

BPIA BULLETIN

The Newsletter of the Association of Black Professionals in International Affairs

About the Association

BPIA is a charitable, non-profit membership association founded in 1989 to increase the involvement of African Americans and other people of African heritage in international affairs.

Founder, Barbara C. Patterson

President, Sylvia Stanfield, U.S. Ambassador (ret.)

Vice President, Business and Economic Envelopment, J. Calvin Williams

Vice President, Education and Training, Brenda Arrington, DBA

Secretary, Leroy Jackson

Treasurer, Cory Bullock

Assistant Treasurer, Rhonda Ferguson-Augustus

Historian, Cynthia Johnson

Ambassador to HBCUs, Shanelle Chambers Haile

Board Members-at-Large

Lassine Cherif

Alexandra Maloney

C. Steven McGann, U.S. Ambassador (ret.)

Earl Yates

Inside the First Full *Bulletin*

As last year drew to a close, BPIA's leaders and membership had much to smile about, if perhaps through a few tears. On November 12 we memorialized our founder, Barbara C. Patterson, together with dedicated and long-serving board members James Washington and Irvin Coker. However, this observance took place at the end of an upbeat, informative Annual Membership Meeting. Inside this edition of *BPIA Bulletin*, find out what our leaders shared about where the organization has been and where it's going from 2017 forward (pages 3-4). The meeting also featured C. D. Glin, President, US African Development Foundation as the luncheon speaker. The dynamic young international executive found not only mentorship and professional opportunities with BPIA — but also romance! Highlights of his excellent presentation are on page 4.

On October 12, BPIA hosted an International Careers Panel and Networking Event at Howard University. The program drew a standing-room-only crowd that got the inside advice it came for from a panel of international affairs practitioners. See page 2. There's also news about upcoming events, a new BPIA mentorship program, a great DC workplace, and more. Enjoy!

BPIA Bulletin is a quarterly publication. Persons interested in contributing/subscribing to the newsletter should email the Interim Editor, Dr. Michele Cisco Titi, at upwardway17@gmail.com.



International Careers Panel a Huge Hit

It wasn't a major Hip Hop concert or a big ball game, but BPIA's International Careers Panel and Networking Event that drew a capacity crowd to Howard University October 12, 2016. At the Bunche International Affairs Center, participants learned about the career paths of a panel of black international affairs practitioners. Exhibitors included the Department of State, the Department of Agriculture, other employers and education program sponsors.

BPIA President, Ambassador Sylvia Stanfield and Bunche Center Deputy Director, Tonijah Hope Navas welcomed students from Washington area universities and as far as the Maryland Eastern Shore to the event. Moderated by BPIA Treasurer Cory Bullock, the panel featured Jamila Thompson, Legislative Director, Office of Congressman John Lewis; Ambassador Steve McGann, Senior Advisor, Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy, National Defense University; Dr. Gloria Herndon, President/CEO, GB Group Global; and Fonta Gilliam, Manager at Deloitte, former U.S. diplomat and Founder, Sou Sou, a social enterprise for financing solutions.

Among the insights the panelists shared with their young audience:

- “The work you do for free can reap massive rewards for you.” — Panelist Jamila Thompson, on the value of unpaid internships. She also cautioned, “You have to be on your best behavior,” with regard to personal conduct, and stressed the experiential value of study abroad as well as “strategic and mindful” informational interviewing.
- “You have to have an understanding of the culture of the institution that you’re in.” — Ambassador McGann. Identify “something that is tangible to show your success,” he said. “Do things that are easily measurable.” He advocated “developing your own interpersonal skills,” citing their usefulness in overcoming racism.
- From the Foreign Agricultural Service, Dr. Herndon made the move into international entrepreneurship insuring familiar types of clients — diplomats and international students. “Do what you know,” was her advice.
- Fonta Gilliam’s path led from the Foreign Service to international consulting to creating a start-up. “Don’t be afraid to reinvent yourself,” she urged her audience. She also told them to, “Pick a career that will allow you to invest in yourself” for example, by learning languages in the Foreign Service. “The world needs our perspectives, mind sets, and energies,” Gilliam said. “Now is the time for millennials to step up.”



From left: Amb. Sylvia Stanfield, Cory Bullock, Jamila Thompson, Amb. Steve McGann, Dr. Gloria Herndon, Fonta Gilliam

Annual Meeting — The State of BPIA

President Reflects on Organization's Vibrant Past, Optimistic Present, Hopeful Future

Introducing her remarks on the state of BPIA at the November 2016 annual meeting, President Sylvia Stanfield, reflected on the richness of her experience in a career of more than 30 years in the U.S. Foreign Service. However, she noted, often “there were few if any who looked like me in the meeting.” She observed that “This situation has improved somewhat over the years, yet African Americans remain an underrepresented group” not only in the diplomatic corps, but also “in other international affairs-related agencies and organizations.” She saluted BPIA founder Barbara Patterson and the core group of international affairs professionals who joined her in 1989 in establishing the organization with a mission to address this need and related ones.

Proud Accomplishments

Reflecting on the association’s past achievements, Stanfield cited: the **awarding of scholarships** and grants to groups and individuals for educational travel and participation in international meetings; **hosting Mentors’ Forums** for students, graduate scholars and young professionals; and **sponsoring policy conferences** to educate and increase involvement of blacks in international affairs. She highlighted the **Ford Foundation grant** awarded to the organization in 2003 that helped to support its further development.

Challenging Years

The President characterized BPIA’s middle years as “difficult.” She spoke of challenges that had “negatively impacted programs, membership, and other areas.” Today she said, the leadership is seeking to **strengthen and secure BPIA’s foundation through fundraising, rebuilding membership, and reaching out to like-minded organizations.**

Rebuilding a Robust Organization

Amb. Stanfield credited a “committed, hard-working Board” (see page 1) for their collective and individual efforts to “rebuild, reinvigorate, and grow a robust BPIA.” Board members have contributed generously, the President said, of their “time, treasure, and talents” to promote the viability and [work] of the association. Among their successes, she cited realization of **successful networking events at Bohemian Caverns and DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired) House; 2016 Black History Month Career Forum at SAIS (Johns Hopkins Nitze School of Advanced International Studies; and two career outreach forums (2015, 2016) at the Ralph J. Bunche International Development Center, Howard University.** She acknowledged the **Association of Black American Ambassadors** for its support of BPIA programs.

On the Horizon

BPIA’s chief executive envisioned a number of programs and activities that the leadership will explore and/or continue in 2017 and going forward. They included **renewing the organization’s mentoring initiative** (see page 4); **developing opportunities to educate and interest middle and high school age students in international affairs careers; reviving support of study abroad and scholarship programs; hosting quarterly professional networking events; and resuming biennial conferences with foreign policy or international economics themes.** She encouraged members to volunteer their time and expertise in support of these programs. People with grant-writing experience are of special interest. “We live in challenging times,” Stanfield said. “We need to know something about our world if we are to be good and engaged global citizens... Thus it is an exciting time to be involved in BPIA.”

Annual Meeting — BPIA to Revive Professional Development and Mentoring Initiatives

No matter where you are in your international affairs career — at entry, mid-level, or in senior service — the effectiveness of your job performance and the successful development of your career depend on sustained professional development and mentoring. So said BPIA Board Member-at-Large Earl Yates as he announced the organization's plans to "revive and refine its professional development and mentoring initiatives" in 2017. Yates outlined a plan to:

- Pair volunteer mentors with mentees in a six-month Mentoring and Professional Development Partnership in which the mentor will provide advice, guidance, and support based on the needs and interests of the mentee and the experience and skill sets of the mentor;
- Provide structure and process to the partnership through a "contract" that defines the expectations and responsibilities on the mentee and the mentor, and sets goals and targeted outcomes for the experience; and
- Ensure maximum learning — for the mentee, the mentor, and BPIA — from each partnership by engaging in monitoring and evaluation that measures achievement of the goals and targeted outcomes.

Guidelines for application to participate as a mentee or mentor are forthcoming.

Annual Meeting — Foundation Exec Cites BPIA Role in His Success

C.D. Glin (right) serves as President and CEO of the U.S. African Development Foundation, an independent Federal agency that works "to secure economic development and growth at the grassroots level" in African communities. He addressed participants in the Annual Meeting as the luncheon speaker.

Greeting the group, Glin invoked the concept of "Ubuntu," a philosophy shared among southern African communities. He said that Ubuntu embodies the "spirit of humanity" and the idea that "I am because you are." He personalized that I-statement to characterize the role of BPIA and its members in both his professional and personal development.

From the personal perspective, he met Jacqueline Hardware, the woman who would become his wife and the mother of his children at a BPIA biennial conference in 1999. Professionally, he credited the programs of the organization and his relationships with certain of its members, particularly one mentor, Earl Yates, with exposures that helped him to grow and advance in his career. (See GLIN, continued on p. 6.)



Workplaces of Note in the DMV: Meridian International Center

Heads-up career-minded readers! This is the first in a series of articles that will showcase agencies and organizations where the work focuses on international affairs.

Located in two beautiful historic mansions set among old trees and well-kept gardens, Meridian International Center (MIC) is one of Washington's most beautiful workplaces. The non-profit organization advances a mission "to promote international understanding through the exchange of people, ideas, and the arts." Its programs focus on professional exchanges, culture, policy forums, and cross-cultural training. Meridian's Executive Director is Ambassador Stuart W. Holliday. The web site is <http://www.meridian.org>.

In a March interview, Susan Cabiati, Vice President, Professional Exchanges Division, (right) said that MIC currently employs about 100 people, including executives, division managers, accountants, analysts, program officers and program associates. (BPIA members are among MIC's former leaders and staff.) Meridian receives about 80% of its funding from the State Department and other federal agencies and the remaining 20% from private sources.



Asked what distinguishes MIC from other workplaces, Cabiati described the organizational culture as "an extremely collegial environment... where people really like each other," rather than a competitive setting. She said there is "a lot of intrinsic satisfaction you get out of coming to work every day. You're always learning and growing." In the Professional Exchanges Division that Cabiati heads, program officers and program associates plan and implement international visitor projects of the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. With colleagues at State and in some 90 American communities, they arrange for visitors from around the world to interact with American counterparts in their profession, and to have informative social encounters and cultural experiences.



Two young Program Associates in Cabiati's division also had positive things to say about their work at Meridian. Jameson Hall (left, at left) likes the diversity of the international visitor projects. He coordinates home hospitality for the visitors with local area hosts for MIC and several other visitor programming agencies. He also loves the imposing White-Meyer House where he works. Hall's interest in international affairs started early when his parents supported his educational travel to Costa Rica as an 8th grader. The Dallas native came to Meridian from the World Affairs Council of Dallas/Ft. Worth. He graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor's degree in International Relations.

Program Associate Rachel Craddolph (right, at left) was impressed with the way new program associates are carefully matched with their MIC partner program officers. In that one-on-one relationship, she said, "minds are working together."

She's also been pleased the variety of her team's projects. Craddolph grew up in Kansas City, MO, and earned a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and History at the College of Wooster in Wooster, OH. She has an M.A. in International Development from the Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. Her world travels started early, when her grandmother took her to the U.K. and France as a high school student. She subsequently visited Costa Rica, Switzerland, and South Africa. To other young black people engaging in international travel and study or embarking on international careers, Craddolph says, "Keep going. You can do it."

(GLIN, cont'd. from p. 4)

Before his current position, that career included turns as Associate Director of the Africa Regional Office of the Rockefeller Foundation and as the U.S. Peace Corps' first Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships, an Obama presidential appointment. Earlier in his career, Glin served as a volunteer in the first Peace Corps group assigned to South Africa. He later worked for the State Department, USAID, and the World Bank in Ghana and Nigeria. He is a graduate of Howard University and holds masters' and postgraduate credentials from Tulane University and Oxford University.

In his remarks, Glin identified three things (in addition to his connection with BPIA) that have gotten him to the current point in his career: "a love of black people and of Africa; seeking out supporters and advisors; and building "a sense of achievement, a record" of what he did for the organizations where he worked, rather than for himself. Regarding career advancement he cautioned his audience that what got them into a current position might not get them into the next. "You've got to change your game," he said. Noting the current wealth of opportunities in the international arena, he observed, "There's not one path any more. You zig and you zag."

Going forward, the speaker asserted that he will continue to ask himself, "What can I do to help black people advance, and to help Africa develop?" We don't know the specific answer, but it is sure to be something good.

Annual Meeting -- In Memoriam

BPIA members and friends gathered in the chapel of Northminster Presbyterian Church at the end of the Annual Meeting to remember and honor the organization's Founder, career international educator Barbara C. Patterson, and former Board Members James Ryan Washington and Irvin D. Coker. Members of the Founder's family travelled from her hometown of Roanoke, Virginia and from Florida, for the occasion.

Board member Earl Yates recalled hearing about Ms. Patterson's reputation for persuasiveness, and perhaps even a bit of toughness, before they first met. But when she asked him to take on the BPIA presidency, which he did — in his words, "with a lot of humility" — Yates said he learned that her persuasiveness derived from a mix of "outstanding leadership, interpersonal communications skills, and pure charm." He said, "It was always a pleasure and an honor to work with her." Maude McCannon worked with Ms. Patterson for many years at the University of DC. She remembered her as a supervisor with high working standards who later became a lifelong friend. Lillie Patterson, a sister of the Founder, told the group how much her sister shared with her whole family about the members and work of the association over the years. Summed up, she said, "Barbara loved BPIA."

Irvin Coker was a career international affairs practitioner who served actively on the BPIA board for many years. Board member Leroy Jackson shared a memory of Mr. Coker asking him to take a photo on a work trip. The subject was to be the cafeteria built at USAID/UGANDA at Coker's direction, but finished after his departure from his post as Mission Director in Kampala. Mr. Coker told Jackson he had felt that the cafeteria needed to be built in a focused effort to encourage American and Ugandan USAID employees "to break bread together" at lunch and break times for mutual exchange.

John Calvin Williams remembered James Ryan Washington, whom Williams met upon joining the BPIA Board. Mr. Washington retired from USAID as a Senior Foreign Service Officer. "Jim was the personification of the goals, objectives and highest ideals of BPIA," who "amassed an outstanding record of supporting persons at all career levels," Williams said. But the one thing that most impressed him about Mr. Washington was a pattern in the way friends and associates spoke of him, "always positive," and often with an "endearing personal remembrance."

On the Calendar

Wednesday, April 26, 2017 —

BPIA Networking Event,

6:00 - 8:30 pm @ Cities Restaurant, 1909 K St., NW, Washington, DC 20006 Visit **BPIA on Facebook** for details and registration.

Wednesday, April 19, 2017 —

2017 Global Development

Forum 8:30 am - 2:30 pm @ Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036 **and** in Live Webcast. Visit <http://www.csis.org> and click on Events. See also on this website, same date, **Spotlight on Ghana**, with Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia.

Wednesday, April 19, 2017 —

American Women for Int'l. Understanding's 3rd Annual Career Opportunities for International Relations Symposium, for high school/college students, young professional women, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm @ U.S. Department of State. Visit www.awiu.org to register.

Friday, April 21, 2017 — 2017 SAIS Annual Global Women in Leadership Conference,

8:15 am - 7:00 pm @ Kenney Auditorium, 1740 Mass. Ave., NW, Washington, DC. Go to: gwlconference2017.eventbrite.com.

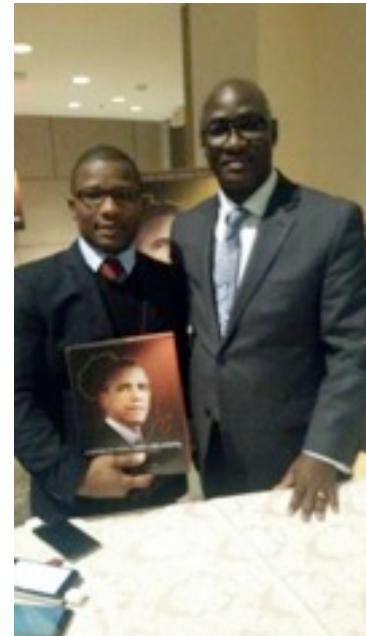
An Obama Post Script

by Lassine Cherif

On January 13, 2017, the Africa Society held a book launch event at the Embassy of Ethiopia for *United States and Africa Relations: The Obama Presidency*, by Frederick Nnoma-Addison (below, right; Lassine Cherif, left) and collaborators. The program was keynote by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Obama administration. In attendance were Ambassadors of several African countries, including Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, as well as host country, Ethiopia.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield spoke of the accomplishments of the Obama administration on the continent, including:

- The YALI Fellowship Program, which gave about 1,000 outstanding young sub-Saharan African leaders opportunities to hone their leadership skills at U.S. colleges and universities and support for their professional development after returning to their countries;
- The U.S.-African Leaders Summit;
- The U.S.-Africa Business Forum, which resulted in approximately \$33 billion in investment commitments;
- U.S. support for economic growth, e.g. through a clean electricity project in Liberia;
- U.S. support for training of approximately 3,000 peace keepers; and
- Encouragement of democracy and good governance.



Join BPIA Today!

For a membership application, visit our web site at <http://www.iabpia.org>. On the Home page, click on **Become a Member**.

BPIA

PO Box 55922

Washington, DC 20011