

# REPARATIVE HISTORIES AND THE BLACK EXPERIENCE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



While Elaine Johnson became the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Maryland, College Park in 1959 we know that this single event was the result of decades of advocacy, demands, and many other Black students attempting to gain acceptance into the university.

The Reparative Histories and the Black Experience Oral History Project seeks to collect narratives representative of Black experiences at the University of Maryland. We're conducting oral history interviews with students, faculty, staff, as well as community members from the surrounding areas. In preparation for these interviews, we've compiled extensive archival research with a decidedly focused view on student and local newspapers and yearbooks. We bookend this project between the first Black UMD student in the 1950s and the organizing around the murder of Lt. Richard Collins III. This period encompasses major global and local social events and movements such as the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, the Antiwar Movement, the modern Black Studies Movement, and the current movement against all forms of state sanctioned violence. While our stories often focus only on our struggles, adversity, and perseverance, we want to explore the fullness of Black life by also capturing moments of Black creativity and joy.

We recognize that academic archives often omit or do not capture the experiences of Black students, faculty, and staff on predominantly white campuses. Our project is reparative in that we recognize these omissions and gaps in the records and histories of UMD and we strive to repair these errors by collecting and depositing the oral history interviews that provide a more nuanced and complete picture of the university's story over the years.

We want to open dialogue with Black alumni about multiple facets of their experiences. We want to hear about your academic, social, and political experiences and thoughts at UMD. Were you a member of a campus or community organization? Were you a commuter? An athlete? What do you remember about your time at UMD?

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED  
IN SHARING YOUR  
EXPERIENCES AT UMD  
PLEASE COMPLETE OUR  
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QR CODE.

