

UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON BLACK TRAILBLAZERS



The University of Scranton congratulates the Black Scranton Project on its inaugural Black Excellence Gala and is pleased to share University of Scranton trailblazer stories to spotlight *Local Black Excellence*.

Since spring 2021, The University of Scranton has convened an institutional Black history subcommittee of its Council on Diversity and Inclusion; the subcommittee's theme is: **Re-Membering Blackness at The University of Scranton: History as a Call to Action**.

The subcommittee seeks to examine the University's historical relationships with Black faculty, staff, students and the broader community as part of campus efforts to address anti-Black racism and foster greater diversity, equity and inclusion. Grounded in the University's Jesuit and Catholic mission, these efforts draw on notions of "moral memory" – the collective and moral act of remembering – and "metanoia" – a process of individual and community-based change, spiritual transformation, and renewal.



+ Institutional Black History Subcommittee Members (Academic Year 2021-2022):

- Peter Anderson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Marketing
- Julie Schumacher Cohen, Assistant Vice President for Community Engagement & Government Affairs (chair)
- Ravenne Cooper, Class of 2022
- Koebe Diaz, Class of 2022, Black Student Union Officer
- David Dzurec, Ph.D., Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences and Interim Executive Director of Slattery Center for the Humanities
- Colleen Farry, Assistant Professor, Digital Services Librarian, Weinberg Memorial Library
- Elizabeth M. Garcia, Esq., Special Assistant to the President, Executive Director for the Office of Equity and Diversity, & Title IX Coordinator
- Nicole Hoskins, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Theology/Religious Studies
- Aiala Levy, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History, Latin American Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies
- Ian O'Hara, Assistant Professor, Research and Instruction Librarian, Weinberg Memorial Library
- Michelle Maldonado, Ph.D., Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Special thanks to Glynis Johns, Founder and CEO of the Black Scranton Project, for her contributions and collaboration in sharing research relevant to the University's history.



Louis Stanley Brown, the first African-American graduate of The University of Scranton, then St. Thomas College, earned his commercial degree in 1919. Prior to matriculation, he attended St. Cecilia's Academy in Scranton. After graduation, he worked as a shoe shiner, a laborer in the coal mines and, later, for G.W. Brown, a local Black-owned trucking company. In 2016, the University dedicated the building at 600 Linden Street as Louis Stanley Brown Hall in his honor, and in 2021, the Louis Stanley Brown Black Student Union was formed to advocate for the needs of Black students, provide a safe space to engage in conversation about the Black experience, and provide leadership to foster community.



Louis D. Mitchell, Ph.D., the University's first African-American tenured faculty member, taught in the English department from 1961 until his death in 1989. Dr. Mitchell, who was also blind and a gifted musician, had a prestigious career in education after earning his bachelor's and master's degrees from Fordham University and Ph.D. from New York University. His scholarship covered such topics as African American literature, 18th-century literature, and he received numerous accolades including being named to the 1976 edition of "Who's Who Among Black Americans."



Karen L. Pennington, Ph.D., arrived at The University of Scranton in 1972 as part of its first coeducational class and may have been the first Black woman to enroll. Dr. Pennington graduated in 1976 with a bachelor's degree in history; in 1980, she became the first Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Activities at the University and later served as a member of the Board of Trustees. She served as Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life at Montclair University for twenty-two years before retirement. The University awarded Dr. Pennington an honorary degree in 2015.



Retired Lt. Col. Everett "Rhett" Jenkins, was born in Scranton and received a bachelor's degree in secondary education from The University of Scranton. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army in 1967, through the university's ROTC program, and went on to serve 22 years in the U.S. Army Infantry. While at the University, Col. Jenkins, also known as Rhett "the Jet," studied education, with membership in philosophy and history clubs, and played basketball; he was the only player to reach the 1,000-point club in two years. During the 1966-1967 season, he received numerous awards, including the Les Dickman Award. He was twice named to the Middle Atlantic Conference All-Star First Team and was inducted into the University's wall of fame in 1978.

