

MAC 30th Year Anniversary: *April 2020 Newsletter Edition*



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Minority Affairs
Committee (MAC) of
AICHE

Editor's Notes

While constructing this month's newsletter, I was overwhelmed with the outpouring of love and respect that pervaded for Dr. Henry Brown. From the love he gave as a father, contributions made to AIChE, and the work in striving for equality, there is no doubt that he has left a sprig of his immortal soul with us. How fitting it is to memorialize him as MAC celebrates its 30 years of service. It is my hope that as you go through these writings that you get that same sense of his noble character which, I feel, is impossible to avoid.

I want to thank all those who contributed writings for this edition as well as the Communications Team who provided guidance in organizing this to be as solemn of a memorial as possible. Most importantly, I thank the Brown family for the photographs that were furnished to be able to construct the collages that are at the back of the newsletters.

Let's keep striving.

Trebor Gainwell
MAC Communications Officer



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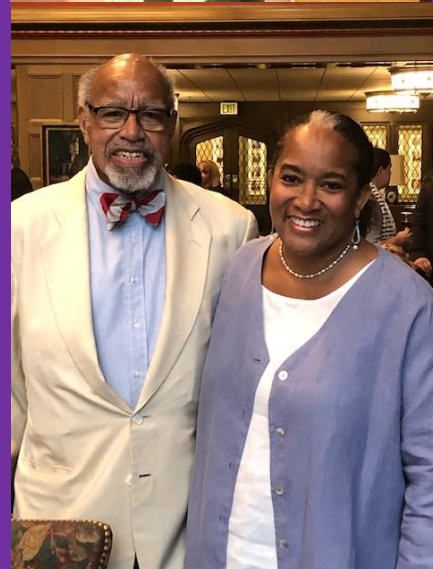
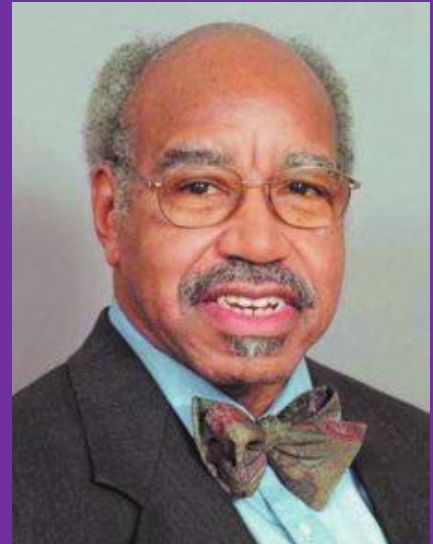
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Dedication to Mr. and Mrs. Brown

There are a lot of great love stories in the world. Watching my father, Henry Brown, with my mother, Melinda, while she was in hospice confirmed for me that my parents were one of those couples. He would sit by her side and hold her hand for hours, squeezing it occasionally.

They met in 1955 at the University of Cincinnati, at a new student mixer, as my mother had transferred in from Fisk. She laughed at him when he said he was a senior, thinking he was giving her a pickup line. But he persisted and on their first real date, they won the balloon that named them the King and Queen of the ball. It was a good sign. They married 3 years later and together personified Ephesians 5:31, "...and the two shall become one flesh," for more than 60 years. They were yin and yang; they complimented each other and their relationship was the template we could and would often use for our own lives and relationships.

Our mother Melinda, raised in Jersey City, New Jersey, was a librarian, a miniature book collector, and an adventurer at heart. She was the only one of her siblings afforded the opportunity to attend college, majoring in French as an undergraduate and then going on to earn a master's degree in Library Science. She had a bold spirit even before feminism was in vogue. She was the first of the wives/girlfriends to dare to wear pants in Rev. Brown's (our grandfather's) house in the 1950's. She was the woman who, amongst their group of friends, was the only wife to go to the March on Washington with the men in 1963, while the others stayed home. And it was she who convinced Henry in India to get up on an elephant for a ride, not the other way around. She was the woman who went parasailing and swimming with the dolphins in her 70's, took a hot air balloon ride for her 80th birthday, and came sliding down a slide into a hotel pool in Mexico at 82. She was a voracious reader who loved literature, history and francophone culture, and she loved travelling to places that she'd read about. In her husband, she found the perfect companion for her adventures. As a young couple, she convinced city-bred Henry to go camping, an activity our father jumped into whole heartedly. Together, they ultimately travelled to 49 of 50 states, numerous countries and 6 of 7 continents. With retirement, we often joked about how tiring retirement must have been – they seemed to go on "vacation" once few months! While many of these trips were overseas to places like China, India, Russia, the Galapagos Islands, they would also travel within the US, our mom accompanying our father on trips to research our family genealogy. Over the years, they published four volumes of family history; both paternal and maternal histories for his family and our mom's family, tracing our history back to the census records of the 1870's.



Dedication to Mr. and Mrs. Brown

Henry, born in Cincinnati, the son of a Baptist minister, from an early age was one who realized the advantages that education could bring. In high school, he tutored younger students at the local YMCA and in college, he was a leader and an organizer. He majored in Chemical Engineering, even after the dean discouraged him from that major, stating they "had never had any black boys in chemical engineering." He suggested that perhaps chemistry would be a better choice. Nonetheless, Henry was the first African-American to graduate from the School of Engineering at UC, receiving his B.S. in 1955 and the following year, he was awarded a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 2001, he received an honorable doctorate of science from UC. It should be no surprise that as a young college graduate, he was involved in the civil rights movement, in an attempt to improve his community at large, but he was also a big brother in Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. For many years he was also a Sunday school teacher for the junior and senior high school students at our church, and he tutored a number of his students in math and science. A man known for his forceful character, he held strong beliefs and convictions. He was always willing to speak out on causes that he believed were unjust, even when such stands were unpopular and perhaps detrimental to his career. He attributed many of his own beliefs and character development to be the direct result of early lessons he had learned as a child in Sunday school and church.

When he wasn't championing a cause, he was championing me and Gregory, rooting for us in all our activities, encouraging us in all our endeavors and later, rooting for his grandchildren, Ian and Camille the same way in all that they did. He nurtured in us a love of music, a love of food, and travel and a mindset of always being open to new things and new experiences. Henry loved all types of music, from the blues and soul music, to classical and gospel. He specified for us, as a matter of fact, what songs were to be sung at his funeral, and even suggested who would be best to sing them! I have fond memories of dancing with my dad as a little girl, to Booker T and the MGs and Wilson Pickett in the living room. And he insisted that we take music in school --Greg played the viola, I was in Girl's Glee club-- and HE taught himself how to play the guitar. And so, on our famous family camping trips, he would play the guitar, as we sang along to my mom's favorite Girls Scout campfire songs.

My dad loved good food, and always made us try something new if we were out at a restaurant. "You don't have to like it," he would say, "but you have to try it." This was his attitude in general about many things in life. And I imagine, that is how, having grown up in land-locked Cincinnati, he became such a seafood lover. I actually can not think back to a June 16, when my father did NOT have lobster for his birthday. Last year, when Father's Day & his birthday landed on the same day, Greg bought the lobsters, loaded them up in a cooler and drove them down to my house in Philadelphia (cause y'know lobster is \$15.99/lb in Philly)...all because we could not POSSIBLY eat something else that day. And of course, my father will forever be known for his homemade ice cream and for perfecting my Nana's yeast roll recipe, to the point that they have now become known as "Henry's rolls."

Just as he encouraged us to be open-minded, he encouraged us to be independent thinkers. Henry had several favorite expressions. When we were children, one was that we should "use our heads for more than just a hat rack," particularly if we had done something knuckle-headed. He would regularly tell us that "a job worth doing is worth doing right." It was his way of saying that one shouldn't do anything half-way. That one should excel in what one does, to the best of one's ability, was a value he endeavored to instill in us, his children, as well as in his nieces and nephews. Further, as only a chemical engineer could, our father would scold us with another of his favorite expressions if we were not "making efficient use of our time." He had high expectations for us, accepting nothing less than hard work, and expected us to rise to meet and never shy away from challenges. While our father expected us to think, he also expected us to think about other's, to give back to others. One year, our Christmas gifts included a lifetime membership to

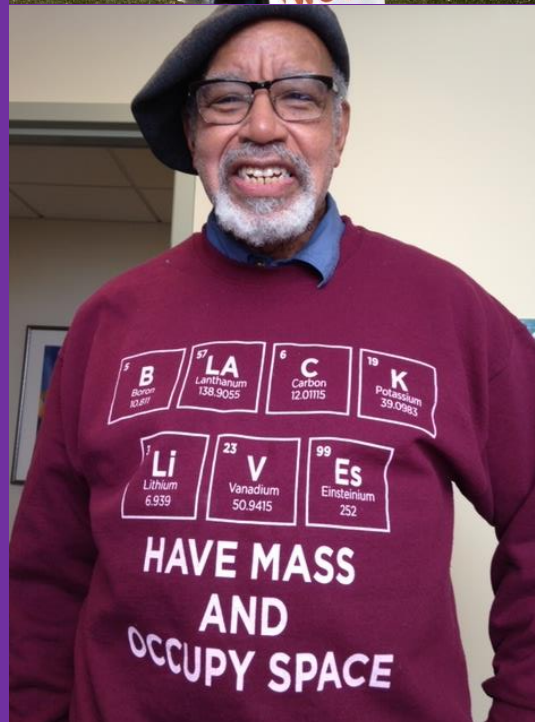
Dedication to Mr. and Mrs. Brown

the NAACP and he encouraged us to be involved with local social service projects. Our parents always made clear to us that we were blessed, and that blessings were to be shared--and we hope they saw that we got it.

Our father was an active member of the AIChE for as long as we can remember. For years we would hear of him going off on business trips to the AIChE conventions, and most times our mother would join him at the meetings. On several occasions as children, our family vacations were timed and routed to coincide with an AIChE convention. We even have recollections of his reading Chemical & Engineering News on the beach! He was dedicated to encouraging minorities to enter chemical engineering and to aid undergraduates who were currently studying within that program.

As you well know, our father's focus within the AIChE was on the mentoring of young engineers, especially with regard to underrepresented minorities and women in engineering. As the Minority Affairs Coordinator and then a founding member of the Minority Affairs Committee, his work revolved around helping younger chemical engineers understand the expectations of their positions, and the ins and outs of the corporate world. Henry was proud to be a member of AIChE and his life was enriched by some of the lifelong friendships that grew out of his relationships within the chemical engineering community. Mr. Gerry Lessells commented to us that they had been friends for more than 50 years! Henry was humbled and thrilled when the MAC decided to create an endowment in his name; when it was renamed to include our mother, he was ecstatic. The AIChE played a tremendous role in our father's life. We will never forget the kindness of flowers, letters and emails sent, as well as personal visits made by MAC members and by other individuals of AIChE while our dad was ill. We are grateful for you and appreciate the opportunity to share our remembrances with you.

M. Allyson Brown* and Gregory E. Brown**
Son and Daughter of Dr. Brown



**Gregory Brown is a civil engineer with Aptim in Canton, MA and is married to Monique McIntyre Brown, an actress. They are the parents of Ian, 22 and Camille, 17. Greg received his undergraduate degree at RPI and a Master's degree from Cornell. He is active in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and is the chair of the usher board at his church.

*Allyson Brown is an obstetrician/gynecologist in the Philadelphia area, married to Ken Griffin, a graphic artist and multimedia producer. They are the grandparents of 3 grandchildren, Jacey, 10, Tarynn, 6 and Isaiah, 4. Allyson is an alumna of Wellesley College and Emory University School of Medicine. She has a special interest in minimally invasive and robotic surgery and volunteers on short-term medical missions in Nigeria.

MAC Leadership Officers

Sipho Ndlela
Past Chair



Kazeem Olanrewaju
Chair



Audie Thompson
Chair-Elect



Temitayo Femifowode
Treasurer



Janice Adewuyi
Secretary



Trebor Gainwell
Communications Officer



MAC Communications Team

Sipho Ndela, PhD.

MAC past-Chair



Education

- Lean Six Sigma Master Black Belt
- Certified Six Sigma Master Black Belt Villanova University
- PhD. Chemical Engineering Iowa State University

Current Position/Title

- Director and Co-Founder at Alternative Energy for Afrika (AEFA Inc.)

Sipho Ndela

Trebor Gainwell, BS.

MAC Communications Officer



Education

- BS. Chemical Engineering Louisiana Technical University and Southern Arkansas University

Current Position/Title

- Process Engineer at OXEA Chemical Company

Trebor Gainwell

Roneisha Haney, BS.

Member of MAC Communications team



Education

- BS. Material Science & Engineering Clemson University

Current Position/Title

- 4th year PhD candidate in Chemical Engineering at Florida A&M University—Florida State University

Roneisha Haney

Salman Zarrini, PhD.

Member of MAC Communications team



Education

- BS. Applied Physics Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz
- MSc. Condensed Matter Physics Tarbiat Modares University
- PhD. Computational; Chemistry Philipps University of Marburg

Current Position/Title

- Postdoctoral Researcher at Drexel University, Chemical & Biological Engineering Department

Salman Zarrini

Jude M. Phillip, PhD.

Member of MAC Communications team



Education

- B.Eng. Chemical Engineering City College of New York
- PhD. Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering Johns Hopkins university

Current Position/Title

- Postdoctoral Associate at Weill Cornell Medicine (present)
- Incoming Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering at Johns Hopkins University (September 2020)

Jude Phillip @JudeM_Phillip

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Member of MAC Communications team



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Current Position/Title

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Bianca Mitchell

MAC Communications Team

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Member of MAC Communications team



Education

- BS. Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering
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- PhD. Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering
Johns Hopkins University

Current Position/Title

- Medical and Scientific Affairs Consultant at
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Michael Chee-Awai, MSc.

Member of MAC Communications team



Education

- BE. Chemical Engineering
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- MSc. Supply Chain Management
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Current Position/Title

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Michael Chee-Awai

Rajib Das, MSc.

Member of MAC Communications team



Education

- BS. Chemical Engineering & Polymer Sci.
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- M.E.Sc, Chemical Engineering
Lamar University

Current Position/Title

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Company

Rajib Das

Kristen Loh, BS.

Member of MAC Communications team



Education

- BS/MS Chemical Engineering
Drexel University

Current Position/Title

- PhD candidate in Chemical Engineering at
University of Minnesota—Twin Cities

Kristen Loh

Important Announcements

- ***The Henry T. and Melinda C. Brown Endowment Fund is now at a total of \$172,600***
 - More details to come soon.
- ***MAC Presents: “Guidance for Success” Webinar- May 21, 2020***
- ***The Institute of Sustainability is providing several funding opportunities from PPG to partially support students and post doc attendance to three sustainability related conferences:***
 - International Congress on Sustainability Science and Engineering – ICOSSE 2020
 - Global Symposium on Waste Plastic 2020
 - Sustainable Packaging Symposium 2020

Register at: <https://www.aiche.org/resources/forms/ppg-grant-application>

- ***Nominations for the Williams Grimes Award, Distinguished Service Award, and Eminent Chemical Engineers Award***
Deadline Approaching: July 31, 2020.

For more information, visit: <https://www.aiche.org/awards/committee-awards>

- ***Tribute Video Package for Dr. Brown***
 - Package will be released at the MAC 30th Anniversary Celebration
 - More details to come from MAC Communications Team

Dr. Henry Brown, the Ground, the Pillar, the Corner Stone, from which MAC is, Now, and Tomorrow

It was a humbling experience serving as the Program Chair at the 2017 AIChE Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but being invited to join as MAC Chair-Elect the same week of the conference was the greatest honor. Without hesitation, I accepted this opportunity, knowing I would be supported by strong MAC family ties. I immediately remembered past MAC events, where we visited schools to share with kids what Chemical Engineering is all about. I had flashbacks when I witnessed celebrations of several MAC distinguished award recipients. The award ceremony that stands out was seeing former NASA Astronaut Mae Carol Jemison being honored, her words of wisdom and encouragement she imparted with the audience still resonate today. There is so much I can share with you about what went through my mind that week about MAC. First thing I did was immersing myself in learning about the History of MAC. What's clear to me, Dr. Henry Brown, is one reason that I get to be part of the MAC family, "he is the Ground, the Pillar, and the Corner Stone, from which MAC is, Now and Tomorrow".

Fast forward, when I became the 2019 MAC Chair, our goal was to leverage existing resources to increase participation and engagement of MAC initiatives at the annual meeting, a voice always came up, "let's follow Henry's approach". It wasn't until I was handing out two pamphlets (the 2019 MAC Events, and a Henry and Melinda Brown Endowment Fund/Scholarship Program) to 2019 AIChE Annual meeting attendees in Orlando, Florida that I realized what MAC meant to me and those I was fortunate to exchange a few words with. While doing that, I saw Dr. Henry Brown from a distance and immediately approached him, handed the pamphlets, and started sharing why I was handing out the pamphlet. With a smile, I said, "Please join us at the MAC events tomorrow", he smiled back, and, "said good job".

There are many more stories I can share about Dr. Henry Brown, whether it's examples from the 2019 AIChE conference or previous years, I alone, cannot do justice. I want to leave that to other contributors who will elaborate more about his journey. One thing for sure, Dr. Brown and Mrs. Melinda Brown, both cared, and loved AIChE-MAC. Such are similar stories that you will get to hear throughout the article. You heard from his family, Dr. Allyson Brown and Mr. Greg Brown. The journey of Dr. Henry Brown and Mrs. Melinda Brown continues through the eyes of a few friends including Mrs. Kathy Lee, Mr. Otis and Mrs. Phyllis Shelton, and Dr. Soni Oyekan. We understand that Henry and Melinda have numerous friends that unfortunately, we were not able to reach before the publication of the Newsletter. We want to hear from you, whether it is thoughts, prayers, and your journey with the Brown family. If interested, do send us an email to the MAC Communication team: minorityaffairsaiche@gmail.com



Sipho Ndlela
Director and Co-Founder at Alternative for Afrika (AEFA Inc.)
2019 MAC Chair
Current Former MAC Chair
PhD. Chemical Engineering, Iowa State University

We live in a world that is constantly changing, and with these changes come new challenges. As engineers, and more specifically chemical engineers, we are uniquely positioned to impact the way that we adapt and respond to these new challenges. However, rising to these challenges will require a generational response, and growing expertise in a variety of areas including energy sustainability and food security, biotechnology, health innovation and pharmaceuticals, as well as environmental remediation and tech innovation, to name a few. As members of the Minority Affairs Committee within the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, part of our mission is to inspire and guide the next generation of engineers and scholars who will rise to this challenge. As part of our ongoing webinar series, for the month of April we focused on the topic “Chemical Engineering for a changing world”. The goal of this webinar was to engage in a dialogue with undergraduate and graduate students, to get them thinking on their future career paths, and the versatility of their training in chemical engineering.

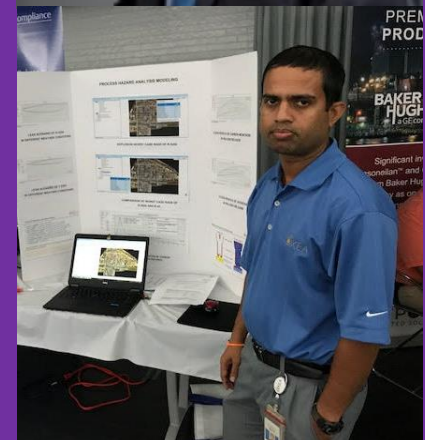
In the webinar, I facilitated a discussion among three young professionals, each having a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering, but were now in very different fields and sectors. The panel consisted of three young professionals: (1) Dr. Hasini Jayatilaka, a Medical and Scientific Affairs consultant at Syneos Health; (2) Mr. Michael Chee-Awai, a Sourcing Engineer at Schlumberger focused on supply chain management; and (3) Mr. Rajib Das, a Process Engineer III at OXEA Chemical Company. Facilitating this dialogue among the panel, we addressed questions such as: What were some of the factors/experiences that inspired your interest in chemical engineering? How do you use your chemical engineering training in your daily job? And what advice that you would give to current students pursuing, or thinking of pursuing a degree in chemical engineering? In addition, the panel fielded questions from student participants such as: how does mentoring and your network of mentors influence your success and career path? and how important is it to have additional training, such as continuing on to a master's degree or PhD, in fulfilling your career path in industry?

Our webinar series continues to be a success, with the first two webinars averaging approximately twenty-five participants. Presently, we are in the process of editing the webinar videos to have them accessible via social media, and the MAC website. At the end of this last webinar, we had participants fill an exit questionnaire to give feedback on how we can improve, and better serve and address their needs and interests. Results indicated that the students felt that the webinar was informative, they liked the format of an interactive panel dialogue, with participants expressing interest in becoming more involved, and becoming members of the MAC communications team.

As we continue to grow our webinar series to provide education and training, we ask that you continue to join in, and encourage students and young professionals that you may know who can benefit from the knowledge and experiences that is imparted. Please follow MAC on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) and be on the lookout for details on our next webinar in the month of May.

Jude Phillip, PhD.

Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology
Weill Cornell Medical College
MAC Communications Team Member



Contribution by Dr. Christine Grant, PhD

Henry Brown was a mentor for me starting from the time we met in 1986 at a NOBCCChE meeting when I was a graduate student at Georgia Tech. His signature bow tie was the annual symbol for me that there was someone in my corner – supporting me through trials, tribulations and triumphs!! He advised me and was a steady force in MAC and throughout the Institute, garnering respect from “historical legends” of AIChE. A legend in his own right, I am thankful that he was recognized by the Institute and that his legacy will live on forever. I believe that he was the first African American Fellow in AIChE and I was the first AA women Fellow. In San Francisco, when I became a Fellow, I had him pin my Fellow pin on me. It was not part of the official ceremony - just an action I made up to acknowledge his legacy to me. I also took a picture with him at his last AIChE meeting in 2019 - I will treasure all the time we spent together.

In the last week of his life (I could not have known that) I sent him a care package. I had just accepted the nomination to run for national office in AIChE and wanted him to know that this was yet another legacy he had inspired me to pursue. I sent the package (with a note about this) on 2/12 and it arrived on 2/14, one day after he passed away. I know in my heart that he got the message and knows I am running for national office. Him and his wife, Melinda were supporters of mine throughout my career and cared for my well-being at least once a year at these meetings. They asked about my family and my career on a regular basis. I will miss Henry Brown at the AIChE meetings; he was a confidante, mentor, role model and an amazing person; his legacy lives on in my heart.

Christine S. Grant, Ph.D.

Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

Associate Dean of Faculty Advancement in College of Engineering

Website: <https://www.engr.ncsu.edu/faculty-staff/efa/>

2019 MAC William W. Grimes Award for Excellence in Chemical Engineering

North Carolina State University

Raleigh, NC 27695-7905



Contribution by Dr. Christine Grant, PhD

Henry Brown and Christine Grant November 2013



Henry Brown and Christine Grant November 2019



Henry Brown, Gerry Lessells and Christine Grant



Partnering with Diversity Driven Organizations

Collaboration amongst different organizations can bring about many benefits, including innovation, synergy between the groups, sharing of knowledge and resources, increased community awareness, and more. The collaborative effort allows the participating groups to work together to achieve and often exceed any common goals. MAC is continuously expanding and growing, putting forth efforts to brainstorm on new ideas to push forward the mission of encouraging the education and training of underrepresented groups within the engineering field. In that effort, one approach has been the idea of creating and or strengthening relationships with existing groups or organizations that have a similar mission. The overall aim is to collaborate with such organizations to allow for new programs, sharing of resources, use of compatible skills, and more. Currently, MAC has several activities and programs, including monthly webinars, scholarship and travel grant opportunities for students, and conference events and forums, to name a few. The programs, events, and resources that have been and continue to be offered through MAC have a dynamic impact on those associated with the organization, and collaborating with like-minded groups and organizations can only strengthen the organization moving forward.



Organizations such as the Black Women in Science and Engineering (BWISE) and Women in Chemical Engineering (WIC) are two examples of organizations dedicated to assisting minority students and professionals in their academic, industrial, and entrepreneurial journeys as it is related to the field of engineering. With more than 1,200 active members and six local chapters (Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, DC Houston, and San Diego), BWISE showcases their dedication to the mission by working hard to bridge the leadership gap for black women in STEM. Comparably, this past year (2019), WIC was able to grant 16 graduate and young professional travel awards. This type of funding allows WIC to not only recognize the achievements of the hardworking student members in their group but also allows students to take advantage of all the incredible networking events and workshops offered at the annual AIChE conference.

Organizations like these, having core values and goals aligned with the mission of MAC, are ideal collaborators for diversity initiatives in both industry and academia. Working together will lead to broader impacts and greater participation while highlighting the talent and skill of minority professionals in the field of engineering. As a supporter of both organizations, MAC will continue to provide updates (awards, events, activities) on the progress of BWISE and WIC through our newsletters and social platforms. For more information or details on getting involved with BWISE or WIC, please contact our communications team at minorityaffairsaiche@gmail.com.

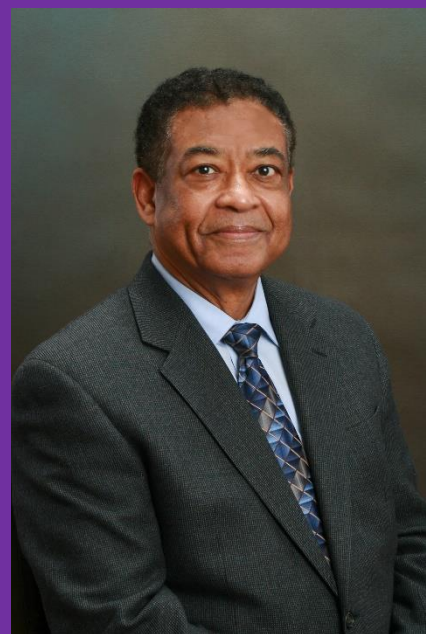
Roneisha Blakeney
FAMU ChemE Ph.D Candidate
MAC Communications Team Member

Contribution by Otis & Phyllis Shelton

In reflecting on Henry T Brown's legacy, I'm reminded of the words from an abolitionist - Harriett Tubman who, born a slave, helped 70 of her enslaved brothers and sisters to freedom. "Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars and change the world". In my opinion, this determination was reflected in Henry's life.

In the late 80's, Henry Brown, working with Gerry Lessels, faced a daunting task..how to sensitize the AIChE leadership to the needs of the upcoming minority engineers in our profession. Their efforts, with the support of AIChE President Jimmy Wei, required courage and persistence to obtain Council's approval to establish MAC. Henry didn't leave MAC after it was established, but stayed and nurtured it through his personal efforts.

It is this leadership and courage by Henry that, in my opinion, were key to his success. Over the years, Phyllis and I got to know Henry and Melinda. In addition to supporting Henry, Melinda was a pioneer in her own right in supporting the minority community in the Boston area, such as Project STEP, an initiative to ensure the classical music profession reflects the ethnic diversity in our community. We recognized their unique leadership roles, and were honored and privileged with their friendship.



*Otis & Phyllis Shelton

B.S., Chemical Engineering, University of Houston

M.S., Chemical Engineering, University of Houston

Fellow of the AIChE

Served as AIChE President in 2014

Served on AIChE Board of Directors from 2000-2002

AIChE National Secretary from 2004-2006

Otis Shelton Biography

*Otis retired in 2012 after a forty-five-year career in the chemical industry. He spent 20 years working in the Safety & Environmental Services Dept. of Praxair, Inc., one of the largest industrial gases companies with global reach spanning North and South America, Asia, and Europe.

"I was hired by Praxair to develop and direct its Corporate Compliance and Operational Assessment Program. Through this program, we managed and conducted coordinated in-depth assessments, using representative sampling techniques and through in-depth protocols, at Praxair's industrial gas facilities worldwide," says Shelton. "We developed a methodology to assess a range of important safety-related programs, including personnel safety, environmental, distribution, industrial hygiene, process safety, product safety and emergency planning."

Prior to his employment with Praxair, Shelton spent 25 years working for Union Carbide (the parent company to Praxair, before it was spun off as a stand-alone company in 1992) in manufacturing, purchasing, human resources, business and financial analysis, and safety in facilities on the Texas Gulf Coast, global headquarters in New York City and Danbury, Conn.

A few career highlights:

- Graduated Salutatorian of his high school class in Bloomington, Texas
- Life member of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), and served on NSBE's Advisory Board for 20 years (1986-2006)
- Grand Knight of the St Edwards Knights of Columbus Council (2012-2013)
- Received AIChE's Minority Affairs Committee 2011 Eminent Chemical Engineers Award, Pioneers of Diversity Award (2016)
- Received the NSBE Chair's Council Award for Outstanding and Dedicated Service to NSBE (2015)
- Co-Chair AIChE Foundation Steering Committee for the Henry T. and Melinda C. Brown Endowment for the Education of Under-represented Minority Chemical Engineers (2016-present)

Young Professional Highlight: Bianca Mitchell

When I was first deciding on what field to pursue in my undergraduate career, I was at crossroads between chemistry and journalism. For me, I always had a passion for any form of writing. However, after a traumatic event where my family almost lost one of my older sisters to cancer, I truly felt I needed to choose a career where I knew I could be of significant help to society. I eventually decided to talk to my parents about my dilemma. In doing this, they helped me compare the pros and cons between each choice. This led me to decide that the path that would be the most beneficial would be that of Biochemistry. I managed to excel in the field.

By my junior year, I began to look at my options for a postgraduate path. During a physical chemistry course I was enrolled in, my professor gave the class an opportunity to visit the College of Engineering to perform an experiment. At that time, I did not realize that I was in the lab of my future principal investigator and being taught the experiment by my graduate mentor. However, I did realize that I was developing a deep appreciation for the field. Being a student at FAMU, I knew that there was no doctoral program in chemistry. On the contrary, FAMU is the only HBCU to have a doctoral program in chemical engineering. With this in mind, I once again began weighing my options. I knew that my parents wouldn't know much about how to go about this dilemma. So instead, I expressed my issues to one of the chemistry faculty who I knew I could trust and had the best interests for students. He immediately set me up with Dr. Ramakrishnan, the doctor whose lab we had just conducted experiments in the previous semester.

Dr. Ramakrishnan was very excited to see someone who had the willingness to transition from chemistry to chemical engineering and guaranteed me that I would be able to get into the PhD program. In order to ensure that I was not at a steep disadvantage, he advised me to take several math classes and also sit in on a transitional course for graduate students who did not get their undergraduate degrees in chemical engineering. I found these classes to be very helpful, seeing as that the chemistry curriculum was not deeply math-based. I feel if I would've gone in blind, I surely would've been discouraged and failed. In combination with the classes, Dr. Ramakrishnan also made sure that I had the opportunity to work in the lab in order to understand what type of research chemical engineers conduct.

I graduated with my degree in Biochemistry in Fall 2019 and was able to immediately start within the doctoral program in chemical engineering the following semester. Thankfully, the course load in graduate school isn't as strenuous as undergraduate, where I had to take 15 credit hours due to being on scholarship. With this no longer being the condition, I was able to ease into the curriculum. I have been able to have minimal issues in my transition, largely due to being prepared beforehand, and my switch has definitely been solidified. This is how I know that this field is for me.



Bianca Mitchell
FAMU ChemE Ph.D Candidate
MAC Communications Team member

Small words for a Big Heart

I am very much aware of the love and debt I owe my near and far ancestors. I don't only mean the ancestors in my family tree but also the ones in my science or chemical engineering family tree. But I wasn't always aware. While my two children were early grade school, I kept my action around STEM education local. I had fun with that. But once they were a little older, I found myself looking for something. I didn't know what. At one AIChE annual meeting registration on Sunday, a gentleman wearing a bowtie stopped me and invited me to a MAC meeting. In that room, I found what I didn't know I was looking for: connection to the diaspora of engineers that went before me and the ones coming behind me. I was offered the opportunity for action with impact.

That was Henry Brown to me. He represented what I wanted to be.

*Kathy Lee



Kathy Lee Bio

*Mary Kathryn (Kathy) Lee is a Senior Chemical Engineer at ExxonMobil Corporate Strategic Research. She graduated with a BS in Chemical Engineering from MIT in 1982 and attended NCSU as a G.E.M. scholar, graduating in 1984 with an M.S. in Chemical Engineering and a minor in Science Education. Kathy just completed a 3 year term on the Board of Directors for AIChE. She has also served as two-time chair of (MAC) and as a member of the SIOC.

Henry T. Brown, an AIChE Fellow whose devotion to equity for minority engineers made an indelible impression on the life of the Institute and the countless chemical engineers who he mentored and encouraged, passed away at the age of 87 on February 13, 2020.

As one of the original advocates for minority engineers in AIChE, Henry co-created (with former AIChE director Gerry Lessells) AIChE's first outreach initiatives for underrepresented engineers. Throughout his career, he continued to build consensus and impetus for the creation of a Minority Affairs Committee (MAC), with it ultimately chartered in 1990.

In 2017, the AIChE Foundation established the Henry T. and Melinda C. Brown Endowment for the Education of Underrepresented Minority Chemical Engineers, a global effort to promote inclusiveness in the profession by providing an endowment to support, in perpetuity, the education of future minority chemical engineers.

We are deeply grateful to Henry's children, Gregory and Allyson, who requested contributions be made to the fund named in honor of their parents. Their thoughtful decision resulted in nearly \$10,000 in tribute gifts, elevating the total funds raised to \$174,000. All donations to the endowment will enable the selection and awarding of scholarships to high-achieving underrepresented students annually.

Henry remained a guide and mentor to MAC's leaders and AIChE members throughout his life, and we welcome your assistance in positively impacting many more engineers at the beginning of their careers.

Natalie Krauser*
Development Manager
AIChE Foundation



Natalie Krauser Bio

*Natalie R. Krauser is a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) responsible for increasing individual philanthropy through the development and successful deployment of the annual and named endowment fund campaign strategies and management of related staff. She is adept at engaging program and executive staff in support of fundraising activities, and in collaboration with volunteer leadership, is leading a refresh of the board composition to ensure diversity of thought and experience, while enhancing overall giving.

Before joining AIChE, she focused her activities on raising six and seven figure gifts from corporate donors in support of IEEE educational initiatives for students from high school through university. Natalie also provided strategic counsel and relationship management in support of the IEEE Foundation's first-ever comprehensive campaign while leveraging her marketing background to craft unique and personalized communication pieces designed to steward and elevate major individual donors.

Prior to joining the nonprofit industry, she was responsible for account development for a global travel company. This included sales and marketing for both retail and consumer channels in North America. Natalie is a Board Member for the New Jersey Chapter of the Association for Fundraising Professionals, one of only eight AFP Master Trainers in New Jersey, and former President of Greater New York Mensa. She received a Bachelor of Science, Marketing and Bachelor of Arts, Performing Arts from Alfred University.

Natalie is a member of the Vestry of All Saints' Episcopal Church, in Scotch Plains, NJ and was volunteer campaign chair, successfully endowing her sorority's AKO Womens' Leadership Awards at Alfred University, Alfred, NY. Natalie lives in Westfield, NJ where she raises two daughters, Madelyn and Erin, with their cat Snowball.

Contribution by Soni Oyekan

Dr. Henry Thomas Brown – A Christian, Family Leader, Fellow and Founder Extraordinaire

I can still remember my first meeting with Dr. Henry T. Brown. We first met at an American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) national meeting in the early nineteen-eighties. Not only did I find him to be quite debonair, he also left a lasting impression of being both friendly and caring. His attire was unmistakably striking on that special day. He wore an impeccable business suit, a beautiful shirt, a colorful stylish bow tie to complement the shirt and a differentiating beret to complete his ensemble. Henry Brown approached me, introduced himself and personally welcomed me to the meeting. He followed that welcome with an invitation to attend the Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) of AIChE. Dr. Brown and several past presidents of AIChE were working to establish, maintain and use MAC to promote diversity in the AIChE membership.

My main goal then of operating at the national level of AIChE after my time at the New Jersey chapter level in the early nineteen-eighties was to function within the Petroleum Refining (16A) section of the Fuels and Petrochemicals Division (F&PD). Henry Brown supported such personal goals. He was, however, focused on urging attendees from minority segments of the US to join in strengthening MAC for the benefit of future generations of underrepresented and marginalized groups of the US. His magnetic personality swayed all that Henry Brown targeted. He was an experienced organizer, and a leader who was quite effective in encouraging AIChE leadership to support his ideas and concepts. When I began to attend MAC meetings, I observed that the great organizer, Henry Brown, had attracted an interested group of ardent supporters that included past presidents of AIChE in the nineteen-eighties. Dr. Brown instituted the scholarship program for students from marginalized groups of our nation so that they could study in universities and become chemical engineers. He funded the program with his own money and encouraged his employer, Polaroid, and AIChE to assist in funding the program. He encouraged MAC members to help solicit funding from their employers. With his drive, energy and astute leadership, the success of MAC was assured, and it has been realized. AIChE honored Henry Brown with so many awards for his pioneering and leadership work in promoting diversity in AIChE membership before that necessary transformation began to take hold in the business world.

Sometimes we meet colleagues at AIChE national conferences and are too busy to fully engage. The obituary of Henry Brown enabled me to realize the source of so many other salient features of our leader. His nurturing in the Christian faith, a lifetime service in various roles in his Church, his leadership years in the civil rights movement, confirm what we now know about him. His life was driven by a set of commitments to make this world a better place for all in the universities, at the companies where he worked, in the places where he lived and in AIChE.

Dr. Brown was a true pioneer in a variety institutions and companies. He was the first African American to graduate with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Cincinnati in 1955. After completing his master's degree program in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Henry worked as the first African American



Contribution by Soni Oyekan

Development Engineer for the Exxon Research and Engineering company in Linden, New Jersey. He later joined E. R. Squibb as the first African American engineer at E. R. Squibb and Sons company in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He worked there for 24 years, ascended to the position of Corporate Manufacturing Manager of Polaroid company, and retired in 1996.

With such seemingly overwhelming array of commitments to institutions, companies and the people around him, I was interested to learn a bit about his relationship with his family. We had all shared great times with Henry and Melinda Brown at several AIChE conferences, and I felt that I needed to know about his relationship with his children. I have now learned a lot like most of us about their son, Gregory Elias Brown, and daughter, Dr. Mary Allyson Grayson. Mary Allyson and Gregory both fondly discussed how their father encouraged their interest in music, trained them fully for life and bestowed them with the necessary foundation to succeed and enjoy life. They are fully cognizant of the fact that they have been benefactors of great love, training and education by their parents.

Dr. Henry Brown fully exemplified the great teaching from the Bible which admonishes us to “let your light so shine before the world that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven”. Henry Brown’s stellar contributions inform us to further the work of our founder extraordinaire. The Henry T. Brown and Melinda C. Brown Endowment Foundation is appropriately named for a giant and pioneer of our chemical engineering institute and industry and his wife. We still visualize Henry Brown with his bow ties and berets at AIChE annual meetings. What an enviable, unique and remarkable way to remember our friend, our mentor and leader.

Soni Oyekan*

Soni Oyekan Bio

*Dr. Soni Oyekan is the President and CEO of Prafis Energy Solutions and a world-renowned expert in oil and gas, and oil refining. Oyekan was a corporate process technologist for Sunoco, Amoco and Marathon Petroleum Corporation and provided technical and managerial services for over 20 oil refineries within a 20 year-period. He has contributed significantly in the use of catalysis and chemical engineering in oil refining. Oyekan has 5 US and 10 global patents on platinum catalysis and naphtha reforming. Over the past 43 years, and including those of his consultation services, he has provided engineering, technical, and operational services in oil refining and associated businesses. Dr. Oyekan is a Fellow of AIChE, the 2008 recipient of the AIChE William Grimes award, and the 2009 recipient of the Percy Julian award from NOBCChE. Oyekan is a graduate of Yale and Carnegie Mellon universities.



GWEN PEASE PRESENTS
MELINDA WELLS AND HENRY BROWN,
KING AND QUEEN OF THE
MARDI GRAS



