

Committment to *Give Back*



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“College don’t teach you what you need to know to stay alive in these streets”.

Hearing this from my mother when I told her I was going to graduate school was heartbreaking, yet I understand how her experiences limited her ability to grasp that education was a viable tool for survival.

In high school, I was constantly ridiculed for my educational accomplishments and aspirations and *sounding “white”*. *Most of my kin never completed high school*. Unwilling to accept their view, I made education my highest priority as *the only way I could escape poverty and the sheer nihilism of communities entrenched* in violence, substance abuse, and poverty. Without the support of my family, I became the first to attend college.

Up until I entered SF State, I had no Black teachers to support me. Meeting and *learning from Black women professors with doctoral degrees confirmed my hopes* and reinforced my right to academic success.

Throughout college, I served as an advocate with HIV/AIDS Prevention Organizations. Working with youth and young adults, I focused on overcoming barriers to access higher education.

In May, 2009, I earned my dual bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Africana Studies. My pursuit of a Ph.D. in Community Psychology at the University of Michigan is *my continued effort to transcend my familial circumstances , achieve personal success and give back to my community*.

