RACE, GENDER, & THE VOTE

NOTES ON BLACK WOMEN'S POLITICAL SELF-CARE

A Review Essay by Stephanie Y. Evans
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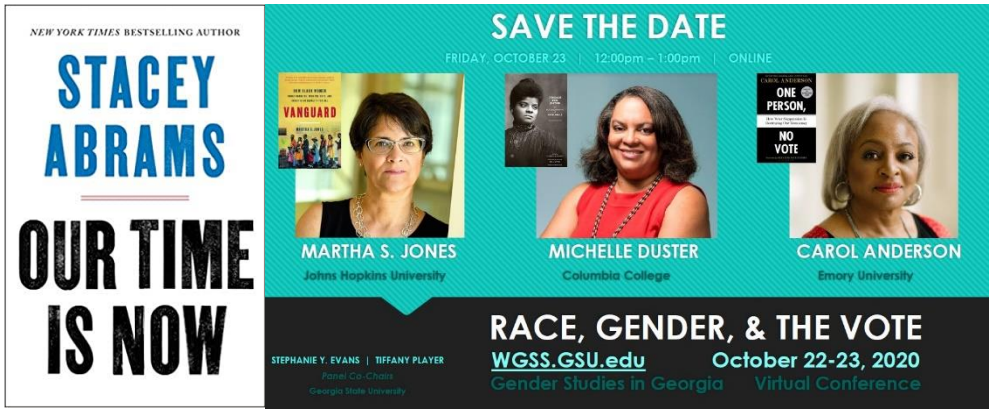
***Our Time Is Now: Power, Purpose, and the Fight for a Fair America*, Stacey Abrams (2020)**
With *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All*, Martha Jones (2020); *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, Afterword by Michelle Duster (2020); and *One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy*, Carol Anderson (2018)



I'm haunted by the song from *Hamilton*, "The Room Where It Happens." I'm haunted by the deals that White men made in pubs—from planning a new nation's capital to institutionalizing capitalist structures. I'm haunted by the declarations made in halls championing the virtues of freedom by those who built a government on the backs of enslaved Africans. I'm also haunted by the rooms where many of the slaveholding "Founding Fathers" raped Black women and girls (as Thomas Jefferson did with Sally Hemmings)—no one else was in the rooms where that happened, either.

Reading *Our Time Is Now: Power, Purpose, and the Fight for a Fair America* (2020) by Stacey Abrams encourages me to think about other rooms, too. Rooms that can be populated by those once deemed property, less than human, or unworthy of enfranchisement. Rooms where Sally Hemmings' daughters make the proclamations. Rooms where women like Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi of Black Lives Matter, LaTosha Brown of Black Voters Matter, as well as a growing cohort of Black and women of color legislators, work in concert with one another to make sure freedom for all is a real thing, in government houses, on the street, in markets, and in our own homes. In this critical political moment in the history of the United States, Black women are organizing in our own rooms. From national sorority gatherings, teacher rallies, and healthcare offices to academic conferences, strip clubs, and protest marches—Black women are organizing to stroll to the polls in our own way and on our own terms. This engaged movement for freedom, liberty, justice, and participatory democracy is far beyond what the slaveholding framers could have imagined. But here we are.

Georgia's Stacy Abrams is a lauded political phenomenon, but she is not an aberration. Abrams is a well-trained and highly experienced legal scholar, creative writer, serial entrepreneur, consistent public servant, and political activist, with unabashed aspirations of being elected to the highest political offices. Yet, her work and her writing can best be understood within a continuum of Black women public figures from the last two centuries. Though she is not a replica of anyone who has preceded her, Abrams can only be understood if we consider Boston's Maria Stewart, Chicago's Ida B. Wells, Mississippi's Fannie Lou Hamer, and New York's Shirley Chisholm, among others.

In a historical context, Abrams operates within a tradition of political activism that fights for equal citizenship and opportunity, voting rights, and diverse representation. Fairness is her motto, and she demands not only attention to disenfranchisement but also to a fair census for the equitable allocation of resources. In a contemporary context, Abrams writes alongside a cadre of scholar–activists, including Martha S. Jones of Johns Hopkins University (author of *Vanguard*), Carol Anderson of Emory University (author of *One Person, No Vote*), and Michelle Duster of Columbia College (great-granddaughter of Ida B. Wells and author of the Afterword in a new edition of *The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*). Abrams sits alongside public figures of the past, as well as alongside critical voices of the present, which positions her for an unprecedented level of leadership in the future. Some consider her to be special, and she was rumored to be a potential pick running mate for Joe Biden. But, she is no different than an army of dedicated Black women, all of whom demand and work for social justice every day.

Published in June 2020, just months before the presidential election, *Our Time Is Now* is Abrams's second book. Like her first book *Minority Leader: How to Lead from the Outside and Make Real Change* (2018), *Our Time Is Now* is part leadership guide, part personal narrative, part legal primer, part entrepreneurial manifesto—and entirely a calculated intervention into the state, regional, national, and global systems that have (unsuccessfully) insisted that she stay in her place and out of the way. She is, with steady purpose, following the playbook written by those who came before her and walking a line that is, by her own admission, not at all progressive but far from conservative. Her work is documented in real time by those who recognize her aggressive political approach.

Stacey Abrams writes unapologetically as a Black woman who wants not only to sit at the decision table but to sit at the head of it. If the cards are going to be stacked, she wants to be the dealer—and she is playing for the house.

Fighting for Fair Leadership: "The System Worked as Manipulated"

Given her list of well-documented grievances against unfair and manipulated government systems, it is understandable why Stacey Abrams has refused to remain quiet. In ten chapters, Abrams chronicles how "the system worked as manipulated" (21) not only to deny her the governorship in Georgia, where she would be the first African American woman to be elected governor in the US, but also to systemically deny citizenship participation in three ways: voter registration, access to the polls, and counting (or not counting) votes. For each of these areas, Abrams gives numerous examples from the state of Georgia, as well as from states like Texas and Florida and foreign nations, including Brazil and India, where similar tactics are used to subvert democratic

participation. Abrams shows how operatives are "Stealing America's Future" (the first chapter's title), which includes instituting barriers to accepting various types of voter ID, rejecting automatic or same-day registration, not providing enough voting machines or open polling places, gerrymandering (drawing districts to choose voters and manipulate outcomes), and cherry picking thousands of votes to throw out (to impact the outcomes of districts and, thus, states). Abrams challenges these practices and advocates clearly for an inclusive politics that represents the diversity of the United States. Her plan demands enfranchisement and rights not only for African American voters, but also for immigrants, Native Americans, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized populations of, you know, Americans. Everyone should be counted, and everyone should be considered for opportunities to represent themselves, their state, and their nation.

In the book, Abrams looks back to her own family, who hailed from Mississippi, and she recounts her grandmother's fear of voting after decades of violent intimidation with police dogs and water hoses. Abrams includes her own story of progressing through college, graduate school, and law school, as well as through leadership preparatory programs, which gave her the skills necessary to operate in different levels of political office and business. The book is a primer to the government of the United States and is chock-full of details about the history of voting Amendments (like the Nineteenth, which extended the franchise to women, and the Twenty-Sixth, which lowered the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen as a result of Vietnam War-era protests) as well as the origin of gerrymandering (a tactic in operation since 1812, when a man named Elbridge Gerry drew his district in Boston, Massachusetts, like a salamander—hence Gerry-mandering). Abrams analyzes the rise of what she calls "authoritarian populism" (231), the idea that "elites" aren't letting American be great (again?), which she traces to the demise of the 1965 Voting Rights Act as a result of the 2013 Supreme Court case that dismantled basic protections. Though she is not a radical, Abrams advocates for transformative politics and lauds progressive politicians by name, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York, Ayanna Pressley in Massachusetts, and Sharice Davids in Kansas. (To this list I would also add Cori Bush, the Ferguson, Missouri, Black Lives Matter activist, who is now a very engaged presumptive representative.)

Abrams offers a roadmap, "The Playbook" (Chapter 8), which, instead of moving us "back" to a recognizable government, will, rather, move us forward to a more effective and just one. Her recommendations include: making voting a national holiday; giving paid time off to vote; getting rid of the Electoral College; pursuing unlikely (inactive, unregistered, or unsolicited Black, Latinx, and Native American) voters and not only the elusive swing (presumed White) voters; rejecting the zero-sum strategy of abandoning voters of color in order to appease White voters; encouraging new leadership to "run as you are" by being authentic, honest, and aggressive (not changing your tone or message with different audiences); and educating, activating, and agitating (138–39). When assessing this critical moment in political history, Abrams lays out the need to do three things: first, to elect a new president; second, to diversify government at all levels to more accurately represent the nation; and third, to institutionalize the means of safeguarding the process for active and engaged citizens.

In a highly publicized and contentious 2018 gubernatorial race in Georgia, Abrams did not win the seat but refused to concede. One book reviewer in the *Wall Street Journal* panned *Our Time Is*

Now as essentially a tantrum by a sore loser with a "weak argument" against voter suppression because "state officials" are operating in the interest of the people and must do their job by purging voter rolls. Abrams charges that "state officials" of Georgia, like Brian Kemp (who refused to step down as Secretary of State while he oversaw an election in which he was a candidate), are the ones who have abdicated their duty to the people. Abrams makes people uncomfortable because she provides a detailed chronicle that traces the injustices of the state at every level. And, she just won't accept defeat. But, she is not the first, and her book is only one book in a library of documentation.

The Vanguard: Frontline Resistance to Structural Violence

In *Vanguard*, Martha S. Jones offers a succinct, yet detailed overview of Black women's public voice. Though many of the women Jones traces are familiar to historians (Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Rosa Parks, and Shirley Chisholm), she shines new light on the intricate details of how they used the "pulpit, podium, and pen" to pave the way for voting rights. Jones restructures the historiography of the Nineteenth Amendment in order to place it within a broader trajectory—one that revolves around Black women's participation. In doing so, she highlights the experiences of cultural, institutional, and interpersonal violence against the Black women who spoke out on their own behalf (Jarena Lee), sought to organize women nationally (Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin), or demanded leadership positions, whether in Black (male) churches, (White) women's organizations, or White, male-led abolitionist societies. New Jersey preacher Jarena Lee, Pennsylvania abolitionists Susan Paul and Sara Mapps Douglass, and Hester Lane of the American Anti-Slavery Society are some of the names brought to the fore. This history rescues the narrative of a quest for citizenship from the reified dates of the 1848 Women's Convention in Seneca Falls (where Black women did not attend) or the 1920 Amendment (which did not guarantee Black women equal access to the ballot). The book moves through figures like Rosa Parks in the Civil Rights Movement and representatives like Chisholm and ends with Abrams, who Jones notes "has moved between office holding and advocacy with equal parts skill and persistence" (247). Like Abrams, Jones traces her own family history, dedicating *Vanguard* to her third great-grandmother, Nancy Belle Graves, who was born enslaved in Danville, Kentucky, in 1808. Jones archives instances of civic activism and voter suppression in her own family, including an 1890 Greensboro newspaper that listed the names of Black voters as an intimidation tactic. Like Abrams, Jones notes that the story of voting is personal and political. In sum, Jones's subtitle suggests that one goal of Black women's political agenda for self-preservation is "equality for all."

Along with other activists included in Jones's book, Ida B. Wells is a towering figure of political engagement. In the Afterword to a new edition of *The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, her great-granddaughter Michelle Duster presents Wells's legacy. Wells entered into public activism after three of her friends were lynched in 1892. This event offers insight into the history of violent suppression, which is also newly documented in Carol Anderson's *One Person, No Vote*. Together, Duster and Anderson offer individual and institutional accounts of the systemic voter suppression decried by Abrams and historicized by Jones.

Michelle Duster adds personal and familial knowledge to detailed accounts by historians like Paula Giddings and Mia Bay. In the Afterword, she recounts her own journey as a writer and filmmaker, growing into her own as she also grew into the task of legacy preservation. In *The Autobiography*, Ida B. Wells provides an incredibly well-documented account of her crusades, mainly against lynching but also as an advocate for African American organization-building (Wells was a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)) and as an advocate for women's suffrage. Born to enslaved parents in Holly Springs, Mississippi, in 1892, Wells makes apparent the impact of voter intimidation to her story. After emancipation, the former plantation owner expected Wells's father to vote Democrat (the conservative party at the time). When he did not, he was locked out of his home. Losing both of her parents to the yellow fever epidemic, she became guardian of her siblings and began to work as a teacher to support them. Her narrative details how she sued a railway after she was forcibly ejected from the ladies car. When she moved to journalism from teaching, she subsequently turned her attention to the subject of lynching. Three of her friends, who owned a grocery store, were lynched, presumably because of their success. After Wells relentlessly reported the story, her press was burned down, and she moved from Memphis to Chicago. Years later, she published *The Red Record* (1895) and traveled nationally and internationally to promote the cause of anti-lynching and equal rights for Black people and women. Wells was a researcher *par excellence*: her journalistic prowess was on full display in the minutiae she recorded to tell her own life story. Wells pushed her way into the suffrage movement discourse, dominated by White women; she insisted on fighting for voting rights for Black women as vehemently ash she fought against the lynching of (mainly) Black men.

Carol Anderson's *One Person, No Vote* is a contemporary example of the type of detailed research and reporting to which Wells dedicated her life. Anderson, whom Stacey Abrams acknowledges personally in her book, displays the same professionalism, unyielding advocacy, and determined fact-tracking about voter suppression as Wells did in her writing on lynching. Anderson gives the history of disenfranchisement (Chapter One), rooting up the 1890 Magnolia Plan in Mississippi, which originated much of the "fraud and discrimination" still experienced today. Arranged thematically, across five chapters, a Conclusion, and an Afterword, Anderson's book lays out how systems have been purposefully set up to keep Whites in power and Blacks from voting. As Anderson describes it, real people, at all levels of town, county, city, state, and federal office, have willfully cheated marginalized groups in order to limit their rightful access to representative government. Anderson names violent acts by racist mobs, court cases, abuses by Sheriffs, and all manner of injustices, which led to the need for the 1965 Voting Rights Act. As a historian, Anderson pulls no punches: she labels the manipulation of Florida ballots and the Supreme Court case that handed the 2000 election to George W. Bush "treachery" (36); shows the coalitional resistance, including Native American rights organizations, that is at the forefront of those who "Warrior Up" (162); and targets Brian Kemp of Georgia directly in a searing analysis of how he "rigged" the election and stole the governorship from Stacy Abrams (163). Anderson, a professor at Emory University, is unflinching in her scholarship. One of her previous books is titled *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (2016), and, in it, she places blame for the unstable state of our nation at the feet of white supremacy—or more accurately, white domestic terrorism. Her first book, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (2003), provides a stable foundation to her collection,

offering the fundamental argument that the problem of civil rights abuses is that they are part and parcel of human rights abuses. We must focus on universal human rights if we are truly to address the civic and social ills we face.

A Critical Moment in the History of "WTF* America"
(*White Supremacy, Threats of Violence, and Fraud)

The morning after the first presidential debate, held on Tuesday, September 29, 2020, Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) tweeted, "Everyone around the world is probably waking up to the debate highlights, thinking 'wtf America.'" Watching the few parts of the debate that I could stomach, I indeed thought, WTF America?! I concluded that those three letters summed up the ongoing challenge of the democratic project of the United States: white supremacy, threats of violence, and fraud.

Specifically, comments by the impeached 45th President of the United States clearly represented the position of white supremacist extremists, like the hate group "the Proud Boys." After the debate, that group immediately shared his message of "stand back and stand by" as an accepted charge to subvert the democratic process that would ensure a fair vote for fair representation in a diverse nation. Threats of violence have included promises of voter intimidation by armed patrollers at the polls, cars running over protesters during resistance marches against racism and police brutality, and a foiled plot to kidnap the Governor of Michigan after armed demonstrations at the Michigan state capital. Fraud by state and federal leadership has ranged from tax cheats (a supposed millionaire—billionaire, maybe, who knows?—paying $750 in taxes and never being held accountable for the untold amounts of missing funds or the millions owed to those who intend to harm the United States), court packing (blocking over one hundred Obama nominees for state courts, only to hurriedly fill them once the next president was elected and then writing an admonition blocking future leadership from—guess what?—court packing), voter suppression (restricting registration or access, including fake ballot boxes or setting boxes on fire in California, upholding the one-box-per-county court ruling, or allowing for disproportionately long lines in Georgia at predominantly Black polling places), or the outright stealing of presidential elections (targeting voter counts, rejecting ballots, and calculated targeting efforts, like when, according to the *Washington Post*, in 2000, a team of lawyers, which included John Roberts, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Comey Barrett, were all employed to ensure the Supreme Court ruled in George W. Bush's favor). At every turn, conservative charges or presidential complaints have been confessions of guilt.

Given the intersection of racism and sexism, Black women have had to rely on ourselves to fight the systems that harm everyone, but which hurt us in particular ways. In our case, political wellness and self-care means a collective understanding that, as a demographic, our fate lies only with us. Unlike a narcissistic conception of self-care, which occurs at the expense of others, the group experience and expression of Black women's self-care is often (though not always) understood as a collective body of resistance to the abuses of political, social, and economic power. Black women's acts of political self-care can be seen in the exit polls of the 2016 election and in consistently forthright assessments of a failing president's performance. In a CNN exit poll, 94% of Black women voted for Clinton, 4% for Trump, and 2% other. In a CNN poll from September

5–9, 2019, Black women's approval rating of the president was 3%, with Black men's approval at 15%, and White women's approval at 42%. Professor Angela K. Lewis-Maddox and a collective of Black women political scientists are "disrupting" conceptions and practices of politics by developing scholarship on the topic of Black women's resistance and self-care to expand understanding of Black women's political behavior.

As articulated in the title of the foundational text of Black women's studies—*All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave* (1982), edited by Akasha Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith—we most often have to be brave for ourselves. Both White women and Black men, given their one-step advantage to institutionalized race or gendered power, have too often traded away allegiance for identity politics—a notion established by Barbara Smith and the Combahee River Collective, which Abrams not only cites in her work but champions as a winning political strategy. Identity politics emphasizes race, gender, class, sexuality, and other characteristics as necessary elements of acting and voting in one's interest. For Black women, only our political engagement *as Black women* will adequately address the issues we face (and our engagement must more actively center lesbian, queer, transgender, disabled, poor, and other marginalized voices). Clearly, as argued by Kimberlé Crenshaw, and earlier by Maria Stewart, Frances E. W. Harper, and Anna Julia Cooper, no one else will seek to address our intersectional issues in public squares, courts of law, or houses of government.

Two weeks after the 2020 presidential debate, Amy Comey Barrett, the nominee to be the third Republican Supreme Court Justice of the current administration, sat before the Senate Judiciary Committee in a contested hearing. The hearing was held despite several factors that should have, in fairness, prevented it: voting for the 2020 election had already begun; Republicans blocked Merrick Garland's nomination, arguing Obama, as the outgoing president, should not nominate a lifetime appointee; immediate replacement was against the dying wish of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg; and the Senate had not adequately convened to offer aid for those suffering from a pandemic and crashing economy. The Supreme Court nominee declared herself a "textualist" and "originalist," confirming that she read the Constitution, "text as text," the way the shapers intended. On the year commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, the Senate is considering a "conservative" Supreme Court nominee who would conserve the conditions that would have barred her from the position in the first place.

In the year of the Honorable John Lewis's passing, after a lifelong struggle to secure Black people's voting rights, several rich Black male rappers are jumping on a train to protect their individual tax cuts over the lives of Black people, even as some others (Common and Snoop Dogg) are joining community-based movements to amplify grass roots messages. Black women, as a demographic, have been the sole steady and unwavering opposition to this current administration. Scholars like Brittney Cooper clearly point out the compromises Black men are willing to make in exchange for power—especially financial freedom and dominance over women. However, that is not to say that Black women have not sold out Black lives too. Looking at Black women as a comparatively broad demographic of voters simply shows that those who do sell out—wholesale to "conservative" agendas that would conserve, among other things, the "good old days" of

segregation—are in the minority. Many more, honored in texts by Abrams, Jones, Duster, and Anderson, prevail in their forward movement, even if they are fragmented in their ways of doing so. As Carol Anderson's work demonstrates, Black women's research around voting rights is specifically an outgrowth of the fundamental need to rectify all human rights abuses. Black women's rights are human rights, and, collectively, these scholars embody, as Patricia Hill Collins has argued, a collective ethos of care.

The Room Where It Happens: The History and Legacy of Black Women's Political Self-Care

Black women are not a monolith. Not everyone wants to be in the room where it happens—much less in the house or property where political deals happen. I know and admire multiple Black women who are not fans of Stacey Abrams's pro-capitalist stance (as represented by her sponsorship of and by Bloomberg); who have challenged Abrams because she has refused to advocate defunding police; and who have criticized her defense of Joe Biden against sexual harassment claims. I also know and admire several Black women who can't stand Kamala Harris, criticizing her for her prosecution record and for being representative of the same repressive, neo-liberal capitalist structures that President Obama failed to dismantle, which fostered continued systemic murder of Black people without condemnation or without any serious, fundamental, structural challenge to police brutality. I know and admire progressive and radical women who are adamant that Barbara Smith and Nina Turner are more critical political leaders than Abrams and Harris. However, none of these Black women, radical or progressive, who insist that we move the needle further left than Abrams or Harris represent, would act so fundamentally against their own collective self-interest as to align themselves with the current would-be regime. As a Black women's studies scholar, I understand that Black women have mastered the art of coalition politics.

This semester at Georgia State University, I'm teaching a Feminist Theories course and one of the assigned readings is my favorite, from a daughter of Georgia herself, Bernice Johnson Reagon. Professor Reagon's essay, "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century," is published in Barbara Smith's *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (1983). She defines the work of coalition in social movements, differentiating between home space (a barred room where people who identify alike can gather in comfort) and coalition space (an uncomfortable place where people with different identities can gather to address several issues of relevance). She writes, "Coalition work is not work done in your home. Coalition work has to be done in the streets. And it is some of the most dangerous work you can do. And you shouldn't look for comfort. Some people will come to a coalition and they rate the success of the coalition on whether or not they feel good when they get there. They're not looking for a coalition; they're looking for a home!" Even as a political demographic, Black women are a diverse group of people who do not agree with each other, and sometimes have seismic fallouts, but who, for the most part, still manage to get work done.

There is a wide variant of positions by Black women: radical, progressive, or left-leaning liberals, as well as quite a few conservative stances. But, as the lack of justice for Breonna Taylor has shown us, a palpable and unmoving majority of Black women know we must take care of ourselves. As intimated by Megan Thee Stallion's *New York Times* Op-Ed piece, "Protect Black

Women," we all we got. The widely variant political positions of Black women are not a case of "Black women against the world." To the contrary, while we have collectively demonstrated time and again that we must protect ourselves, that does not equate to attacking others. It is fine if others want to come to our tables (there are many), but we are sick and tired of being abused at other people's. *Our Time Is Now*, *Vanguard*, *The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, and *One Person, No Vote* are simply a few of a multitude of books that have been written to advance the playbook of our Ancestors—in whatever disparate way they can.

The field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies turned fifty in the year 2020. To commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the WGSS program at Georgia State University, we partnered with the Southeast Women's Studies Association to host a "Gender Studies in Georgia" virtual conference. There were two plenary sessions and a keynote address. The first plenary featured Julie Shayne, the editor of *Persistence is Resistance*, and Judy Howard, an author included in that book, both of University of Washington, along with Beverly Guy-Sheftall, who wrote the Introduction. In her Introduction, Guy-Sheftall writes, "Feminist scholars must continue to conduct research and generate data to inform public policy debates and decision-making that will affect women and families in the US and around the globe." Stacey Abrams, a graduate of Spelman College, where Professor Guy-Sheftall has been a leader in the field and on campus since 1971, gave the keynote address, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment. Abrams is fulfilling the mandate set down by Guy-Sheftall and the generations of Black women educators who came before her.

As one of many who are seeking to claim power for themselves, Abrams's refusal to concede is, indeed, one of the few but important declarations that are reflective of African American women as a demographic. That is not to say that her voice is the only one needed because, as critical scholars like Barbara Ransby, Keeanga Yamahtta-Taylor, and Cherisse Burden-Stelly explain, representation is not enough if it doesn't challenge cultural capitalism, and plans built on race and gender analysis without class analysis are destined to fail.

My work on Black women's intellectual history has shifted to work on mental health and wellness. I am among several writers taking on the role of defining and practicing self-care, which womanist scholar Layli Maparyan defines as health, healing, and wellness. I listen to all Black women, but I only speak for myself. Abrams, and those with whom she is in conversation, are not only fighting for individual self-care, but for a collective understanding of community health, racial healing, and human wellness. When the world and nation is sick from colonialist hangover, it is time—our time—to begin to institutionalize wellness. I am glad that Abrams is pushing to be one of those in charge and in the rooms where government happens. To the extent that she ensures a wide participation of a coalition of diverse voices—including a diversity of Black women's voices—I will join those, like Anderson and Jones, who cheer on her quest for governmental leadership in Georgia and beyond. Like Duster, Abrams is a legacy keeper in the Wells tradition of crusading for justice.