INSIDE

SPelman

MAY 2023

HONORING OUR PAST... CLAIMING OUR FUTURE

SPELMAN CELEBRATES ITS 142ND FOUNDERS DAY
AND INAUGURATES ITS 11TH PRESIDENT

IN THIS ISSUE:

President’s Perspective (2)
Faculty/Staff Highlights (5)
Campus Highlights (6-7)
Student Spotlights (8)
Alumnae Highlights (9)
Spelman in the News (10)
Dear Spelman Community, Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the May edition of Inside Spelman, our monthly digital magazine. This edition features highlights of recent signature events that serve as reminders of the uniqueness of Spelman College and the importance of our mission.

In April, we kicked off a season of celebration with Founders Day – “Forever Blue,” which brought our campus and alumnae community together to reminisce about and celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of our College community over the past 142 years. It was also a time to renew our commitment to upholding and building upon our founders’ dreams. A time during which our alumnae begin preparing to welcome the next graduating class as alumnae Spelman Sisters, after they attend the upcoming “March through the Arch,” ceremony. We also welcomed hundreds of incoming first year students and their families to campus during Spelbound. This two-day event offered new students a preview of the College, student life and special events, such as Research Day, prior to matriculation.

The Spelman College Community, including the four living past presidents, family, friends and supporters came together for four days of inspiring and uplifting inauguration events to mark the 11th Presidency. As with each Presidency, this time together reminds us of the vision of our founders Sophia Packard and Harriet Giles. If they were alive today, they would be proud of the legacy they left behind. An institution that offers a premier liberal arts education to young Black women in an environment where they can thrive as their authentic selves. A place that supports their academic success and their physical and mental well-being.

In this edition, we also join in the national observance of May as National Mental Health Month. Spelman vice president for Student Affairs, Darryl Holloman, Ph.D., shares examples of how we are expanding efforts to support the mental health and overall well-being of our scholars, which is a necessity in today’s social climate. A report by the UNCF indicates that in 2021, more than 60% of college students met the criteria for one or more mental health problems, a jump of nearly 50% since 2013. As health disparities continue to grow across communities of color, we are all the more committed to improving the trajectory of the health of Black women. It’s just one of many examples of how we are working to change the world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey and thank you for your continued support of Spelman College.

President Helene Gayle

Dr. Gayle hosted the virtual May edition of Courageous Conversations: Black in the C-Suite with media pioneer Cathy Hughes, founder and chairperson of Urban One, Inc. Ms. Hughes shared her story and reflected on the “power of one” – one woman, one vision, one company - and her efforts to drive economic mobility in communities of color.
Spelman College celebrated the inauguration of Helene D. Gayle, MD, MPH, as the 11th president, during the Investiture Ceremony on Friday, April 28, at the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel.

The event was attended by Spelman President Emeritae (Johnetta Betsch Cole, Ph.D.; Audrey Forbes Manley, MD; Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D.; and Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D.), Spelman’s Board of Trustees, higher education leaders, distinguished guests, faculty, staff, students, family and friends of Dr. Gayle. The theme of the inauguration was, “Honoring Our Past, Claiming Our Future.”

To read more, visit Spelman’s News and Events page.

FOR MORE PHOTOS AND HIGHLIGHTS, VISIT SPELMAN.EDU/INAUGURATION
Spelman College, Honoring our History During ‘Forever Blue’ Founders Day

On April 11, 1881, the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary was founded by Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles – in the basement of Friendship Baptist Church – to provide educational opportunities for Black women in the South. Over the next 142 years, a pathway for academic excellence has been paved – cemented by their fortitude and a contribution from John D. Rockefeller. This one-room seminary with a few students would evolve into Spelman College, a pace-setting liberal arts institution empowering thousands of young women of African descent to become global change agents.

In honor of Spelman’s founding – students, alumnae, faculty and staff – the Spelman community gathers annually on Founders Day, April 11, to pay tribute to this historic event.

“Founders Day means there was a vision and a hope that was created for someone like me,” Edwards explained. “It’s a reminder that this legacy will continue forever, and that Spelman will remain a space where you can not only be who you want to be, but truly appreciate what it means to be you.”

Spelman’s legacy of empowering Black women to create positive social change through service is reflected in three Spelman women who were recognized during Founders Day events. The honorees were: Honorary Degree Recipient and best-selling author Tayari Jones, C’91, for her award-winning contributions to literature; Founders Spirit Award Recipient and mathematics teacher Dr. Ernestine Dearing Hogan, C’68, for her role in driving thousands of students to greatness; and True Blue Award Recipient and associate professor of psychology Dr. Sandra Sims Patterson, C’70, for her service to Atlanta’s mental health community and her alma mater. These impressive achievements are what Spelman College President Helene D. Gayle, MD, MPH, believes Packard and Giles envisioned when they first founded the seminary.

“For 142 years, Spelman has remained a place of promise, a place of outsized ambition,” she said, speaking to a packed Sisters Chapel. “This Founders Day, we celebrate you. You are the most recent link on the long chain of history that keeps casting itself wider in the world and with more ambitious aspirations. Your footprints are forever linked to our founders’ legacy.”

To learn more about Spelman through the years, visit the Spelman College History in Brief page.
Addressing the Needs of Today’s Spelmanites: How Spelman is Expanding Efforts to Support Student Mental Health

The past three years have impacted the mental health and everyday lives of millions of Americans – especially students enrolled in academic institutions. As a result, Spelman College’s Office of Student Affairs – specifically the Counseling Center – has increased its offerings to support students who continue to navigate not just the coronavirus pandemic and its aftermath, but the journey to adulthood in the 21st century.

Darryl Holloman, Ph.D., vice president for student affairs, attributes the more intentional increase in resources to both notable changes in post-pandemic collegiate life and the importance of meeting the holistic health needs of today’s students. That includes those diagnosed with ADHD, autism, and other neurodivergent conditions.

“What we are finding, following the pandemic, is a heightened sense of anxiety, which of course, requires more interaction and intervention with the Counseling Center,” said Dr. Holloman. “Creating the appropriate level of support for students – in both their curricular and co-curricular engagements – fosters an environment of student success. As a component of this, we want to ensure that all students, regardless of their situation, have the appropriate resources in place to help them to matriculate at Spelman.”

For Ronjonette O’Bannon, Ph.D., director of the Counseling Center, the expansion of services and resources in recent years has allowed for unique opportunities to engage and meet Spelmanites where they are. Efforts include virtual workshops, support groups, open dialogues and a safe space to connect during challenging times.

Tiffany Oliver, Ph.D., Named 2023–2024 Jefferson Science Fellow

Tiffany Oliver, Ph.D., was recently selected for a Jefferson Science Fellowship appointment with the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Global Food Security (EGFS) in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Oliver currently serves as chair and associate professor of biology. Her research interest focuses on the activity of chromosomes and how they affect the health and lives of humans.

“The Jefferson Science Fellowship is a prestigious honor bestowed upon faculty at U.S. institutions of higher education by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine,” said Dr. Oliver. “As Spelman’s first Jefferson Science Fellow, I will lend my expertise as a scientist to issues of internal concern as I work for the U.S. State Department in the Office of Global Food Security.”

The Fellowship, which begins August 2023, is managed by the Office of Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State (STAS) and represents a wide variety of the nation’s highly accomplished professors in the fields of science and engineering. For Dr. Oliver, this is an opportunity to impact change in one of the nation’s highest offices – all while carrying the spirit of Spelman College with her.

“I am excited to begin my appointment, and it is truly a privilege to represent Spelman in this capacity.”

Forever Blue: The Enduring Dedication of Linda Patton, C’88

Linda Hart Patton C’88, is an exemplar of “Forever Blue” – this year’s Founders Day theme and a testament to Spelman’s enduring legacy of sisterhood and exhibition of tenacity by students, alumnae, faculty and staff. Patton’s service to Spelman began as a first-year student in 1984 and has continued throughout her more than decade-long tenure as a Spelman employee. Infusing sisterhood into every element of her work, she even affectionately closes emails with “sisterly.”

As Director of Alumnae Operations in the Spelman College Office of Alumnae Engagement, Patton and her team have planned numerous Founders Day celebrations – including Spelman’s 142nd Founders Day on April 11, 2023.

“Founders Day is such a day of remembrance for us all,” said Patton. “We take a moment to understand how we are connected to this vast legacy, whether as a graduating senior preparing to embark on their next chapter in life, as a first-year student affirming their decision to be a part of this long legacy, as an alumna, parent, faculty/staff member, or college friend,” said Patton.
A Wealth of Wellness Resources: How Spelman is Inspiring Better Living

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. From mental health services to stress management programs, Spelman College is dedicated to supporting the well-being of our campus community lifestyle through various campuswide initiatives. Mental illness can affect a person’s thinking, feelings, behavior and mood. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in five U.S. adults experience mental illness each year.

Emotional support programs such as SpelJoy uplift innovation and collaboration through interactive enrichment experiences that teach how to cultivate joy in the workplace. From lessons on the science of joy to best practices that enhance efficiency, this new mindfulness workshop vows to increase creativity, productivity and morale amongst faculty and staff.

Spelman’s Counseling Center offers a range of mental and emotional support services to the entire Spelman community, including mental health resources, outreach and peer counseling and workshops.

The WISDOM (Women in Spiritual Discernment of Ministry) Center, a student-centered leadership development program is designed to provide a safe space for students to reflect, critically examine and pursue questions of meaning and purpose in a supportive environment. The WISDOM Center also supports Sisters Chapel Sunday worship, the Lavender Graduation ceremony and the “For the Soul of Spelman Newsletter.”

The Wellness Center at Read Hall serves as the campus wellness hub for students, staff and faculty. From a state-of-the-art gym facility and swimming pool to a full-sized instructional kitchen supporting the Food Studies Program, the Center serves as a space to support all dimensions of health and wellness.

For more information on these and other campus wellness resources, visit Spelman.edu.

Research Day 2023 Celebrates Student Scholarship, Excellence

I am very proud that this event featured, 21 corporate sponsors, 230 judges (130 alumnae), 500 plus SpelBound students, and a multitude from our Spelman community. Students had an opportunity to showcase their creative pursuits under the direction of our amazing Spelman faculty and other collegiate partners said Taylor.

In addition to exhibits, performance presentations and a campus-wide cookout celebration, this signature event directly recognized the importance of celebrating scholarly excellence.

“The faculty, staff, and friends of Spelman are committed to developing the thought leaders of tomorrow,” said Dolores Bradley Brennan, interim provost and vice president of academic affairs, professor of psychology and co-director of the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) program. “Research Day helps to instill confidence in our students and their abilities as they prepare for the challenges of the world.”

“we have to thank the student presenters and their faculty mentors! We would have no Research Day without students’ engagement in scholarly and creative pursuits and faculty’s dedication to advising them on their projects!”

- Tasha Inniss, Ph.D. Associate Provost for Research
SpelBound Offers Incoming Students a Special Spelman Experience

Spelman College welcomed nearly 500 students of the incoming class of 2027 and their families on April 21 and 22 for SpelBound – the annual event designed to provide a weekend of special programming for new students.

“SpelBound is one of the most special events of the year,” said LaTrina Fisher, associate director of Admissions. “It is an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our admitted students with our partners in the Office of the Provost, Student Affairs, Undergraduate Studies and the AUC.”

This year, SpelBound participants also attended Spelman College Research Day and were able to witness students across a variety of disciplines present engaging research projects. After Research Day, SpelBound students attended the campus-wide cookout, convened in the Wellness Center for Sister Chat and attended a SpelBound fashion show. That evening, Spelmanite Live introduced the incoming students to Mahogany in Motion, the Morehouse College Band, Miss Spelman and her court and step show performances from Spelman sororities.

Students also heard from representatives from Financial Aid, Public Safety, Wellness, the Access Center, the Counseling Department, Career Planning and Development, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, Student Life and Housing, and Residence Life. Parents had the opportunity to engage with current parents and ask questions in preparation for the future. While parents attended informative panel discussions, students engaged with current Spelmanites and Spelman alumna who returned to campus to welcome them to SpelBound.

“Spelbound 2023, was an exceptional event,” said Spelman alumna, student ambassador and co-advisor, Morgan Offord, C’2019. “Even with the implementation of new ideas, we were able to show admitted students how incredible and deeply rooted our sisterhood is for us all.”

For more information, visit the SpelBound webpage.

Fenty Beauty by Rihanna and Ulta Beauty’s #SHADEMATCHU Brings a Different Blend of Beauty to Spelman

On April 3, Fenty Beauty by Rihanna and Ulta Beauty brought their “Shade Match U” pop-up team to Spelman College as part of their college tour across the country.

During the day-long event, students received complimentary products and valuable tips from professional makeup artists on make-up application.

Political science major Indi Clayton, C’2024, was crowned as the 40th Miss Spelman for the 2023-2024 academic year during the annual Miss Spelman Pageant on Saturday, April 15, in Spelman College’s historic Sisters Chapel. Dual sociology and anthropology major Ayiana Polen, C’2024, 1st Attendant to Miss Spelman College, and history major Nadia Scott, C’2024, 2nd Attendant to Miss Spelman College, will reign as the Miss Spelman College Court.

A Choice to Be “Well”: Kayli Joy Cooper, C’2026, Uses Nonprofit to Promote Self-Care Among Teen Girls

Kayli Joy Cooper, C’2026, is on a mission to make self-care accessible to all. In 2020, the documentary filmmaking major started Girl Well – a non-profit committed to curating and distributing self-care kits to under-sheltered teen girls, a group Cooper says is often forgotten and overlooked.

“Self-care is the reason I got through the pandemic, but I quickly found self-care to be a luxury,” said Cooper. “This did not sit right with me, because at Girl Well, we firmly believe every girl has the right to practice mental, emotional and physical wellness.”

Since its founding, Girl Well has served thousands of girls across eight states and internationally, extending to Bangladesh. The non-profit has also partnered with companies like Dove, NARS Cosmetics, Estée Lauder, Bombas, Better Help, Denman and more to curate self-care kits. According to Cooper, the contents of each kit are focused on three tiers of wellness – mental, emotional and physical wellness.

“We have things like a hotline and human trafficking card for mental wellness; a self-care book, handwritten affirmations and access to free teletherapy for emotional wellness; and for physical wellness, we have socks, granola bars, ChapStick and more.”

The Los Angeles native has now brought the work of her non-profit to Spelman. On April 2, Girl Well hosted its first on-campus “packing party.”

“Ever since I committed to Spelman, I had the goal of introducing my non-profit to campus,” said Cooper. “The packing party was a success as we packed 500 self-care kits with 80 AUC volunteers.”

Spelman Students Meet with Federal Legislators and Policy Makers during Spelman on the Hill

Last month, 21 Spelman students traveled to the nation’s capital for Spelman on the Hill – which opens the door for students with a passion for advocacy and social change to learn more about and engage in legislative and policy issues.

Students met with U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock, U.S. Representative Nikema Williams, U.S. Representative Lucy McBath and other influential individuals in Washington, D.C., to advocate for a range of policy reforms. Students also met with Spelman alumnae who hold key positions in the federal government, to gain valuable wisdom and insight on careers in the executive and legislative agencies and offices in Washington, D.C. Gabrielle Strawn, C’2023, Spelman Student Government Association director of special events, helped lead the effort.

“For the inaugural campus packing party, NARS Cosmetics donated products (including lip glosses and eyeliners), and The Atlanta (GA) Chapter of The LINKS, Incorporated sponsored storage and assisted in transporting the completed kits.”

“Girl Well is my choice to change the world. With the alarming rise in young girls dealing with mental health and questioning who they are in a constant cycle of comparison, Girl Well reaffirrms their worth,” explained Cooper “When you give a girl the opportunity to start her self-care journey, she can change the trajectory of her and her family’s life.”

In addition to Girl Well, Cooper is an executive board member of Spelman’s chapter of National Action Network and serves as the admissions event coordinator for the Social Media Influencers Team through the College’s Office of Admissions. She is also a general body member of Gifted Girls of Grace, AUC Camera Collective, and Entrepreneurship Club.

“Spelman on the Hill has empowered me,” Strawn said. “Meeting with the leaders who are creating change was inspiring. Networking with Spelman alumnae who have been in my shoes as a student and are now leading successful careers while giving back to their community was motivating. And, of course, traveling and bonding with my Spelman sisters has made this trip unforgettable and a wonderful way to wrap up my undergraduate experience.”
Discover What’s in Store for Forever Blue 2023: Spelman College’s Reunion Preview

Reunion is a cherished custom at Spelman College. It’s a time when alumnae classes gather every five years to commemorate, demonstrate affection and give back to our beloved institution. This year, from May 17-21, the College looks forward to welcoming alumnae and celebrating alumnae from class years ending in “3” and “8” during Reunion 2023. This will be the largest gathering of Spelman alumnae reunioners since the pandemic. Registration is now closed for ticketed events.

To learn more about reunion activities, visit the Spelman Reunion page.

FOREVER Blue

REUNION 2023

All reunioning class years ending in “3” and “8” are invited to participate in the following activities:

Friday, May 19:
Class Meetings

Friday, May 19, at 3 p.m. ET
March Through the Alumnae Arch (Spelman College - The Oval)

Sunday, May 21, at 3 p.m. ET
Commencement:
Georgia International Convention Center (GICC) -- ticket required

Congratulations, Class of 2023!
As you prepare for this year’s March Through the Alumnae Arch
Spelman College caps capital campaign at $339 million
The Ascends Campaign, the largest comprehensive campaign in the college’s history, has raised $339 million to cover student fees, improve technological infrastructure, build the Center for Innovation & Arts and expand various initiatives across campus. Dr. Gayle is quoted in the article. 3/28, SOURCE: AJC

Scientists From Spelman College Help Women With Textured Hair
Video interview with Dr. Michelle Gaines and Imani Page, discussing how they’re using biochemistry to help people with curls and coils find hair products that work. 4/12, SOURCE: INSIDE EDITION

Spelman College Launches Online Cosmetic Science Certification Program
As part of its online education platform, eSpelman, Atlanta’s Spelman College, a leading historically Black college for women, has introduced a cosmetic science certification program, conceptualized by chemistry and biochemistry professor Dr. Leyte Winfield. 4/12, SOURCE: COSMETICS & TOILETRIES

Spelman College students win $1M Goldman Sachs prize
Spelman sophomores Princess Dandoo, Madison Porter, Gabrielle Smith, Victoria Woodward – and Havellin Autry, a freshman, won the Goldman Sachs Market Madness case study competition and claimed the $1 million grand prize for the school. The winnings will be put into Spelman’s general scholarship fund. 4/28, SOURCE: AJC

Spelman College Celebrates the Inauguration of 11th President Dr. Helene D. Gayle

Spelman students balance pros and cons of social media
Spelman College Associate Director of Counseling Pamela Walton and students Madison Riles and M’Kenzie Lumas-Harmon weigh in on the pros and cons of social media. 4/18, SOURCE: FOX 5

Spelman’s new president talks about its future (VIDEO)
4/28, SOURCE: AJC
Logan’s Visit to Spelman Focuses Lens on Documentary Media Studies, Visual Arts

Jonathan Logan, the CEO and founder of the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, visited Spelman College recently for a campus tour and discussion about future developments in documentary media studies and visual arts at Spelman. Logan was hosted by faculty members Julie Dash, Ayoka Chenzira, Ph.D., Myra Greene, and Anjanelle Levert from Spelman’s Department of Art & Visual Culture Department and the Division of Institutional Advancement.

Recent Spelman alumnae and graduating seniors attended the meeting, where they shared their experiences in the program and aspirations for the future. Kennedy Dunning, C’2023, shared her plans to move to Los Angeles to work in the entertainment industry after graduation. “What impacted me the most is seeing how passionate everyone was, talking about how much they want to change the world through film,” said Dunning. “They’re so moved through social activism and trying to center Black women’s voices in media, which can be a powerful source for change. It was beautiful and reassuring to see that I’m in the right spot, and I’m in the right field.”

Last year, the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation donated $1 million to Spelman College to fund the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation Center for Documentary Media Studies, which will be housed within the forthcoming Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D., Center for Innovation & the Arts. This contribution marks a significant milestone as Spelman is now the first Historically Black College & University (HBCU) to offer a bachelor’s degree program in documentary filmmaking. As a tribute to the Foundation’s generous contribution, the documentary film program, as well as the motion capture room and corridor, will be named after the Foundation.

“Our gift to Spelman comes at a time when hearing new voices in the documentary field is more vital than ever,” said Logan. “The talented women of Spelman College have insights to share and important stories to tell, and documentary film is a powerful way to bring them to light.”

Spelman College will also name the Documentary Production Lab within the Center for Innovation & the Arts, in honor of Dr. Ayoka Chenzira. “This generous new gift will allow our students to be the next group of emerging Black women documentary filmmakers to produce their creative and bold ideas for films in a state-of-the-art facility,” said Dr. Chenzira.

Spelman College Scholarship Luncheon Thanks Donors, Celebrates Recipients

On April 17, Spelman College hosted a luncheon to honor its donors who are committed to enhancing access to a Spelman education and the scholarship recipients whose lives were significantly impacted by remarkable philanthropic efforts.

Longtime supporters of Spelman College, Seth and Beth Klarman, gifted the institution $10 million in 2020 with the aim of providing scholarships to help students overcome the financial barriers that may prevent them from graduating. “We hope our support ensures that exceptional young women have the opportunity to attend and graduate from Spelman, and go on to have rewarding and fulfilling careers,” said the Klarman at the time of their donation.

Kamina Aaliyah Griffin, C’2025, is a biochemistry major and a Seth and Beth Klarman Scholar. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in biomedical education after she graduates. Griffin, a first-generation college student, shared how her scholarship has positively impacted her life.

“This scholarship has relieved a financial burden on my family and allowed me to focus on my studies without worrying about how to pay for them,” said Griffin. “Spelman College has provided me with sisters for a lifetime, a network that has been invaluable in helping me navigate the challenges of college and prepare for my future career.”

As Spelman continues to inspire and empower future generations of young women, its mission of fostering academic excellence and social responsibility remains as strong as ever.

SAVE THE DATE!

Reunion
Wednesday, May 17 – Sunday, May 21

2023 Baccalaureate
Saturday, May 20

Class of 2023 Commencement Ceremony
Sunday, May 21

View the Full Events Calendar at Spelman.edu/calendars
View the Academic Calendar at Spelman.edu/AcademicCalendar
MISSION STATEMENT
Spelman College, a historically Black college and a global leader in the education of women of African descent, is dedicated to academic excellence in the liberal arts and sciences and the intellectual, creative, ethical and leadership development of its students. Through diverse learning modalities, Spelman empowers the whole person to engage the many cultures of the world and inspires a commitment to positive social change.

Accreditation: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award baccalaureate degrees
Member: Atlanta University Center Consortium

Inside Spelman is published monthly by the Division of Strategic Communications and Marketing. All editorial correspondence should be directed to the editor at: publicrelations@spelman.edu.

CONTACT US
Spelman College
350 Spelman Lane S.W. | Atlanta, GA 30314-4399
[p] 404-681-3643 | publicrelations@spelman.edu
For More Info, visit Spelman.edu/InsideSpelman