
ABWH TRUTH: SPECIAL ISSUE

Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Remembrances



About the Issue

Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn

Since her untimely passing, scholars across the nation have paid homage to the important intellectual contributions of Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn. In addition to creating the [Rosalyn Terborg-Penn Junior Faculty Award](#) in her honor, we wanted to dedicate a special issue of *Truth* to our founder to showcase the lasting

1941-2018

impact she had on others personally. What follows are selected remembrances from friends, colleagues, students, and mentees whose remembrances capture the richness of her legacy.

**Jessica Millward,
Associate Professor of
African American Studies
and History, UC Irvine**

Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn has touched every aspect of my professional life. She was a mentor to my dissertation advisor and a mentor to my older sister scholar. She was also my mentor. Mentoring was Rosalyn's modus operandi. She was sincerely interested in the work of young scholars. I think I speak for many of us in the profession when I say that we take calls from junior scholars and are accessible to them, because Rosalyn was accessible



Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, 2015.

**“Girl! I already
know why you
are calling.”**

to us. She could be unflinching in her reprimands and advice, but she would also delight in seeing someone at a conference or when they called. She would join you for lunch in an instant, be it at a conference or as a personal request. More times than not, she answered the phone with, “Hello dear.” At some point she moved from being my mentor to being a trusted older friend and auntie. Occasionally she would answer the phone with, “Girl! I already know why you are calling.”

Next to mentoring, the most important professional lesson that I learned from Dr. Terborg-Penn's scholarship and legacy came to me when I attended her memorial at Morgan State University. That lesson was to give it your all, at all times, and in every instance. Rosalyn grew where she was planted and did so ceaselessly. She started at Morgan at a time when Black women were not on the faculty in large numbers. She, and those in her ranks of pioneers, fought at campuses and in a profession that wasn't meant to include women, let alone Black women. No word can describe the feeling in the auditorium when the announcement came that Morgan State's Annual Women's History Month Convocation was being renamed The Rosalyn Terborg-Penn Women's History Month Convocation. It seemed the universe was confirming that her job was, indeed, well done.

Personally, I learned from Rosalyn the importance of self-care and good health. Child onset diabetes necessitated that Rosalyn was always on top of her health. I also learned that space existed in the profession to create a family; in fact, family was crucial. As career-driven as Roslyn was, being Jeanna's mother and, later, little Stash's Oma was a source of pride. I miss Rosalyn's Facebook posts about family genealogy. She is that person who really wanted to know, "Who are your people? Where are they from?"

In 2000, Dr. Terborg-Penn chaired my session at Southern Association of Women Historians in Richmond, Virginia. Hat on head and body in motion, she instructed me to get in touch with her when I moved to Baltimore later that summer. From 2000 onward, I had nearly seasonal check-ins with Rosalyn either by phone or in person when I was in Baltimore. Copeland's in Columbia Town Center was our preferred meeting spot. We would listen to jazz and walk along the water. Because Copeland's decided to close down without our permission, we were forced to dine somewhere else. A few years ago, Natanya Joyce Pickney Duncan and I joined Roslyn at her "new" favorite restaurant. The lunch was as you would expect it. We each spoke about our current projects and provided updates on our family and our respective health. After lunch, I wanted to go to the mall for some signature Wockenfuss chocolates. It was decadent, and I did not think that Natanya and Roslyn would indulge me. However, I wasn't leaving the area without receiving my

blessing from the signature Baltimore chocolatier. All three of us went to the Wockenfuss store across the way at Columbia Mall. We all had chocolate



Dr. Jessica Millward

(RTP's was sugar free, of course).

Honey!!! I am not sure if it was the sugar or because it was a Saturday where we had zero behavior. We sat at the mall food court for hours. I know this because we had to order more real food. We giggled and gossiped, taking special delight in finding a man friend for one another . .

. "There goes your man." "Girl, I told him not to wear that out today."

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn could be a stickler professionally, but she also liked to laugh.

Rosalyn was a history purest. She did not believe in shortcuts and she lived and breathed the politics of citation. She had no patience for people who failed to cite their intellectual elders in

footnotes, and she became incensed if younger scholars did not know classic arguments. She would insist upon these four principles:

1. Do the hard work of history.
2. Do not take shortcuts.
3. Know the historiography.
4. Cite the elders.

Undoubtedly, many will speak of about their encounters with Dr. Terborg-Penn at the Association of Black Women

Historians (ABWH) forty-year symposium in Los Angeles. The symposium did not lack a signature “Auntie Roz” story. Before the keynote address by Stephanie Evans, Rosalyn saw me in line for the buffet. She looked at me and said, “I am a Founder. I am going to go before you.” My response was, “Dr. Penn, we all know you are a Founder. Why aren’t you at the front of the line?” Rosalyn looked past me to the younger scholar behind me and asked, “Do you know who I am?” The woman blushed and said, “Of course.” Rosalyn was not worried about getting food or standing at the front of the line. She wanted to make sure that younger scholar knew Black Women’s History. As if anyone could forget her. The symposium provided Rosalyn the space to truly go out on top. Because of the efforts of the planning committee and everyone who pitched in along the way, Rosalyn embarked on her journey beyond us filled with love and light.

Upon first seeing me at the symposium, Rosalyn said, “Jessica, can you tell that I am shrinking?” She was slightly shorter, but her skin was flawless as always. She was, in fact, radiating. My response was simply, “No Ma’am. You will always be a giant to me.” Asé.

**“Remembering
one of my
Morgan State
University
Mothers.”**

**Edwin T. Johnson, Assistant
University Archivist, Morgan State
University**

As we celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment, much of the scholarly world may turn a portion of their attention if only for a moment to the seminal work of Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn. *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920*, which evolved out of her dissertation, deliberated documented women of color and their appropriate roles within the Women’s Suffrage Movement. Historians may also note the impact of her research in establishing African American Women’s History as a legitimate, research-worthy area of academic interest. Members of the Association of Black Women Historians may pause and reflect on their founders’ organizing efforts to make roads in the academy easier to travel. We lost Dr. Terborg-

Penn unexpectedly on Christmas Day 2018. While much of the world was exchanging gifts that Christmas morning, the academy lost an invaluable one.

While the celebration of Dr. Penn's scholarship is indeed warranted, my memories of her extend far beyond her successes in the academy. While, unquestionably and unapologetically, Dr. Penn was an African American feminist, she was simultaneously a stern but loving surrogate mother to countless students. Generations of students were touched by her spirit and will forever remain changed.

I encountered Dr. Penn as a freshman in my spring semester at Morgan State University in 1989. I had just celebrated my nineteenth birthday and was enrolled in her History of Civilizations II course. I was a recently manufactured product of the Prince George's County Public Schools. My neighborhood in Seat Pleasant, Maryland, was just across the boundary of the North East neighborhood of Washington D.C. I came into my youth and attended high school amid President Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs. While we were taught to "Just say no!," many of my friends and classmates were incarcerated. Having received questionably long sentences, many vanished, as if they never existed. More of my friends than I care to remember did not live to complete their twenties. Although I was raised in a household with two married, present, active, college-educated parents, when I was told that I was "not college material," I entertained the possible truth within the label. Ironically, while I was statistically unprepared to successfully complete college, Morgan State University awarded me a full academic scholarship. I had been selected to be part of the university's Honors Program under the direction of Dr. Clayton C. Stansbury. Dr. Stansbury handpicked some of the toughest professors on the campus to ensure that every Honor Student was prepared through the general education curriculum to be successful in whatever major they chose. While I was unsure whether I belonged in college, Dr. Stansbury was certain that I did, and Dr. Penn followed close behind to confirm his decision.

As a nineteen-year-old African American male, I had been systematically programmed to be uncertain about a great number of things related to my identity and my ability. Understand that in the fall semester prior to enrolling in Dr. Penn's course, one of my closest childhood friends had become a victim of gun violence. I gradually came to the difficult conclusion that if I were to be successful as a collegiate, I would have to put some distance between myself and home. Morgan State University became my new home, and Dr. Penn was among my Morgan Mothers.

Upon entering Dr. Penn's class, I found myself beginning to understand my identity and station within the larger context of American History. I fondly recall mantras from Dr. Penn, such as "You're going to have to be twice as good to get half as much." Although her classroom was an extremely rigorous learning environment, in it I was indoctrinated to believe that I could accomplish anything my heart desired just as long as I was willing to work. She set the bar extremely high and cautioned that I was being prepared to compete in a world that was not going to be kind to me. You came to Dr. Penn's class early and were already seated when she took the lectern. Should you unwisely decide to report to class late, it was in your best interest to listen quietly from the hallway. God help the poor soul who reported late and thought it appropriate to disrupt her class. I was often reminded that she was "whipping my tail" in love. "If you can earn an A in my course, then you can earn an A in the Ivy League." I did not earn an A in her class. I barely qualified for the B I earned. However, I left her class with an indelible imprint on my life's trajectory.

Although I never lost contact with Dr. Penn, I formally reconnected with her in 1996. Under her watchful eye, I earned a Master's degree in African American studies and a Ph.D. in history. She chaired my thesis and dissertation committees, and I am proud to be counted among her last doctoral students before her full retirement from Morgan.

I lost Dr. Penn on the eve of my forty-ninth birthday. I can still remember receiving the phone call from her daughter, Jeanna, a Morgan classmate and



Dr. Edwin T. Johnson

friend, about 7:00 PM on Christmas night. After shedding some tears and calling several classmates and colleagues, I collected myself and began to reflect on Dr. Penn's impact on my life. Dr. Penn had been in my life one month shy of three decades.

I have enjoyed employment opportunities at four institutions of higher learning in the state of Maryland. Every position for which I have applied included a recommendation or a reference listing from Dr. Penn. Long after I had left her classroom she remained faithfully invested in my life. When I look back, I shudder to think how my academic and professional career might have

played out had I, as a confused nineteen-year-old, not encountered her. It is a transformative experience when you encounter someone who sees you more greatly than you see yourself. Dr. Penn literally rewrote the narrative that had been spoken over my life.

Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn was an exemplary, world-renowned scholar. However, she was also a beloved Morgan State University Mother. She loved her students, and she invested tirelessly in them. Though small in stature, Dr. Penn also zealously protected her students from the injustices of university politics. She believed in me and in so many others when we were not yet at a place where we could believe in

ourselves. So much of who I am is because of what Dr. Penn was. She believed in me, and now I confidently believe in myself. I am forever grateful and thankful that God allowed for her to be part of my village.

Sharon Harley, Associate Professor of African American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park

Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn's scholarship and global student and faculty outreach profoundly affected me (and others) intellectually and personally. First of all, I attended Howard University's history department to study the political economy of slavery in Brazil and switched to study Black women's labor history and political activism after numerous discussions with Roz about her Black women's suffrage research. As we traveled to numerous women's history conferences, we often confronted scholars who omitted Black women from their suffrage narratives, which Roz's research fully documented. It became increasingly exhausting to hold up the Black women's history banner

“Pioneering Scholar, Founder, and Friend.”

at these sessions, so Roz and I decided to write our own Black women's history text—thus came *The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images* (1978), which included essays by the distinguished and pioneer Black women's history scholars Evelyn Brooks Barnett (Higginbotham), Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, and the late Gerald Gill. At the ABWH-initiated, NEH-funded Women in Africa and the African

Diaspora national conference at Howard University in June 1983, Rosalyn presented “African Feminism: A Theoretical Approach to the History of Women in African Diaspora.” Subsequently, Rosalyn, Andrea Benton Rushing, and I coedited the first edition of *Women in America and Africa Diaspora* (1988).

I have so many special memories: most notably, the joy of sharing discussions of our scholarly work and even our personal life as we traversed Howard University campuses or worked in Rosalyn's basement on two pioneer Black

women's histories. I learned so much from Roz. I was utterly amazed by her outreach and friendships with various diaspora student populations on Howard's campus. Over the course of our decades-long friendship and as I read her published accounts of her diaspora background, I learned of her relatives in Surinam, New York City, and Amsterdam. Prior to her passing, Rosalyn and her daughter, Jenna, had traveled to Amsterdam and other places to reconnect with these relatives.

Roz was an exceedingly hardworking and generous scholar who encouraged and supported so many junior scholars and graduate students. Seek out a Roz-like mentor on your campus or in the ABWH, the ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History), and the ASWAD who will encourage and support you, invite you to present papers, and nominate you to serve on history associations and conference committees.

Because she seldom sought personal recognition for her hard work, dedication to students, and the development of the ABWH and the ASWAD, few people knew the breadth and depth of her service to Black women's history, the profession, and the aforementioned organizations until, sadly, reading her obituary in the *New York Times* or these and other personal reflections. Like most of you, her daughter Jenna and I remain especially grateful to former ABWH national director Francille Rusan Wilson and her team for honoring Roz at the fortieth anniversary of the ABWH and current ABWH national director Erica Armstrong Dunbar and her team for establishing the Rosalyn Terborg-Penn Junior Faculty Award. This award recognizes junior faculty who epitomize the tradition of student outreach and mentoring so important to Roz. I miss her!

Bettye Collier-Thomas, Professor of History, Temple University

Death ends a life but not a relationship! Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and I shared a lifelong friendship.

Quite by accident, I met Rosalyn in the late 1960s, at Howard University, while rushing up the hill next to the law school to teach a class in Founder's Library. I recall her running behind me. Out of breath, she stated that she remembered me as a student at the John Adams High School in the South Ozone Park neighborhood of Queens, New York. That chance meeting at Howard University blossomed into a friendship that spanned over five decades.

Deservedly so, much has been written about Rosalyn the scholar and pioneer. I too celebrate her pioneering scholarship on African American women in the suffrage movement and her superb mentoring of students at Morgan State College where she created the history department's first graduate program and taught numerous young men and women who received Master's and Ph.D. degrees under her tutelage. But she was much more than a scholar and pioneer. She was a loving daughter and a dedicated mother who was deeply invested in her family's long history on three different continents: Europe, South America, and North America. She was a lifelong activist—a promoter of civil rights and a defender of the rights of Black women.

My relationship with Rosalyn was multifaceted. More than just being a fellow historian, she was a loyal friend and a staunch sorority sister. Like all relationships, ours required patience, time, and work. Throughout her life Rosalyn privileged and maintained close relationships with several women that she had known in high school, college, and graduate school.

As our friendship continued to grow and blossom in the 1970s and 1980s, Rosalyn and I often reflected on what it was like to grow up during the 1950s and 1960s and the people we knew. We discovered that we had far more in common than we knew. Rosalyn knew and associated with a number of people who were several years older and in college—some of whom were friends with my brother, an engineering student at New York University. On one occasion, I mentioned that while I had set my sights on a career in law, it was Miss Sokolowski, a brilliant history teacher who inspired me to become a historian. Rosalyn laughed and said that she had also been influenced by her.

In preparation for writing this remembrance, I spoke with Thelma Polk Collier—a former classmate and now my sister-in-law—about her experiences during her four-year tenure at John Adams. I was presently surprised that she was also taught by Miss Sokolowski. Thelma explained that she was not only the best teacher she ever had but also that she was the most supportive of Black students. She also noted that the school had a fairly large Black student body, some of whom participated in the predominantly white organizations. Thelma,



Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas

a 1958 Adams graduate, was in the business track and could not recall ever seeing or meeting Rosalyn.

Following graduation from John Adams in 1959, Rosalyn attended Queens College where she majored in history, was mentored by Harvard Sitkoff, and earned a bachelor's degree in 1963. In 1967 she earned a master's degree in history from George Washington University and began her academic career at Morgan State College. Ironically, I was accepted by GWU and entered the history department's doctoral program in the fall of 1968. Bettye Gardner and I were the only Black Ph.D. students in the department

between 1968 and 1974. On February 18, 1974—my birthday—I became the first African American to ever receive a Ph.D. in History from GWU.

During the early 1970s, as Ph.D. students at GWU, Bettye Gardner and I spent many days, nights, and weekends

conducting research and working on our dissertations at the Library of Congress. It was there, mostly in the late afternoon and at night, that we encountered a cadre of Howard University Ph.D. students, including Rosalyn, Sylvia Jacobs, George White, Gerald Gill, John Fleming, and Sharon Harley. It was there in the spring of 1974 that Rosalyn introduced me to Sharon Harley. The three of us became fast friends. A year later in the spring of 1975, I recall Sharon approaching me one night at the Library of Congress to invite me to write an essay for a book they were planning. I declined. Having received the Ph.D. in February 1974 and signed a book contract with the University of Illinois Press, I did not think it prudent to take on a new project. In the summer of 1978 I was thrilled to join the two of them at a small downtown club to celebrate the publication of *The Afro-American Woman: Struggle and Images*, a groundbreaking anthology that provided a historical perspective on key movements, women activists, and topics relating to African American women's history.

This 135-page book conceived and edited by two Black female graduate students in their twenties was a major catalyst for launching the African American women's history movement. As young scholars we were buoyed up by the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, the music, dance, and general celebration of our Blackness. It is difficult to capture the spirit of the times and to communicate what we were feeling at that time. With the release of Nina Simone's song "To Be Young Gifted and Black"—which literally became our anthem—we were floating on a never-ending cloud!

As the women's movement progressed during the 1970s, and numerous publications on "women's" history were being published, Rosalyn, Sharon, and I were among the cadre of Black women who felt the need to organize and promote Black women's history. In October 1979 Rosalyn, Eleanor Smith, and Eleanor Parker founded the ABWH. Beginning in late 1976, I had set my sites on organizing a national conference on Black women's history and founding a museum and archives. In 1978 I submitted a proposal to the NEH

for funding to sponsor the First National Conference on Black Women's History. Sharon Harley, Lillian Williams, Gloria Dickinson, and I developed the program that included presentations by Black women Ph.D.s and graduate students mostly in history, but also in law and several other disciplines, whose work focused on Black women. Coinciding with the opening of the Bethune Museum and Archives in November 1979, the conference, held at the Shoreham Hotel, featured Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Sharon Harley, Mary Frances Berry, Evelyn Brooks, Gerda Lerner, and a host of other scholars who delivered papers on a diversity of topics. The conference, attended by over two thousand persons, was a resounding success and received widespread publicity in the major white and Black press in the United States and abroad.

I was privileged to be one of a very few persons with whom Rosalyn discussed the need and for a Black women's history association. Rosalyn also sought my advice on numerous articles, projects, and programs that she was instrumental in either developing or was working on at Morgan State College, for the American Historical Association (AHA), and for other professional committees she was involved in between the late 1970s and into the 1990s. For several years, she pressured me to accept an invitation from the AHA to serve on the Committee on Women Historians; to speak to several women's organizations in Baltimore; and sought my advice and assistance in the development the graduate program in history at Morgan.

She called on me frequently for advice and information regarding women or movements that she was researching and writing about for her book on Black women in the suffrage movement and for various articles and individual figures that she and Elsa Barkley Brown, as co-editors with Darlene Clark Hine, worked on for the *Black Women in America* encyclopedia. She was aware of the extensive biographical files that I maintained on African American women and knew that she could count on me to either provide sources, help define a research methodology for various graduate students, or provide biographical and other data on women and organizations.

Rosalyn was a very vibrant but somewhat conservative scholar who religiously protected and defended her scholarship. She policed the publications when she did not agree with the author's interpretations. Rosalyn, like many of us, was complicated, and at times tended to be opinionated, difficult, and unpredictable. She knew who she was, celebrated her roots, was proud of her scholarship and extremely confident. She carefully constructed her public image, shared her innermost thoughts, and only revealed her true self to a few of her most trusted friends.

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn was a giant of a scholar. During most of her academic career she felt unappreciated and that her scholarly work was ignored by a white racist intellectual establishment that determines who gets hired, what gets published, reviewed, and cited, and that is supported by Black acolytes who endorse its decisions. This includes historians, professional organizations, publishers, universities, and an array of institutions and individuals who have benefitted from white supremacy.

In 1993, having read Rosalyn's groundbreaking dissertation, I asked why it had not been published. She informed me that for over a decade she had fought to get it published. Well over a dozen university publishers had rejected her manuscript. Quoting the historians who reviewed the work, she remarked that invariably they emphasized that it was not centered in the history of the women's suffrage movement and did not cite the extant historical scholarship written by "noted" historians. However, Darlene Clark Hine had invited her to submit the manuscript to Indiana University Press, where she served as editor of the Blacks in the Diaspora Series. In 1997 *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920* was published by IU Press.

There are many lessons that younger scholars should learn from Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn's life and service, not the least of which is that you must believe in yourself and continue to press forward to achieve your goals; ignore the naysayers and those who would place obstacles in your path. You must be ever faithful to the history and struggles of your people and understand that it

is because of them that we exist and that it is incumbent upon them to never forget that they stand on the shoulders of giants who laid the groundwork for them to succeed.

Toya Corbett, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Dean of Students, North Carolina Central University

When I decided to pursue graduate school, I chose Morgan State University because I was intentional about attending a historically Black university and to study under the mother of African American women's history, the legendary Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn. During my first semester of the master's program, she intimidated the hell out of me! I was so nervous to be in Dr. Penn's presence because of the amount of reverence and respect I had for her. She was extremely tough but nurturing. Petite in stature, she intellectually towered over the masses. Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn was an extraordinary professor who taught with vigor, passion, and the spirit of the ancestors.

Shaping the minds of future historians through a Black feminist lens, Dr. Penn challenged those fortunate enough to glean from her knowledge and wisdom to be uncompromising critical thinkers with a contextually analytical approach

“Dr. Penn, I am because of you!”

that demanded contemplation beyond the predominate narrative. This method of grooming allowed me to hear the shattered yet present voices of Black women who were major influencers in their families and communities, striving for equality, acceptance, and freedom. I subsequently found my own voice which was filtered with a new sense of pride, confidence, and abundant joy.

In February of 2003, I had the honor of accompanying Dr. Penn to the annual ASALH luncheon at Howard University. There, she personally introduced me to all the great Black historians present. I vividly remember chatting with Dr. John Hope Franklin and shaking his hand while my heart was dancing with pure

Black history bliss. On the ride back to Dr. Penn's home in Columbia, Maryland, she suggested we stop and have coffee. Little did she know this was my very first time going to Starbucks! I had no idea how or what to order, but I was determined not to embarrass myself over navigating what was then to me a complicated and foreign coffee shop. We sat there talking, professor to student, mentor to mentee and soror to soror. Dr. Penn not only advised my master's thesis and cultivated me into a great historian, she was my Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority sister, and she eventually became a dear friend.

Reflecting back on that particular afternoon, I see that Dr. Penn did more than just buying me my first mocha latte (which is still my favorite). She took the time to pour into me, filling my being with her scholarly genius, support, and love. I hope this story resonates with those currently in the academy, because we certainly need more Dr. Penn's in the profession who are generous with their time and genuine in their pursuit to cultivate the next generation of African American scholars.

Dr. Roslyn Terborg-Penn shall always be remembered for her extraordinary contributions to the academy and for being a pioneer who gave voice to the thousands of Black women throughout the diaspora who sacrificed and fought



Dr. Toya Corbett

for equality. I am forever grateful for being embraced by her intellectual prowess for many years. Suitably, when meeting fellow historians, I boldly exclaim that I am a child of Dr. Roslyn Terborg-Penn.

Thank you, my friend, for being the conduit for my continued scholarly endeavors and for being the guiding light who has led so many to discover their own voice.

Dr. Penn, I am because of you!

**Francille Rusan Wilson, Associate Professor of
American Studies and Ethnicity and History,
University of Southern California**

Friday, December 7, 2018, dawned crisp, sunny, and startlingly clear. The ABWH 40th Anniversary Symposium folders were filled, registration and swag desks at the ready, microphones checked, and the shuttle busses were ferrying participants to the auditorium. Twelve months of planning by the organizers had come down to one remaining question—Would Roz be pleased? What a relief it was that she was pleased, engaged, animated, actively participating from the opening session to the closing reception. We had no hint that for most of us those sunny days and cool nights in Los Angeles would be the last we would spend with our beloved founder, colleague, and friend, Dr. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn.

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn was an intense if tiny bundle of hatted energy. Her eyes and hands flashed as she asked piercing questions and read her deeply researched papers. Her laughter filled rooms. I no longer remember the very first time met Roz but I do vividly recall my first encounters in the early 1980s when I was a graduate student. Nell Painter, my advisor at Penn, had insisted that I join ABWH and begin to get *Truth*. As the mother of a young son, I didn't get to a lot of conferences but when I did I was inevitably stopped in the halls by Rosalyn and firmly instructed to attend the receptions for minority scholars



Dr. Francille Rusan Wilson

or women hosted by AHA or OAH or the business meeting and luncheon of ABWH. Sometimes if the time for the gathering was approaching Roz would simply march us stragglers and strangers to the venue. Rosalyn made sure graduate students and newly minted Ph.D.'s met everyone and that we felt welcome and included. This was a routine of hers that never really stopped. Roz insisted on meeting you, learning what you were working on, and giving you advice. She came to your presentations and publicly defended your ideas while privately explaining to you just where you had gone astray. Roz was the opposite of a gatekeeper as she worked often

officially and sometimes stealthily within the AHA and OAH to increase the opportunities for African American women and men who entered the profession.

I came to know Roz more as a colleague and friend when I began teaching at the University of Maryland in the early 1990s. We were in a Ford Foundation faculty research seminar on Black Women and Work, led by her Howard University classmate and frequent collaborator Sharon Harley, that met regularly. Roz asked me to serve as a commentator on engaging ABWH sessions that featured her doctoral students, and was I honored when she asked me to revise and expand a review essay I had written in *Feminist Studies* as a historiographical study of

the contributions of ABWH members for its 20th anniversary anthology, *Black Women's History at the Intersection of Knowledge and Power* that she edited with Janice Sumler-Edmond who was also in the first cohort of ABWH members and officers. The first part of my chapter, "Our Foremothers' Keepers: The Association of Black Women Historians and Black Women's History" became part of the title of our 40th Anniversary Symposium. Rosalyn's own chapter, "Finding Their Own Voices: African American Women

"Would Roz be pleased?"

Suffragists," illustrated the second part of the symposium's title: The Art and Practice of Black Women's History.

Rosalyn's scholarship embodied the highest standards of our field but her practice made it possible for countless others to join the profession and expand her endeavor.

Roz was funny, feisty, and formidable. Above all she was a talented scholar whose work on Black women's struggles for the vote from the 1830s to 1965 has been invaluable to several generations of scholars. It saddens me that her voice was stilled on the eve of the centenary of the 19th Amendment because she would be reminding us that 1920 was not when the majority of Black women were able to vote and cautioning us about voter suppression in the 21st century.

Dearest Roz, Thank you for letting ABWH give you flowers and high praise while you lived. Our hearts were lifted last December as you heard and cheered on the brilliant work of our newest sister and brother scholars. Your vision of our organization has given us forty years of truth telling. Black women's history is in good hands as you join the foremothers. We treasure your memory, rigorous scholarship and devotion to ABWH. Rest in Power, Peace, and Love.

Contributors

Bettye Collier-Thomas, Ph.D., is Professor of History at Temple University; founder and first director of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History; and organizer of "Black Women: A Research Priority: The First National Scholarly Research Conference on Black Women in America" (1979). The recipient of numerous grants, fellowships and awards, she is a specialist in 19th and 20th century African American and women's history. Her publications include *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (2010); *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979* (1998). She is also the co-editor of *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (2001); *African American Women and the Vote* (1997); and *Vindicating the Race: Contributions to African-American Intellectual History* (1996); and the co-author of *My Soul Is a Witness: A Chronology of the Civil Rights Era, 1954-1964* (2000). She is the compiler and editor of *A Treasury of African American Christmas Stories*. Her forthcoming book is "In Politics to Stay": A Political History of Women" (Beacon, 2020).

Toya Corbett, Ph.D., Toya Corbett is the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at North Carolina Central University. She is responsible for promoting and upholding the values of civility, personal integrity, and academic excellence by providing resources, advocacy, and crisis management for all students. Toya also provides executive level leadership for the Career and Professional Services Center, Diversity & Inclusion, LGBTQA Center, the Women's Center, Men's Achievement Center, Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, Campus Ministries, Case Manager and Student Advocacy office. As a trained historian, scholar and student affairs professional, Toya has spoken at numerous conferences, workshops and seminars. Additionally, she has curated historical exhibits and published a book titled, *The Morgan State University Women: The First Sixty Years, 1934-1994*. Toya is also an entrepreneur who conducts dining etiquette training as "The Etiquette Doctor" and she owns a t-shirt company called Black Genius Apparel, LLC. Black Genius Apparel's mission is to eradicate

discriminatory and mythical philosophies concerning African American's mental aptitude, while empowering, inspiring, and affirming Blackness, Black-thought, Black pride and the fortitude of a Black Genius. Toya is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. where she has served on the International Board of Directors and several national committees.

Sharon Harley, Ph.D., Associate Professor and former chair of the African American Studies Department at the University of Maryland, College Park, researches and teaches Black women's labor history and racial and gender politics. She is the editor and a contributor to the noted anthologies *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work* (Rutgers, 2002) and *Women's Labor in the Global Economy: Speaking in Multiple Voices* (Rutgers, 2008); her most recent essay appears in *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower* (UNC Press, 2008). She has been a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and, in the spring of 2008, at the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University, where she worked on her historical monograph about gender, labor, and citizenship in the lives of African Americans in the United States from the 1860s to 1920s.

Edwin T. Johnson, Ph.D., has spent most of his professional career as a higher education administrator. His work has primarily served non-traditional students. Johnson currently works full-time as the Assistant University Archivist at Morgan State University. An Associate Adjunct Professor at the University of Maryland University College, Johnson also teaches American History and African American History. In 2016, Governor Larry Hogan appointed Johnson to the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. Johnson holds an M.A. in Mass Communications from Towson State University; an M.A. in African American Studies, and the PhD in History from Morgan State University. He was among the last of Dr. Penn's doctoral students before her full retirement.

Jessica Millward, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at UC Irvine. Her research focuses on slavery in early America, African American history as well as women and gender. Dr. Millward's first book, *Finding Charity's Folk: Enslaved and Free Black women in Maryland* was published as part of the *Race in the Atlantic World* series, Athens: University of Georgia Press (2015). An award

winning scholar, she has published in the *Journal of African American History*, the *Journal of Women's History*, *Frontiers*, *Souls* and the *Women's History Review* as well as op-eds in *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Feministwire.com* and *The Conversation.com*. She served on the Advisory board for *The Enslaved Women in America: An Encyclopedia* edited by Daina Ramey Berry and Deleso Alford.

Millward's research has been supported by the American Association of University Women; the Mellon Foundation; the UC Consortium of Black Studies; the UCI School of Humanities; UCHRI; and the Organization of American Historians. Millward is currently working on a book length project that discusses African American women's experiences with sexual assault and intimate partner violence in the late 19th century. She also co-hosts the podcast *Historians on Housewives*.

Francille Rusan Wilson, Ph.D., Francille Rusan Wilson is Associate Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity, and History and the interim chair of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Southern California. She was twice elected National Director of the Association of Black Women Historians, 2015-2018. She was a 2017-2018 fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study of the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. Her book, *The Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890-1950* (University of Virginia Press, 2006) was awarded the 2007 Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Prize for the best book in Black women's history by ABWH. Francille Rusan Wilson is an intellectual and labor historian whose research examines the intersections between Black labor movements, Black social scientists, and Black women's history during the Jim Crow era. by the Association of Black Women Historians. Wilson's works in progress include a study of the impact of racism and sexism on Black women lawyers and social scientists before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a history of Black history movements, 1865-2015.