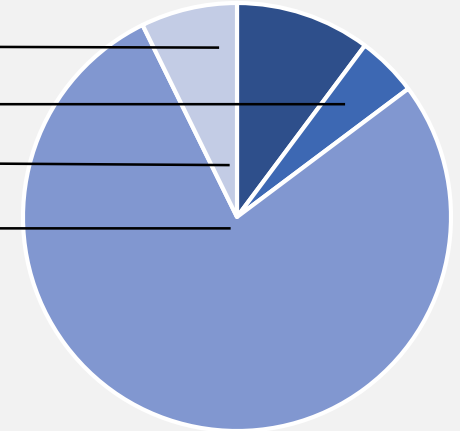
Operating Revenue

University 7%

Foundations 5%

Individuals 10%

Government Grants 80%



Operating Expenses

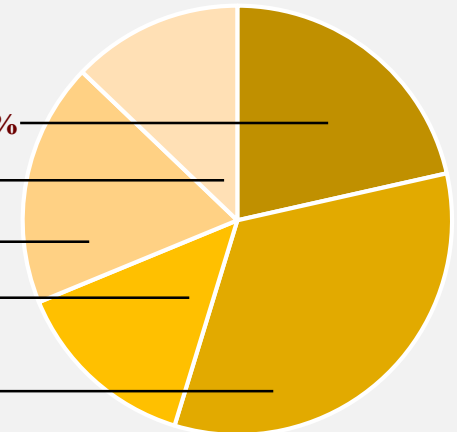
Student Success and Completion 21%

Culture 13%

Financing 18%

Strategic Partnerships 14%

**Academic Program Quality
And Research 33%**





Support the Urban Research and Resource Center

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Located in the School of Public Affairs, Suite 205
3100 Cleburne Street
Houston, TX 77004
Phone: (713) 313-4858
Email: urrc@tsu.edu

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The URRC is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation funded in part by Texas Southern University, but relies on program funding from individuals, corporations and others interested in supporting the mission and vision of the URRC. Please donate today.

