

BPIA BULLETIN

The Newsletter of the Association of Black Professionals in International Affairs

About the Association

BPIA is a charitable, non-profit membership association founded in 1989 to increase the involvement of African Americans and other people of African heritage in international affairs.

Founder, Barbara C. Patterson

President, Sylvia Stanfield, U.S. Ambassador (ret.)

Vice President, Business and Economic Envelopment, J. Calvin Williams

Vice President, Education and Exchange, Brenda Arrington, DBA

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Ambassador to HBCUs, Shanelle Chambers Haile

Board Members-at-Large

Lassine Cherif

Alexandria Maloney

C. Steven McGann, U.S.

Ambassador (ret.)

Earl Yates

What's Inside

BPIA is heading down the homestretch of 2017 at full speed, having opened the fall season with its biggest and possibly best International Career Expo on October 4 at Howard University. Read about the most recent presentation of this increasingly popular event on page 3. As we approach the November annual meeting, we want to better acquaint you with the dedicated volunteer BPIA Board members who are re-animating our 28-year-old organization. Meet them on pages 2 and 5. The Educational Development Center, featured on page 6, is the international workplace in the spotlight in this *Bulletin*. What does it take to realize a successful career in today's U.S. Foreign Service? A mid-career professional offers some insights on page 4. And whatever became of those lucky recipients of BPIA scholarships? Read about two of them on page 7.

"On the Calendar," found on the inside back cover, offers information on international affairs events sponsored by BPIA, as well as other organizations throughout the DC metropolitan area. Find all this and more inside.

BPIA Bulletin is a quarterly publication. Persons interested in contributing/subscribing to the newsletter should email the Interim Editor, Dr. Michele Cisco Titi, at upwardway17@gmail.com.



Meet the BPIA Board

These dedicated people (in random order) are generously investing their time, expertise, and energies in building BPIA.

Cynthia Johnson, Historian - A 23-year Board member, Cynthia has variously served as Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Chair of the Nominations Committee, Member-at-Large, and Vice President for Professional Development. In her work life, she is Assistant Dean for Continuing Medical Education at the Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



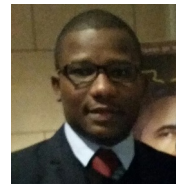
Ambassador (ret.) C. Steven McGann, Member-at-Large is Founder of The Stevenson Group, a consulting firm that advises clients on expansion into global markets. At the State Department, his positions included U.S. Ambassador to the Republics of Fiji, Nauru, Kiribati and the Kingdom of Tonga and Tuvalu. He is a visiting scholar in International Studies and a Trustee at Claremont McKenna College, and previously served as an International Affairs Advisor and Vice Chancellor at the National Defense University.



John Calvin (Cal) Williams, Vice President, Business and Economic Development - Cal retired from the IMF African Department after more than 20 years of service, having achieved the rank of Senior Economist. He served three years as the Resident Representative in Zaire, and four in the same capacity in Mali (1998-2002). Prior to the IMF, he was a commercial lending officer at the Chase Manhattan Bank with assignments in Paris, Geneva and London. After graduating from Kansas State University (1968) with honors, he served two tours as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger (1968-71) and Morocco (1971-72).



Lassine Cherif, Member-at-Large, came to BPIA in 2010 as student member and volunteer. He subsequently joined the BPIA staff as Membership Coordinator and IT manager. In that capacity, he managed the organization's IT infrastructure and communication system. Lassine is an IT consultant focusing on International Development. He holds a Bachelor's in Information Technology from the University of the District of Columbia, and will begin studies toward a Master's in Information Technology at Georges Washington University in spring 2018.



Earl Yates, Member-at-Large, served as BPIA President 1994-1996. He has more than 30 years of international affairs experience, having held leadership positions in the U.S. Air Force, the Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps, and the African Development Foundation. He was Executive Director of the non-profit Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance and Senior Vice President at the Academy for Educational Development. He holds a B.A. from Howard University, an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Southern California, and did post-Master's studies at Johns Hopkins SAIS.



Cory Bullock, Treasurer, is a humanitarian policy advocate. He currently serves as an information officer at (USAID), where he focuses on humanitarian response efforts in East Africa, with an emphasis on Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia. Prior to USAID, Cory worked at MicroVest, an asset management firm, on increasing access to microfinance in



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2017 International Careers Expo

By Cierra Saylor

Hosted by BPIA in cooperation with the Association of Black American Ambassadors (ABAA) and Howard University's Ralph Bunche International Affairs Center on October 4, the International Careers Expo was an event to remember. Graduate and undergraduate students from several area universities and colleges — including a busload from the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore — as well as young professionals came together to network and learn more about international career opportunities.

Participants met representatives of international employers including the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Peace Corps. They also met representatives of the Payne and Rangel Fellowship programs. They heard great international career advice from four panelists: Sean McIntosh, U.S. Foreign Service Officer and Pickering Fellow; Dr. Sandile Hlatshwayo, Economist, International Monetary Fund, Asia Pacific Department; Ambassador (ret.) Charles Ray; and Youshea Berry, Attorney, United States Agency for International Development (USAID). A few take-aways from the discussion:

McIntosh: “You really have to determine your own path... Serving in a career of international affairs for people of color reflects the representation of America. I’m honored to go overseas and represent the United States... Regardless, the shock on individuals faces persists.”

Hlatshwayo: “Be sure to take advantage of your network. If you can, do a thesis. It shows that you can create your own work and follow through while also showing a skills set. Start to develop your mentor relations now and learn to lean on your cohort... Showing up everyday and striving to make it your best day is what differs you from being mediocre to being spectacular. Your voice is absolutely necessary in these spaces, especially given what’s happening in 2017 in this [global affairs] space.”

Ambassador Ray: “Decide who you are and don’t let someone else decide for you. You go over, around, or through whatever obstacles get in your way. You wake up every morning excited for the next obstacle and for what you do... Keep an open and inquiring mind. Think back to when you were 5 or 6 years old, when you were always exploring. Try not to lose that or try and recapture as much of it as you can. In building relations between cultures, the ability to see the interesting aspects of something strange is the greatest thing you can have.”



Berry: “Be ready to lead at any opportunity... Be prepared and do your homework; whenever you go to meet someone, [determine] what you want to get out of it and what you can provide them.”

At the Expo, pictured from left: Youshea Berry; BPIA Board Member, Earl Yates; BPIA President, Amb. Sylvia Stanfield; Sandile Hlatshwayo, Sean Macintosh, Amb. Charles Ray

She's the New Consul in Durban

In September, BPIA Bulletin caught up with Sherry Sykes in the immediate wake of her second wedding, and in the midst of final preparations for her departure on a three-year tour of duty as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer in South Africa. She will serve as Consul General, the U.S. representative to Kwa-Zulu Natal, the country's second most populous province, at the Consulate in Durban. We wanted to get her perspectives on what it's like to serve in the American diplomatic corps today.

By way of background, Sykes (*right*) is the daughter of two parents who served in the U.S. Navy. Her family traveled “all over the U.S.,” but not abroad. After graduating from an arts high school in Chicago, she went to Stanford University, where she majored in African and African American studies and international relations, with a focus on African languages. At Stanford she met her first husband, a Tanzanian, and had the first of three children. The baby was born in January of her senior year; Sykes graduated in June!



After graduation, she worked domestically for several non-profit organizations. Eventually, she was awarded a “full-ride” fellowship to Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government for her accomplishments in the non-profit sector. There she earned a Master of Public Administration degree in organizational behavior and design.

In 1997, she moved to Tanzania with her then-husband, found employment with the World Bank, and later with USAID, as a local contractor working in private sector development. Aiming to take her career to the next level, she took the written Foreign Service Officer examination in Dar-es-Salam, then returned to Chicago for the oral exam. Passing both, she opted for assignment as a management officer. Overseas assignments have taken her to Lagos, Addis Ababa, and Durban (three times). Her U.S. tours of duty included time at the Bureau of Oceans, the Environment and Science.

About her work, we asked the new Consul:

Q: *What is the nature of your duties?*

A: “I will oversee every aspect of work” [at the Consulate]: “Homeland Security for ports; HIV/AIDS cultural and educational exchanges, commerce, U.S. citizen services and services to South Africans coming to the U.S.” She will supervise a staff of 42 American and local employees.

Q: *What qualities does a person need to do well in this work?*

A: “Flexibility, eagerness to learn, the humility to know that you don’t know. You have to be humble enough to be consultative. You need to be willing to work hard, for example, as in wearing three hats, and to be a team player.”

Q: *Are there any downsides to the job?*

A: “Because it’s so public, I’ll no longer have a division between my personal and private life. It’s a 24/7 job, and there are no peers.”

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Q: *What do you love about it?*

A: The “breadth of engagement with the province. Every day will be different. I’m so excited about the top notch team I’ll be joining.”

Q: *What does anyone who might be interested in this type of work need to know?*

A: “That no two foreign service careers are the same. Each person designs and builds their careers. You bid for your country of assignment and job. You decide what you want to do.”

Q: *How did you meet your new husband?*

Michael (Jordan) and I met when we were both on assignment five years ago in Mozambique. (Jordan, an engineer, is with USAID.)

Meet the BPIA Board

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[Cory Bullock, Treasurer] Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, and at the U.S. Department of Treasury on economic and development policy efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa. He holds an MA in International Development from the Johns Hopkins University SAIS, and a BA in International Studies from Emory University.

Ambassador (ret.) Sylvia Gaye Stanfield, President, was the first African American to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam. Focusing on Asian affairs during her career of more than 30 years in the U.S. Foreign Service, she had assignments in Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and New Zealand. A native Texan, Amb. Stanfield earned a B.A. in Intercultural Studies from Western College for Women (OH). As an East West Center grantee, she received an M.A. degree in Asian Studies from the University of Hawaii, and continued her studies at the University of Hong Kong School of Oriental Studies and Linguistics. She also attended the State Department’s School of Advanced Chinese Language and Area Studies in Taiwan.



BPIA acknowledges with deep gratitude the service of our outgoing Board Members: Brenda Arrington, DBA, Vice President for Education and Exchange; Leroy Jackson, Secretary; Rhonda Ferguson-Augustus, Assistant Treasurer; Shanelle Chambers Haile, Ambassador to HBCUs; and Alexandria Maloney, Member-at-Large.

Wait for It...

In collaboration with the U.S. African Development Foundation, BPIA held a very well-received Business and Economic Development Africa Outlook Forum on November 21 at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The program focused on the IMF’s most recent biennial Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Economic Outlook publication. Stay tuned for a full report in the next *BPIA Bulletin*.

Attention BPIA Members: Are your annual membership dues current?

Full-time Student: \$20 General Member: \$50 Sustaining Member: \$195 Institutions: \$2,500

Mail payment to: BPIA/PO Box 55922/Washington, DC 20011

Workplaces of Note in the DMV: EDC (Education Development Center, Inc.)

This is the second in a series of articles on places in DC where the work focuses on international affairs.

On a narrow Georgetown street in a large modern office building, *BPIA Bulletin* recently found Deirdre Jennings-Holton (right) and Carrie Lewis (below) at their workplace, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). The 60-year-old non-profit designs, implements and evaluates programs to provide educational, health and economic development worldwide. In addition to Washington, EDC has main offices in Chicago, New York City, and Boston, and conducts its work in 20 countries. Jennings-Holton is an International Recruiting Manager, and Lewis a Senior Project Director in EDC's International Division.



EDC staff work in a wide range of positions at the Washington office. There are international project coordinators, project directors, technical advisors (subject matter experts), financial analysts, IT specialists, administrators and more. Educational requirements for positions range from bachelor's to doctoral degrees. There are also paid and unpaid internships.



Why do the two women like working at EDC? “The people are the backbone,” said Lewis (left). “The atmosphere in the office is welcoming of different ideas. The work is always interesting. You have opportunities to learn new things, and to work across our U.S. and international divisions.” Jennings-Holton recalled, “At a previous job, I felt like I had to ask if I could wear braids. Here, I feel that I can be my whole self.” She described her colleagues as “passionate about what they do ... really motivated... We’re treated as professionals,” she added, “not micro-managed.” She values the

“collaborative” environment.

Both women followed indirect routes into their international careers. After college, Jennings-Holton worked in human resources and law firm recruiting, but “wanted something more meaningful.” Learning from a State Department friend about a need for recruiters in international development (she had been unaware of the field as an undergrad), she pursued that lead into her first international recruitment job. Lewis spent a decade in New York City schools as an early childhood teacher, but “I had always had a deep interest in the international sphere,” she said. That interest would lead her from a sabbatical year honing her French skills in West Africa to educational consultancies in the Middle East, then back to Africa “before finding a home at EDC.” She’s been there 10 years.

Of her employer, Jennings-Holton noted that EDC is “interested in opportunities for organizational collaboration and informational exchange,” and is “very thankful for BPIA” in that connection. She said that EDC is recruiting for international projects and other positions. Importantly, she describes the non-profit as “one of the most inviting and inclusive organizations” for applicants of diverse backgrounds. “For young black professionals looking to get into international development,” she observed, “I couldn’t think of a better place to start or continue their careers.” (Learn more at <https://www.edc.org>.)

On the Calendar

Saturday, December 9 - BPIA Professional Development and Mentoring Forum and Annual Members' Meeting at the United Negro College Fund, 1805 7th St., NW, Washington, DC 20001. **Forum, 10:00 am -12:00 noon; Lunch 12:00 noon; Annual Meeting, 1:00-3:00 pm**

Monday, December 11 -Salon Dinner Series - "Women in Foreign Policy" 6:00-8:30 pm, National Press Club, 529 14th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005, 202.662.7587

Tuesday, December 12 - Author Series, Friends of the Shepherd Park Library - Ambassador Harriet Elam-Thomas speaks on "Cultural Competence in Foreign Affairs" from her new book, *Diversifying Diplomacy: My Journey from Roxbury to Dakar*. 6:30 pm, Shepherd Park Library, 7420 Georgia Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20012, 202.541.6100

Monday, December 18, forum, "Western and Chinese Infrastructure Development Abroad," live and webcast, Center for Strategic and International Studies, DC. See <https://www.csis.org> for full info.

From the Scholarship Alums

Recently we were delighted to make contact with two recipients of BPIA Scholarships. We wanted to find out what they've been doing.

Lois Harmon (right) received her BPIA Scholarship in 2011 while studying at Florida A&M University. She used it to fund Spanish language and cultural studies at the Menendez Pelayo International University in Sevilla, Spain. In addition to the academics, Harmon said, her program provided "an incredible immersion into the Spanish culture." Importantly, she observes, "it sparked my teaching and scholarship interests in supporting second language acquisition for students who are English learners." Currently, she is a scholar focusing on teacher preparation for literacy development of ESL students, and Coordinator of the Master of Arts in Teaching program at William Jessup University in Rocklin, CA.



Dominique Waters (left) was a music student at Central State University in Ohio when he received his BPIA Scholarship in 2010. A singer, he used his award to fund his participation in an Oberlin Conservatory of Music summer study program in Arezzo, Italy. "I had never been on a plane before," Waters said of his journey. He learned Italian, studied with renowned voice teachers, and performed in operas and other venues. "This experience helped me greatly both educationally and professionally," he said. "I was able to make lasting connections with other singers and faculty that I still cultivate to this day." Besides learning the power of networking, Waters said that in Italy he gained a lasting appreciation for cultural difference. He is employed at Louis Vuitton 5th Avenue Maison in New York, singing and planning for auditions, "seeking to find a balance between the stability of working while fulfilling my creative aspirations."

Join BPIA Today!

For a membership application, visit our web site at <http://www.iabpia.org>. On the Home page, click on **Become a Member.**

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