

The ARC Newsletter

A monthly newsletter put out by the Anti-Racism Committee.

Happy Black History Month!

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ARC Member Spotlight: Matt Hurst



Matt Hurst (he/him/his) is a first year student in the School Psychology program here at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Tell us a bit about your background. Where are you from and what brought you to Minnesota State University, Mankato?

I was born in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and grew up on the New Jersey - New York Border, which introduced me to so many different peoples. I knew from a young age that I wanted to work in human services, and got the idea to pursue school psychology from my mother who recently returned to finish her master's in school psychology. What brought me to Minnesota State University, Mankato was the amazing opportunity to be a member of a doctoral program, and one so committed to diversity at that.

What made you choose to pursue a degree in school psychology?

I joined the field of school psychology to make a difference in education. So many minority students can feel left out or uninvited in the process and I really wanted to make a difference, no matter how big or small.

Why did you join the Anti-Racism Committee?

As a victim of racism, it is exceedingly important that we as an organization stamp it out. It's a blight on the experiences of all on both sides of it and unfairly limits people from living their lives to the fullest, and as such, I strive to combat it wherever possible, and the Anti-Racism Committee is an excellent avenue by which to do so.

What does being anti-racist mean to you?

Being an anti-racist, to me, is very closely tied to empathetic action. A lot of people may be apathetic to those who struggle with discrimination, or say the oft-repeated, "I'm not a racist. I love everyone." These to me, are rather dismissive, and as such, being an anti-racist, requires action, not always direct. One of the most difficult things we can do as people is confront our ingrained beliefs and prejudices, and it bears mentioning that ALL peoples are capable of prejudice, this, however, is not a pass for it, merely an observation. I think we are getting closer to building a more understanding and caring society, but that will take a lot of action, action that is tough, but ultimately rewarding.

Mamie Phipps and Kenneth Clark: Psychologists, Pioneers, Activists, and Change-Makers

by Matt Hurst



It is not uncommon for the social circumstances surrounding groundbreakers to contribute to their being unfairly forgotten, a sad fact that is unfortunately true of Dr Mamie Phipps Clark and her Husband Dr. Kenneth Clark. Both were among the first black psychologists in their fields in the United States and the world and played instrumental roles in the desegregation of the United States' system of public schools, and in the further desegregation of the nation, but their role is oft uncredited or deliberately omitted. This profile will illuminate the role they played in understanding black thought and the fight against systemic racism, both inside and outside the fields of education and Psychology.

Mamie Clark was born in 1917 in Hot Springs, Arkansas, deep in the heart of the Jim-Crow south. Her father Harold Phipps, a (relatively) affluent and respected doctor made enough money so that her mother, Kate Florence Phipps could stay at home and raise Mamie and her younger brother. This environment she would later credit for her later success, as she enjoyed a warm supportive environment. This did not, however, insulate her from the dark side of black life in the south, as she attended segregated schools and saw firsthand the violence inherent to this racist thought both in and out of schools. Mamie Phipps graduated High school in 1934, and attended Howard University, in Washington DC. She intended to study education, but after feeling alienated from the field, met a fellow student at Howard, Kenneth Clark, who introduced her to the psychology staff in the school. The two formed a lasting professional and personal bond. Phipps graduated from Howard with a B.A. in Psychology in 1938, the same year she married Kenneth Clark.

Kenneth Clark, born in 1914 in the Still US-controlled Panama Canal Zone to West Indian Parents, moved along with his mother to Harlem, New York to pursue a better life in the continental US. He too, despite being in what was considered the black capital of the US saw the effect racism had on systems and individuals. He graduated from High school in 1931, and attended Howard University, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1935 and his masters degree in 1936, both in psychology. He also introduced his soon-to-be wife to the field that would etch them both into history.

Both Clarks went on to attend Columbia University, becoming the first black man and woman to graduate from the school with doctorates in Psychology. Their work would revolve around the effect that segregation had on black people personally. In 1946, the Clarks founded the Northside Center for Child Development in Harlem, it being the first child-focused clinic providing psychological and casework services in the neighborhood. Their greatest contribution wouldn't be until 1954.

Both Clarks had anchored their studies around so called "doll tests". In these experiments, black children were presented with several dolls of varying skin tones, and asked which ones they most liked and disliked. The results proved that black children, even as young as three, had a preference for white dolls, due to the system of segregation. What may seem obvious now, would prove instrumental in US and world history. Both Clarks were employed by the NAACP as expert witnesses in court, with Mamie testifying against her own Ph.D. advisor who was a proponent of segregation. Kenneth Clark was contacted by (at the time a lawyer) Thurgood Marshall in conjunction with the NAACP to be an expert witness in a case being heard by the Supreme Court. Clark, using the research done by him and his wife, testified to the nature of self-hatred caused by segregation in the education system stating that it was "likely to endure as long as the conditions of segregation exist". This testimony undeniably led to the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)*. The opinion of Chief Justice Earl Warren read in part: "In the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

This would not be the last contribution from the couple to the civil rights movement, as their work and research would further pave the way for integration, black psychologists and other influential civil rights figures. Mamie worked as the director for the Northside Center for 33 years, and Kenneth would have the opportunity to interview many figures in the growing civil rights movement, such as writer and LGBT activist James Baldwin, and civil rights activists Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.

As for their personal lives, Mamie and Kenneth Clark had two children, with Mamie saying about her relationship with her husband it was "a lifetime of close, challenging and professionally satisfying experiences". Their work and activism continued for the rest of both of their lives. Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark passed away in August of 1983 due to lung cancer, survived by Kenneth who passed away in May of 2005. Both of these unfortunately forgotten figures stand as titans in the field of psychology and the emerging field of school psychology, leaving behind a legacy of progress and integration that is still felt to this day in the many programs and initiatives they founded and to which they dedicated their lives.

Few Black men become school psychologists. Here's why that matters.

NPR released this short, 4-minute clip and article in July of 2022 discussing the importance of representation of Black school psychologists.

[Click here to check it out!](#)

Responding to the Racist Incident that Occurred at NASP 2023



As previously acknowledged by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the Anti-Racism Committee of the school psychology doctoral program at Minnesota State University, Mankato acknowledges that a totally unacceptable and harmful incident occurred Wednesday, February 8th, 2023, in the Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center that directly affected NASP President Dr. Celeste Malone, her friends, colleagues, and family, and by extension, the Black community. Every faculty member and student in the program was in Denver for the conference when the incident occurred. Although no one from the program was directly involved in the incident, it is a vivid and proximal example of the racial issues that pervade our society and affect the well-being of students in our communities.

A summary of the incident was posted on the Facebook page of the National Association of School Psychology. It described the incident as follows: "As most NASP Presidents do in the evening of their biggest event at convention, [Dr.] Celeste [Malone] hosted a party in her president's suite for her Howard University colleagues and students and her close friends and family. This is what a presidential suite in the hotel is for. At 9:30 p.m., 30 minutes before quiet hours are enforced, two white hotel security staff came to the suite and demanded everyone leave due to noise complaints, stayed in the suite until guests left, and demanded ID. Hotel policy requires one or two warnings before any action is taken. No warnings were given. And again, Celeste and her guests DID NOTHING WRONG. This is inexcusable behavior and would not have happened had the guests not been Black and Brown individuals." *Note: [] were added to the present post to identify Dr. Celeste Malone to anyone who is unfamiliar with her work and role as NASP President.

The Hyatt Regency has recently issued an apology for the incident and the school psychology community is monitoring for follow-up regarding four specific requests stated by Dr. NASP to address the issue: (1) Give a public, genuine apology to Dr. Malone. (2) Refund all room charges and fees to Dr. Malone's invited guests to the party. (3) Provide direct compensation to Dr. Malone. (4) Give substantive donations to the NASP Minority Scholarship Program, Howard University (to be determined by Dr. Malone), and the Black School Psychology Network.

[Donate to the Black School Psychologists' Network](#)

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