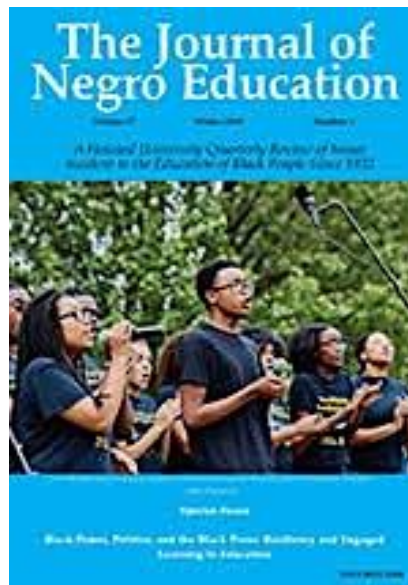


Pageantry & Politics: Miss Howard University from Civil Rights to Black Power

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Published May 2018
The Journal of Negro Education**



The Journal of Negro Education
Vol. 87, No. 1, Special Focus:
Black Power, Politics, and the
Black Press: Resiliency and
Engaged Learning in Education
(Winter 2018), pp. 22-32
Published by: [Journal of Negro
Education](#)
DOI:
10.7709/jnegroeducation.87.1.0022
Stable URL:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7709/jnegroeducation.87.1.0022>
Page Count: 11

ABSTRACT

Few realize that, historically, the women elected to serve as “Queens” of Howard University, were often reflections of political, social, and cultural issues of the time. This parade of beauty, intellect, and charm was an unofficial barometer of where the University as well as the country stood on matters that pertained to cultural politics, institutional identity, and evolving definitions and standards of beauty. This article, written by a former Miss Howard, examines the embedded traditions, historical significance and controversies of this iconic position from the Civil Rights Era through the Black Power Movement, to argue that an in-depth analysis of the Queen’s role over these tumultuous years reveals a little-known, yet important narrative in the trajectory of Howard University.

JNE website link



*Robin Gregory, Miss Howard Univ.
1966. First queen to wear a “natural.”*

Contribution and Impact:

I am the sole author of this journal article, which was accepted in its current form for an edition focusing on Black Power, Politics, and the Black Press.

In this paper I discuss a significant and innovative discourse on the history and impact of “Miss Howard University” during the tumultuous era of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. As a former “Miss Howard,” I was also able to include fascinating ethnographic recollections of former queens during this transitional period of American history.

The scholarship provides an important narrative of the cultural and political history of Howard University, during a controversial and relevant time period in American history, HBCU history and Howard University’s history.

It is also consistent with the *Journal of Negro Education’s* mission to present to its readers new facts and discussions relating to the education of Black people. This research was supported in part by a grant from the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center 2014 Summer Faculty Research Fellowship and is the first such research of its kind at Howard University. This research continues as a documentary with the first-hand accounts of the former queens and other university student leaders involved in the transitional Black Power to Civil Rights eras.

Relevancy:

The Journal of Negro Education (JNE), a refereed scholarly periodical, was founded at Howard University in 1932 to fill the need for a scholarly journal that would identify and define the problems that characterized the education of Black people in the United States and elsewhere, provide a forum for analysis and solutions, and serve as a vehicle for sharing statistics and research on a national basis. *JNE* sustains a commitment to a threefold mission: first, to stimulate the collection and facilitate the dissemination of facts about the education of Black people; second, to present discussions involving critical appraisals of the proposals and practices relating to the education of Black people; and third, to stimulate and sponsor investigations of issues incident to the education of Black people.

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