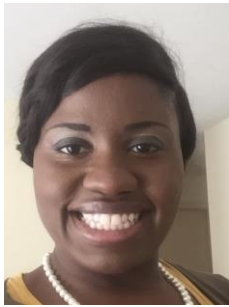


Jackson Heart Study Graduate Training and Education Center
Jackson State University

2018 SCHOLARS



Marcy Cage graduated with a Master of Public Health degree in the concentration of executive administration at the University of Southern Mississippi in May 2020. Marcy looks forward to pursuing a degree in medicine. She is a native of Louisiana, where she completed her undergraduate degree at Louisiana State University. Outside of academics, Marcy is very involved in the community providing organizational and operational expertise to various organizations.



Wynette Williams-Kirkwood is a first-year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at Jackson State University with research interests in maternal-child health, chronic diseases, and psychosocial factors. Her career goals include working in a hospital as a Clinical Psychologist for patients with chronic health conditions and assisting them with stress-management and coping techniques. She recently received her Master of Public Health (MPH) degree in Behavioral Sciences and Health Education from Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health in May 2018. While attending Emory University, Ms. Williams-Kirkwood was awarded a Diversity Supplement Research grant for her MPH thesis: “Complementary-Alternative Medicine among African-American Postmenopausal Women”. Ms. Williams-Kirkwood has previous research experiences with the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Jackson African-American Men’s Sexual Health Study, the Ronald E. McNair Scholar Program at the University of Mississippi, and Dartmouth College. In addition, she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Tougaloo College.



Meghan C. Brown, a Licensed Professional Counselor, is a first-year doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at Jackson State University. Meghan currently provides mental health and behavioral health consultation services for Mississippi Action for Progress, Inc. in Jackson, MS. She is responsible for providing direct care services, including initial child and classroom observations, individual mental health evaluations, Individual Therapy sessions, Family Therapy sessions, and Group Therapy sessions, to individuals with children and families in Mississippi Head Start Centers.

Meghan's clinical interests include African-American adolescent delinquency and multidimensional influences, such as assessment and treatment approaches. Her research interests include cultural differences in adolescent delinquency, implicit bias in mental health, health disparities, and the efficacy of programmatic interventions and prevention planning in mental health juvenile courts. She is particularly interested in developing culturally sensitive prevention and intervention programming tailored to meet the demands of low income and ethnic minority youth and their families, as well as identifying and addressing disparities in mental healthcare access and quality for diverse individuals and populations served.



Alexis Sherise Brown is a Master of Public Health Student with a concentration in Epidemiology. A Madison, MS native, Alexis graduated from Mississippi University for Women with a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health Education in May of 2018. She previously served as a student intern with the Mississippi State Department of Health in the Maternal and Infant Health Bureau assisting the staff with preparation for the safe sleep pilot project called, Safe Sleep City Jackson. Alexis is currently employed at Public Employee's Retirement System of Mississippi in Jackson, MS.



Kierra T. Jones graduated from the historic Tougaloo College in Spring 2018 with a Bachelor's of Science in Biology. Kierra has many leadership experiences that have molded her character. The most influential are serving as Miss Tougaloo and as an undergraduate Jackson Heart Study Scholar. As a Jackson Heart Study Scholar, Kierra took four courses centered around public health education. These courses exposed her to the role public health professionals provide to a community-one that physicians cannot provide alone. After the first course, I knew my interest was no longer only medicine

but public health as well. She is currently acquiring her MPH with a concentration in behavior health education and promotion. Kierra will enter UMMC's school of medicine in the fall. Originating from the MS Delta, she has seen communities that are riddled with health disparities and the effects of the lack of health education and maintenance. Kierra plan to not only practice

as a physician, but to also utilize her MPH to focus on preventative measures that emphasize prolonging life and promoting health in rural and underserved areas of Mississippi.



April Danielle Whitehead, a native of Port Gibson, MS, graduated from Alcorn State University in December of 2017 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry with a concentration in Biochemistry. April is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology from Jackson State University. She is employed with the Mississippi State Department of Health at the Thompson Public Health Lab where she works as a Mycobacteriology Laboratory Technician.



Kia Monique Jones is a young, rising public health professional and trailblazer born and raised in Jackson, MS. As a dean's list scholar, she has always aspired to lead, be successful, and to give her all. Kia is a product of Jackson Public Schools. She is a graduate of Provine High School and Jackson State University where she earned a degree in Biology with an emphasis of Pre-medicine. Miss Jones continued her educational advancement at Belhaven University, obtaining a Master of Public Administration. Currently, she is a Doctoral Candidate at Jackson State University pursuing a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree with a concentration in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Miss Jones is the Clinical Research Coordinator for Mississippi Center for Clinical and Translational Research at University of Mississippi Medical Center. Dedicating her life to improving the lives of others is very appealing to her. Miss Jones wants to consume knowledge and improve her abilities so that she may be an asset to diverse communities through public service. Kia's experience and expertise is leadership and innovation. Her expertise affords her the ability to strategically assist in advocating for those who are disadvantaged. She has embraced these ideas and created environments in which people are given the tools and resources to challenge the status quo, push boundaries and make a difference in the community of Jackson, MS, where she resides.



Jasmine Wheatley, M.S. a native of Vicksburg, Mississippi, born into a remarkable family that believed in the value of faith, family, and education. Parents Richard and Vera Wheatley encouraged her to be innovative, foster self-awareness, and to serve with vision and purpose. Jasmine graduated with honors from Alcorn State University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. Dedicated to reviewing the latest research in science and technology, she then continued her study of genetics and molecular biology by earning a Master of Science in Biotechnology. Her thesis project, *“Establishment and Application of a Virus-Free Sweet Potato Program for Limited Resource Farmers in Mississippi”*, described a new method of meristem technology that is currently in use. Deeply

moved by illness and disease in humanity, Jasmine enrolled as a doctoral student at Jackson State University School of Public Health with a concentration in Behavior Health Promotion and Education. Other notable projects include her service as a Medical Missionary in Reynosa, Mexico and Co-author of *Synergistic Interactions between Environmental Stressors in the Western Fence Lizard (Sceloporus occidentalis)*. Jasmine is highly involved in community relations. She is a frequent speaker at youth seminars, an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. where she serves as Chair of the signature program, CAP (College Admission Process). Member at Greater Grove St. M.B. Church, where she serves as Youth Director of Religious Education, choir member, hospitality committee member and health awareness committee member. Jasmine's Philosophy of Life is in scriptural reference to Romans 5:3-5. "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."