



Ebony Bobcat Network

Fall/Winter 2023

# Unforgettable!!

## The 2023 Ebony Bobcat Network Conference



***Conference Hosts: EBN Akron/Canton***

There was NO better place for Bobcats to be September 22-24 than at the Annual EBN Conference in Akron, Ohio. EBN National President Valerie Biggs Hill summed it up best:

"We were treated like royalty from the beginning--- smiles and welcome packets to the stirring sermon given by Brother Lyman at the closing on Sunday morning."

"Thank you, Tracy Carter, for your exemplary leadership as president of the Akron Canton Affiliate and your vision for this conference."



**Friday evening** kicked off with hospitality and a tour at the LeBron James Family Foundation's House Three Thirty, a newly opened multi-use community facility that promises to be a model for community and workforce development.

The opening was a nonstop "Happy Hour" of food, fun, laughter, picture taking, meeting new friends, reacquainting with the old, attaching a "zoom face" with a real live person and a tour of House Three Thirty, noted Biggs-Hill.



# An Unforgettable Business Meeting

The best of EBN was on display at **Saturday morning's business meeting at the Akron Board of Education Building.**

- Attendees enjoyed a delightful breakfast catered by a local Black-owned business, followed by a welcome from Dr. Michael Robinson, the Superintendent of Akron Public Schools.
- Affiliate presidents and national committee chairpersons reported on their successful year of alumni engagement, fundraising, and student-parent engagement.
- EBN founders led the ceremony inducting Florida Bobcats as the newest affiliate.
- Ohio University President Dr. Lori Gonzalez, Jennifer Bowie, Associate VP of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving and Exec. Dir. of the Ohio University Alumni Association and Dr. Russell Morrow, Interim VP for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion all presented and opened the floor to questions and comments from the attendees. Their responses provided answers to questions and further inquiry to others. Jocelyn Johnson, OUAA Associate Director, Network and Volunteer Management was also in attendance.





# About Saturday Night...

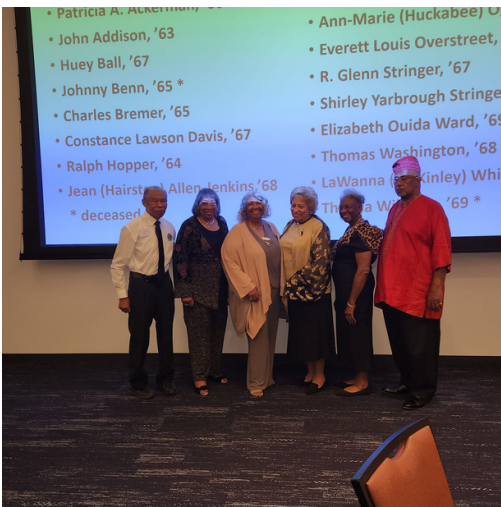


On **Saturday evening**, EBN conferees traveled to Canton's Pro Football Hall of Fame for the conference banquet. And what a surprise to see the greeting on the Jumbotron: "Welcome Ohio University Ebony Bobcat Network."

The banquet was a celebration of EBN, including:

- Recognition of our EBN founders and reflections from the founders in attendance
- Presentation of certificates to affiliates acknowledging their charter dates
- Presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Tyrone Carr
- EBN Website Reveal
- Gratitude to and from our host Affiliate
- Video "final words" from our beloved Dr. Francine Childs, her last recorded interview by Devon Collins.

At the end of the evening, the Hall of Fame was closed to the public as Bobcats enjoyed self-guided tours of the venue.



[Click here to view Dr. Child's message](#)



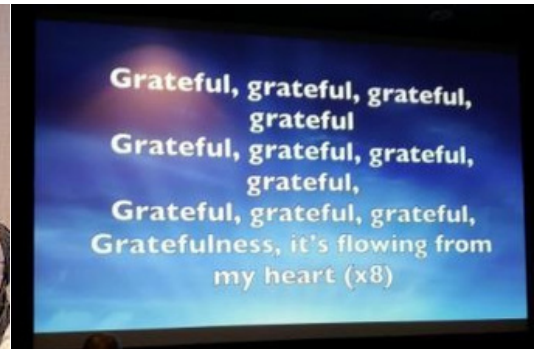
# Sunday Farewell: “Stay in the Fight”

**Sunday morning's Prayer and Alumni Farewell** concluded the unforgettable weekend. EBN Akron/Canton's Lyman Montgomery inspirational message, taken from Scripture in Nehemiah 4, was a challenge for EBNers to “Stay in the Fight.”

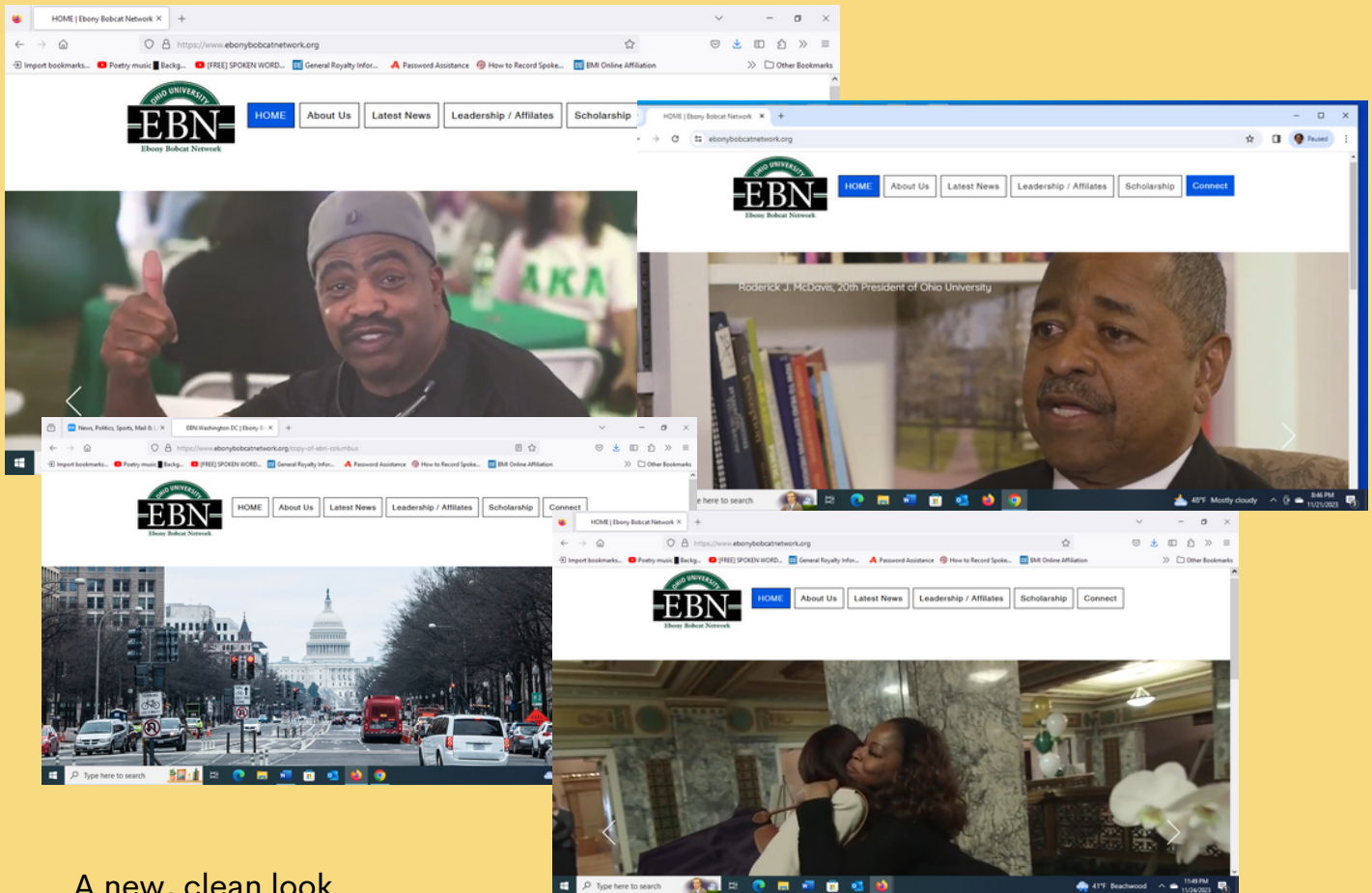
His message focused on 3 'P's:"

- *Planning* and the “audacity” of EBN founders that laid the foundation for the network.
- *Preparation* of policies/procedures that will position the organization for years to come... and to
- *Perform*: the challenge for present and future alumni and those yet unborn to “Stay in the Fight...until we hear the words “Well done thy good and faithful servant.”

[View Lyman Montgomery's message here](#)



# Come, Explore the New Website: [ebonybobcatnetwork.org](http://ebonybobcatnetwork.org)



A new, clean look.  
Memorable video experiences.  
Easy navigation on desktop and mobile devices.

Find all of these on the Ebony Bobcat Network website, revealed during the September EBN Annual Conference Banquet. The website is the one-stop information source for Ebony Bobcat Network fundamentals: About Us, the Latest News, Affiliates, Scholarship and How to Connect.

Special thanks to Adam Stephens, who designed the visually appealing, easy-to-navigate site. Adam is a member of EBN Akron/Canton and serves on the National Communications Committee.

Look out for more enhancements in the months to come....and SPREAD THE WORD!

Visit the website here: [ebonybobcatnetwork.org](http://ebonybobcatnetwork.org)



# A Great Time to Give to the EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment

**The OHIO Match ends June 30, 2024, providing \$.50 for every dollar  
Committed to the EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment**

Through The OHIO Match, launched in July 2013, Ohio University has pledged up to \$25 million to strengthen its endowed scholarship program by providing \$.50 for every dollar committed to eligible scholarship endowments, which includes The EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment. The OHIO Match will continue to match gifts and pledge gifts to eligible endowed scholarship accounts through June 30, 2024.

This is why alumni and friends are encouraged to support the EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment between now and June 30, 2024! As an example, a donor can pledge \$6,000 to the scholarship and if that gift is honored by June 30, 2024, it will be OHIO Match-eligible for \$3,000. This will increase the value of the Scholarship Endowment by \$9,000!

The screenshot shows a donation interface. On the left, a green banner reads "Give To Support Diversity and Inclusion at Ohio University" and mentions the Division of Diversity and Inclusion. On the right, there are buttons for donation amounts: \$18.04, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$1,000. Below these, a text input field shows "100.00". A note asks if the gift is in honor/memory of someone. There is a checkbox for "Make this gift recurring". A "Designation" dropdown menu is set to "Ebony Bobcat Network Urban Scholarship-En". An "Add Another" link is at the bottom right.

## Here's how YOU can Give:

### 1. Give Online @ [give.ohio.edu](https://give.ohio.edu)

Click the "Give Now" button.

Enter the amount, then in the "Designation" box, type in "Ebony Bobcat Network Urban Scholarship Endowment" and complete the transaction.

### 2. Give By Phone

Call 800.592.3863 Monday through Friday, 8am – 5pm EST

### 3. Give By Mail

Mail a check payable to TheOhio University Foundation  
EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment must be written on the memo line.

Mail to:

The Ohio University Foundation

P.O. Box 869

Athens, Ohio 45701

### 4. EBN Affiliates will also accept donations and forward those donations to Ohio University.

# EBN AFFILIATE NEWS

## *Affiliates Team Up with OUAA and OU Admissions for Fall 2023 EBN Connects*



The flyer for EBN Connects features the Ohio University logo and EBN (Ebony Bobcat Network) branding. It announces a free virtual event for prospective students, families, current students, and alumni on November 9, 2023, from 6pm to 7:30pm ET. The event promises insights from successful OU alumni who are business executives or owners, including a panel of featured alumni. A 'Register Now' button and contact information for Tekela Howard are provided.

**EBN CONNECTS**  
A FREE VIRTUAL EVENT FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, FAMILIES, CURRENT STUDENTS & ALUMNI  
November 9, 2023 - 6pm - 7:30 pm ET

Experience Ohio University through the reflections of successful OU alumni who are business executives or business owners.  
Also hear from Undergraduate Admissions, a current student and a representative from the Multicultural Center.

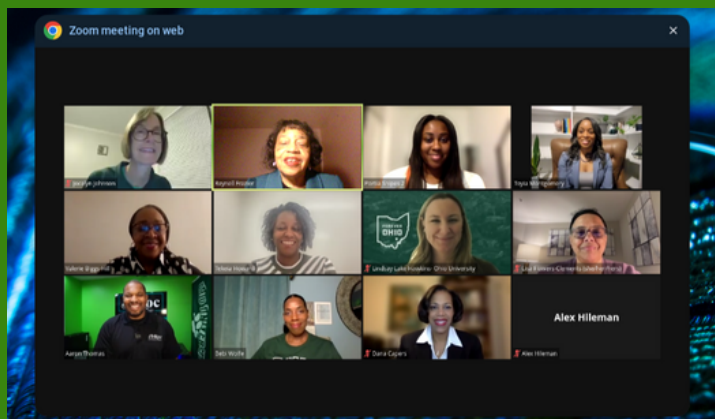
[Register Now](#)

Questions? Contact Tekela Howard @ [ebncincydayton@gmail.com](mailto:ebncincydayton@gmail.com)  
[More Info](#)

**Featured Alumni Panelists:**

- Dana Capers, Vice President, Community and Economic Development, Fifth Third Bank
- Toylia Montgomery, CEO, Good Vibes LLC
- Aaron Thomas, Owner, A-Roc Entertainment LTD

EBN affiliates collaborated in November with the Ohio University Alumni Association and the Office of Admissions to host Fall 2023 EBN Connects, a virtual event for prospective students, families, current OU students and alumni. The webinar focused on executive leaders and entrepreneurial alumni that are leading change and impact in their respective industries. Panelists included Dana Capers, Vice President-Community and Economic Development Fifth Third Bank, Toylia Montgomery, CEO Good Vibes LLC, and Aaron Thomas, Owner of A-Roc Entertainment LTD provided valuable insight regarding their Ohio University experiences as well as information about their career paths.



Lindsay Lake Hawkins from Admissions reviewed the application for admissions process and offered a fee waiver for applicants in attendance. Lisa Flowers Clement from the Multicultural Center discussed support services available for students as well as for families and prospective Bobcats when they visit the campus. Bebi Wolfe served as moderator and Portia Snipes was the chat monitor. EBN President Valerie Biggs Hill shared information about the Ebony Bobcat Network and opportunities to support scholarships for diverse students. Tekeia Howard was event chairperson.

EBN Connects continues to receive accolades for its efforts to continue to build community and recruit diverse scholars from around the country.

Thanks to EBN host affiliates Akron/Canton, Cincinnati/Dayton, Cleveland, Columbus and Washington DC for coming together to present EBN Connects.

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## EBN Akron/Canton

### *Father's Day Brunch Celebrates Men Who Honor, Mentor, Coach Others*

On Sunday, June 18, EBN Akron/Canton hosted its inaugural Father's Day Brunch at the Akron Urban League. Sixty-five people were in attendance to celebrate men who accept the honor to father, mentor and coach others. Dr. Patricia A. Ackerman and Huey Ball were in attendance to represent EBN founders.

The event featured OU alumnus Dr. Greg Hill as master of ceremony, Leon Harris as the lead interviewer, and Dru Joyce who shared his fatherhood and coaching journey.



### [Ebony Bobcat Network Akron/Canton](#)



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## EBN Chicago

### *"Ambitions Project" Students Network with Alumni and Small Business Owners*

EBN Chicago affiliate president Clarence Harris III collaborated with two of the 2022 EBN award recipients, Ohio University Professor Nicole Smith and Jeremy Wright, to support the Multicultural Students Business Caucus's (MSBC) "Ambitions Project."





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## EBN Chicago

### *"...Ambitions Project" continued*

The event was a 4-night, 5-day experiential learning experience trip to Chicago for the MSBC executive board to recruit, engage and retain Ohio University Alumni and prospective students.

Chicago Bobcats hosted the group of current OU students and alumni in a networking and panel discussion with small business owners and entrepreneurs. A meet and greet reception followed the panel discussions. This was the second of four planned site visits, with Florida and Atlanta intended for 2024.



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## EBN Cincinnati/Dayton

### *Bobcats Meet Up for Reggae Night*



In August, members of EBN Cincinnati/Dayton met up at Reggae Night in Cincinnati's Washington Park. Bobcats enjoyed Reggae sounds, networking, and sampling Jamaican food, including Just Jerks food truck, owned by Bobcats Ashford and Alicia Hayles. Jackie Colvard, Candice Higgins and Allison Hunter were event co-chairs.

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## EBN Cincinnati/Dayton

### *College Prep Workshop, Canned Food Drive Highlight Activities*



On November 11 Adriane Carter represented EBN Cincinnati/Dayton at the Annual College Prep Workshop that is hosted by the Cincinnati Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Beta Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi. Adriane joined Adam Lankford, OU Regional Admissions Officer, as they interacted with students and families about enrolling at Ohio University.



EBN Cincinnati/Dayton hosted a canned food drive for the Madisonville Education and Assistance Center. Alumni helped collect more than 205 pounds of food. It was a wonderful day to connect with Bobcats, including with the Center Executive Director, the Community Outreach and Program Support Coordinator and the Financial Assistance Program Manager---all proud Ohio U. alumni. Bobcats do care! Allison Hunter and Linda Thomas were event co-chairs.



[Ebony Bobcat Network Cincinnati/Dayton](#)





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## EBN Cleveland

### *"Tina" Musical Theater Party Raises More than \$1,400 for EBN Endowment; Bobcats Partner with OHIO HCOM for Halloween Trunk or Treat Giveaway*

EBN Cleveland celebrated the life and legacy of Rock and Roll icon Tina Turner by sponsoring a theater party at the Broadway musical, "Tina." "We danced, sang, laughed and cried, and the pace of the show and audience frenzy never let up," said Lynn Charles, EBN Cleveland president. The spectacular evening ended with a cast and audience group sing-along. 'Then we all left the theatre singing "Rolling on the River," and when we reached our cars, we tuned on our Tina Turner Pandora station.' The price of tickets was a moderate \$75, and 118 EBN members and supporters attended the show, netting \$1,452 for the EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment.



Nine EBNers participated in a night of Trunk or Treat Halloween fun for 918 children and their families. The event took place at the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine in the South Pointe Hospital parking lot. Bobcats passed out candy and snacks to a parade of superheroes, monsters, princesses and more, thanks to the generous donation of cash and candy from EBN Clevelanders. Special thanks to the donors as well as the volunteers who showed up in their OHIO gear to help.



[Ebony Bobcat Network Cleveland](#)





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## EBN Columbus

### *EBN Columbus Beautification Project Supports Historic Poindexter Village; Annual Family Fun Day Held at Columbus' Largest Entertainment Center*

EBN Columbus participated in the Ohio University Alumni Association's annual Beautification Project on May 20. This successful event was held at the Poindexter Village Community, the first public housing project in Columbus and one of the first in the United States. It was named after abolitionist Baptist Minister James Preston Poindexter who lived and practiced in the city of Columbus. EBNers partnered with Tifani Hendrick, an OU alum who works for Urban Strategies, the non-profit community planning organization that oversees Poindexter Village. Nearly thirty volunteer residents, gardeners and friends joined the OU Bobcat family to clean, plant flowers, provide healthcare information and other support. Sponsoring partners donated a variety of health and wellness items, gardening tools, fresh produce and snacks. Homage, a retailer of sports and pop culture apparel, graciously donated the tee-shirts. Ryan Vesler, Homage founder and CEO, is an OU graduate. Traylene Hines, EBN Columbus President and Mallory Righter, OU Columbus Alumni Network President, continue to work together on events that support both organizations. "Clearly, it takes a village," said Hines.



Scene 75 Columbus, the largest indoor entertainment center in Columbus suburb Dublin, hosted 20 OU Bobcats, family members and friends on June 3. Traylene Hines, EBN Columbus president, provided an overview of EBN highlighting the importance of membership and raising money toward the Urban Scholarship Endowment Fund. Congratulations to Eric Brown and Tifani Kendrick who have bragging rights until next year in winning two \$25 Bobcat Store gift cards

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## EBN Florida

### *Statewide Florida Bobcats Become Newest EBN Affiliate*

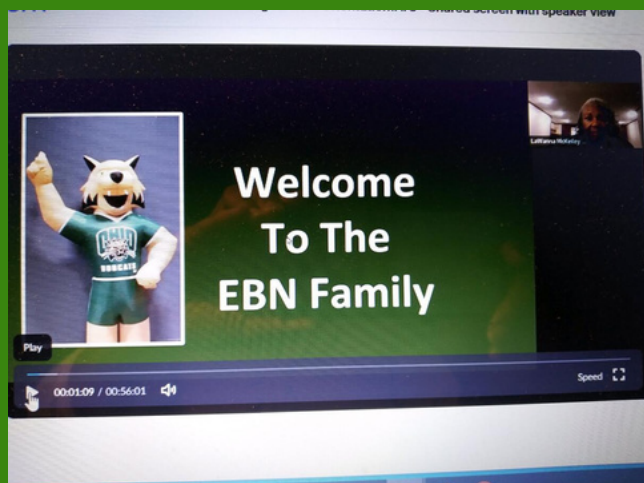
Inspired by the popular EBN Breakfast at the 2022 Ohio University Black Alumni Reunion in Athens, Ohio, Wil Laws, Geoff Green and Valerie Green accepted the challenge to form an all-Florida affiliate.

The trio brainstormed and created a list of Black alumni/potential Floridian EBNers and organized a gathering in Orlando at "Spice Affair," a Black-owned business located in a venue called The Hall on the Yard.

Bobcats from around the state attended the first meeting on March 18, and participants agreed that Valerie Green and Wil Laws would be co-presidents. Other attendees included Meta Wilson (Laws), Keisha Holloway, Pattye Sawyer, Regina McCants-Rose, Karla Terry-Crumbly and Camille Reynolds-Lewis. All in the group attended Ohio University on the Athens campus in the 1980s.

Upon arrival at the venue, attendees received a bag of Ohio University gear provided by Clarence Harris, who also served as the group's coach. Wil Laws and Meta also provided attendees with a gift bag of mementoes. Then, after months of mentoring from Lisa Earley and Clarence Harris, coaching from LaWanna White McKinley and a series of 3 virtual orientations from the EBN leadership team, the Florida Bobcats participated in a virtual induction ceremony during the September EBN Annual Meeting, and on September 29 became the seventh EBN affiliate.

Since the induction, Florida EBNers attended the Tampa Bay Rays baseball game with the Tampa OUAA organization and established connections with that group, and are working on planning the affiliate's first event in February or March 2024.





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## EBN Washington DC....aka EBN DMV

### *Bobcats Team Up with DC Alumni for a Day of Service, Celebrate Huey Ball at Salute to an EBN Founder Meet Up*

In May, EBN Washington DC Bobcats teamed up with the Nation's Capital Alumni Network to provide a day of service at the Carpenter's Shelter in Alexandria, VA. Alumni volunteered to serve lunch for the Family residents and perform other services to support the homeless who use the shelter to shower, use the laundry facility, receive counseling, and other support services.

EBN Washington DMV hosted "A Salute to the Founder" event honoring EBN Founder, Huey Ball. When affiliate leaders learned Huey was planning a visit to DC, the core team decided to honor him with a meetup to celebrate his being a founder, hear about his OU student experience in Athens in the 60s, learn how EBN got started, and listen to his vision for EBN's future. Huey is confident that EBN has a strong future supporting Black students at OU. The gathering of Bobcats and their families took place at the Crab Deck restaurant on Kent Island, Maryland where guests enjoyed some of what Maryland is renown... steamed crabs and crabcakes.



### *A New Name*

Four affiliate members attended the September EBN National Conference. At the conference, fellow Bobcats began referring to the DC affiliate accurately and affectionately as the EBN "DMV" (an abbreviation for District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia). So in December, the EBN National Board unanimously agreed that the affiliate will become known as EBN DMV.

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# Become a Dues-Paying EBN Member Today

## Support Our Important Work

**YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP  
MATTERS**

The Ebony Bobcat Network has grown! The number of affiliates around the country has increased, and we couldn't be more thrilled!

Thank you, alumni, for your support and commitment to honor the heritage and contributions of preceding and present generations of persons of color who attended or are attending Ohio University. EBN is planning for an even more successful new year, and you can help us to continue to grow.

**Any person who attends or attended Ohio University, or supports the mission of the Ebony Bobcat Network, and pays the annual \$50 membership dues is a member.**

**The \$50 membership dues supports the operations of EBN, enabling the organization to:**

- **Engage alumni** via communication, fellowship and EBN programmatic activities.
- **Connect alumni with prospective and current Ohio University students and families** with the goal of increasing recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation of African American students.
- **Host outstanding awards programs** that recognize the accomplishments of Black alumni achievers.
- **Support fundraisers and other philanthropic efforts** that build our endowment and assist OU students.
- **Sponsor informative, engaging annual conferences.**
- **Maintain the EBN website** and development of the bi-annual e-newsletter.

**So, join us in this very important work!**

**New supporters can register their contact information using the QR code here:**



**Annual \$50 membership dues are made payable to the "Ebony Bobcat Network National."**

**1. Online electronic Zelle payments using the QR Code:**



**2. Check/Money Orders are made payable to: "Ebony Bobcat Network National"**

**Memo Line "Membership Dues"**

**Mail to:**

**Ebony Bobcat Network National  
P.O. Box 18177  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118**

# *EBN Recent Graduate Spotlight*

## **Imani Smith**

Imani Smith, '19, is a native of Cleveland, Ohio. After graduating from Ohio University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, she relocated to Virginia to obtain a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Since her time in Virginia, Imani has served in several capacities, including workforce development, community redevelopment, and mental health services. She completed her Masters program in August of 2022 and is currently a licensed Resident in Counseling. Imani aspires to serve underrepresented communities providing resources to educate individuals on the importance of mental wellness, particularly among people of color.

Imani is the proud owner of OneFlow Notary LLC, offering general notary and loan signing services. In addition to her career efforts, Imani serves on the board of the JLE Jr. Foundation as the public relations chair. volunteers at a local women's shelter, and is a leader in Impact Student Ministries at Transformation Church VA.

In her leisure time, Imani enjoys spending time with friends and family, exploring new places, and baking. Imani currently lives in the Hampton Roads area in Virginia and is a clinician for the City of Virginia Beach providing therapy services to children and youth.



# OU Black Heritage: The Facts



**Martha Jane Hunley Blackburn**

**1916: Martha Jane Hunley Blackburn becomes Ohio University's first Black female graduate when she receives her bachelor's degree in education summa cum laude.**

*Upcoming Event*

**Alumna Book Discussion**

**Thursday, February 1, 2024**

**7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom**

**Veanise Gina Ruffin Moore, '79, will discuss her book, *Cincinnati: The Black America Series*, which provides a history of Blacks in Cincinnati. Moore will also discuss her career as a broadcast journalist. Since earning a bachelor's degree in journalism, she has been news director at more than five Cincinnati radio stations, a correspondent for the former National Black Network, and a freelancer for the Associated Press, Cincinnati Enquirer and The Cincinnati Post. In 2012, Moore received a master's degree in HR, Development and Training from Xavier University (Ohio).**

**Registration for this event will be sent out in mid-January. If you do not receive the registration information by mid-January, please email [ebncincydayton@gmail.com](mailto:ebncincydayton@gmail.com) for the registration link.**



# EBN @ OU Homecoming 2023





# Snapshots @ the EBN Conference



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