

MOVEMENT SIXTY EIGHT



**Fifty Years of
Black Student Activism**

October 23, 2018

**6:15-8:00PM
College of Education
Room 160**



The Movement 68 Symposium is presented by the Albert Gore Research Center with help from the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation. See the final page of the program for a full list of sponsors.

RECKONING WITH OUR PAST

Black students at Middle Tennessee State University have a long history of activism for an equitable and inclusive campus. Sylvester Brooks and his peers first spoke out against the

University's use of Confederate imagery in October 1968.



Over the past five decades, students have continued to chip away at MTSU's racist symbols and structures through various types of protest. Despite these efforts, Forrest Hall remains.

How can we learn from our past, and use history for public good? Where do we go from here?

Tonight, we will listen to the experiences of former and current MTSU students, and how they navigated race relations on campus. Their stories matter now, more than ever.

Sylvester Brooks, left, with Robert Rucker photographed in the 1970 *Midlander* yearbook.



SCHEDULE

6:15 Welcome and introduction by **Dr. Louis Kyriakoudes**,
Director of the Albert Gore Research Center

6:20—6:45 Keynote speech by **Lae'l Hughes-Watkins**,
University Archivist at Kent State University and founder of
Project STAND

6:45—7:45 Alumni panel discussion moderated by
Barbara Scales, Director of the June Anderson Center for
Women & Nontraditional Students, and **Sarah Calise**,
Archivist at the Gore Center

7:45-8:00 Audience question and answer

SPEAKERS

LAE'L HUGHES-WATKINS is the University Archivist at Kent State, where she administers the predominant collection on the Kent State shootings. Her research focuses on outreach to marginalized communities, documenting student activism within disenfranchised populations, and utilizing narratives of oppressed voices within the curricula of post-secondary education spaces. She is the founder of Project STAND, a national consortium of nearly forty colleges and universities working to create a digitally centralized location for access to primary resources illuminating the narratives of student activists and organizations from traditionally underrepresented communities. Lae'l is the recipient of the Academic Research Libraries Leadership and Career Development Program fellowship and the Society of Ohio Archivists' Merit Award for her leadership in Project STAND.

SPEAKERS

SYLVESTER BROOKS graduated from MTSU in 1970 and Washington University in St. Louis School of Law in 1973. He spent 31 years working for United Automobile Workers providing legal services to autoworkers across the country. Brooks has been married for 45 years and has four children. As an MTSU student, Brooks wrote a guest column published in the *Sidelines* student newspaper called “Dixie: What Does It Mean?” This article launched decades of activism against MTSU’s use of Confederate symbols. Brooks was also a founding member of the Black Student Union, an active participant in student government, and was a member of C.U.B.E., an organization dedicated to bridging differences between races.

DR. PHYLLIS HICKERSON-WASHINGTON was a student at MTSU 1970–74 (BS) and 1974–76 (Master’s). She also received her Ph.D. in Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University. After teaching a few years in the Rutherford County School System, she came back to MTSU as the Director of Minority Affairs, a position she held until returning to Rutherford County Schools as Coordinator of Secondary Instruction. She retired in 2015. She is married to former City Councilman/Vice Mayor Ron Washington who is also an alumnus of MTSU. Phyllis is a charter member of the Eta Psi chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, chartered at MTSU October 27, 1973.

DR. MICHAEL MCDONALD is a lawyer, ordained minister, university law professor, writer, and teaches political science, criminal justice, and public administration at Cumberland University. He earned his A.A. in law enforcement and B.A. in political science from MTSU. He was the first African American to be elected student body president (March 1978) and “Mr. MTSU” in the history of the University. He also received his Juris Doctor degree from the John Marshall Law School in Chicago. McDonald served as the Administrator of Elections for Nashville-Davidson County for over a decade. Some of his accomplishments and awards include: the Thurgood Marshall/CLEO Legal Fellowship, Political Science “Professor of the Year,” and he served on the National Advisory Board of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

DR. VINCENT WINDROW is an author, presenter, pastor, and educational leader. He earned his B.A. in industrial management technology from MTSU, and earned a Bachelor of Theology at American Baptist College. He received a doctorate in education from Tennessee State University. He is currently the Associate Vice Provost for the Office of Student Success at MTSU. During his undergraduate years at MTSU, Windrow was a member of the NAACP student chapter, and he was instrumental in appealing to University administration to remove the bronze plaque of Nathan Bedford Forrest from the wall of the Keathley University Center in 1989.

ANDRE CANTY began his undergraduate work at Middle Tennessee State University and later transferred to the University of Tennessee and graduated with his B.A. in English Literature. His interest in social justice started as a junior at MTSU, where he was a member of the Students Against Forrest Hall organization. He was the instructor for the Odd Fellows Scholars Program in Knoxville, where he taught students in grades 7–12 to illustrate Black history in the East Knoxville area through written material and digital storytelling. He is the former President the 100 Black Men of Greater Knoxville. He is a writer with publications in the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, *Knoxville Writers' Guild*, and *Huffington Post*, among other sources. Canty also serves on the board for KnowHow Knoxville and the Save Our Sons initiative with the City of Knoxville.

ARIONNA WHITE is a native of Nashville, and currently is a senior at MTSU in the Africana Studies program. She was a leader in the most recent wave of protests against Forrest Hall, and was a member of the Talented Tenth Student Activist Coalition. During the 2016–2017 academic year, she led silent protests to call attention to the lack of inclusion on campus and to gain support for the formation of a multicultural center. She has also participated in Black Lives Matter Movement protests in Nashville.

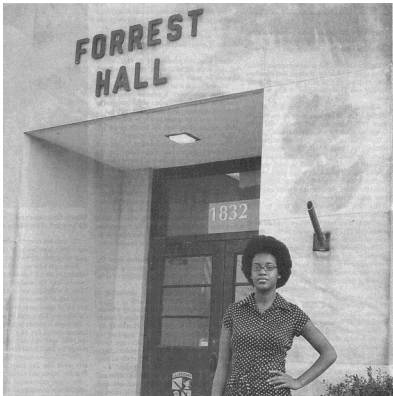
MOMENTS IN MTSU

BLACK STUDENT HISTORY



The **Black Student Union** was founded in May 1969. The group had an immediate impact on campus life by sponsoring speakers and educational events.

Michael McDonald was elected MTSU's first Black student body president in March 1978.



Amber Perkins, pictured left, helped form Students Against Forrest Hall in 2006.

In 2016, students marched to President McPhee's house with a list of demands that included changing the name of Forrest Hall, increasing Black faculty rates, and a plan for combatting racism on campus.



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