

## *Biography of* CRYSTAL A. deGREGORY, PH.D.

A historian and storyteller whose research interests include black higher education and college student activism, DR. CRYSTAL A. deGREGORY is an associate professor of history and the founding director of the Mary McLeod Bethune Center for the Study of Women and Girls at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Known for her collaborative advocacy and entrepreneurial leadership, she is also the founder and director of two digital storytelling projects HBCUstory and Dorian and Beyond, a digital storytelling project of Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas. This gifted orator and sought-after commentator offers a wide range of expertise on multiple topics including race, women and girls, history, culture, education, and of course, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Hailed “young sister leader” by Spelman College and Bennett College President Emerita Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, Dr. deGregory’s words have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *USA Today*, *TIME*, *Orlando-Sentinel*, *The Tennessean*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Market Watch*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The State Journal*, *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *The Key Reporter*, *Nashville Scene*, *The Atlanta Voice*, *Tri-City Defender*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *EducationDIVE*, *INSIGHT Into Diversity*, *The Nation*, *The Feminist Wire* and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.

Her most recent publishing includes the forward to *Heritage & Honor: 150-Year Story of the Fisk Jubilee Singers*, and the op-eds “Here in the Bahamas, Every Generation Has Its Storm Stories. The Tale of Hurricane Dorian Is Still Being Written” and “How the Black Colleges Beyoncé Honors in Homecoming Have Played a Vital Role in American History” for *TIME*.

She has written chapters featured in numerous books, including “Their Highest Calling: The Progressive Ethos of Black College Women in Nashville,” in the forthcoming book *The Work of Tennessee Progressive Era Women* as well as in *Reclaiming the Great World House: The Global Vision of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2019), *Black Colleges in the Diaspora: Global Perspectives on Identity and Culture* (2018), *Gumbo for the Soul: Liberating Memoirs and Stories to Inspire Females of Color* (2016) and *In an Inescapable Network of Mutuality: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Globalization of an Ethical Ideal* (2013). Dr. deGregory also served as the editor of *Emancipation and the Fight for Freedom* (2013), the sixth volume of the 12-part series “Tennessee in the Civil War: The Best of the Tennessee Historical Quarterly.”

As the convener of the HBCUstory Symposium, she was responsible for securing host partnerships, keynote speakers, and sponsorships as well as for organizing two-day meetings of scholarly research and case studies outlining the historical and contemporary value of HBCUs. The convenings have featured more than 100 presenters to date. A finalist for the HBCU Awards “Alumna of the Year” recognition, Dr. deGregory was the recipient of the Fisk

University "Women of Prominence" award, her high school's 50th Anniversary "Golden Warriors" award, and was recognized as the "Hope Dealer of the Year" by Washington, D.C.-based The H.O.P.E. Scholarship Initiative.

Her other published work includes contributions to *The Athletic Experience at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (2015), *HBCU Experience: The Book* (2014), *The Journal of Tennessee State University* (2012), *Encyclopedia of African American Popular Culture* (2011), and *Freedom Facts and Firsts: 400 Years of the African American Civil Rights Experience* (2009).

Dr. deGregory has presented to audiences at TEDx, SXSWedu, the Southern Festival of Books, the Nashville Public Library, Nashville Public Television, The New School, Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation, Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, Ford, Nissan North America, National Institutes of Health, and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. She has also given talks and served on panels for Alcorn State, Edward Waters, Fisk, Florida Memorial, Harvard, Howard, Michigan-Ann Arbor, Tennessee State, Vanderbilt, and Wilberforce universities. She also served as the graduation speaker for her alma mater Bishop Michael Eldon School and was the commencement speaker for the inaugural University of The Bahamas, Northern Campus graduation exercise.

A proud native of The Bahamas and a Phi Beta Kappa alumna of the historic Fisk University, she also earned Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in history from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Education from Tennessee State University. Among her myriad professional and civic affiliations is trusteeship of the Tennessee Historical Society, service on the Tennessee State Parks Black Heritage Advisory Committee and Mellon Fisk Portal to Rosenwald Collections Advisory Board as well as membership with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Most recently, she was inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College, and, in December 2022, authored her first book *Magic and Mortal* (Juju Collective, 2022), which is an introduction to her poetic voice.