African American Females
Zamani-Gallaher, Eboni M., Polite, Vernon C.

Published by Michigan State University Press

Zamani-Gallaher, Eboni M. and Vernon C. Polite.
African American Females: Addressing Challenges and Nurturing the Future.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/23536.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/23536
On September 26, 2008, Eastern Michigan University’s College of Education, the McGregor Fund, and the Office of Urban Education and Educational Equity sponsored a conference focused on African American females. The meeting was the second in the Courageous Conversations series, a follow-up to a 2006 summit that focused on African American males and that framed the development of the monograph *The State of the African American Male*. This educational conference provided an opportunity for K–12, postsecondary, healthcare, and community leaders to exchange ideas regarding programs, policies, and practices that shape the lives of African American females. One focus of the meeting was an effort to assemble key commentaries on social issues affecting Black girls and women. More than 500 participants joined in this one-day dialogue that offered insight, recommendations, and best practices for facilitating self-actualization among African American females across generations. *African American Females: Addressing Challenges and Nurturing the Future* is the product of this conference.

The following chapters illustrate the contributions of leading scholars with expertise in the areas of K–12 education, higher education, health, family, and
consumer science. Each of the contributors problematizes and situates the local, state, and national context as well as recommendations for policy and practice affecting African American females.

This work would not be possible without the support of the many organizations and individuals who sponsored or otherwise supported the summit that served as initial nourishment for this undertaking. Sincere thanks are extended to C. David Campbell, president of the McGregor Fund; former governor Jennifer M. Granholm; Ypsilanti mayor Paul Schreiber; Sue Martin, president of Eastern Michigan University; State of Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael P. Flanagan; and John W. Porter, former president of Eastern Michigan University.

Additional appreciation is offered to Sharon P. Robinson, president and CEO of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; Deborah Harmon; Cheryl Price; Michael Bretting; Casey Wooster; Paul Vuocolo; Erica Ginyard; Donald Loppnow; Freeman Hendrix; Caroline Sanders; Bill Miller; Kelly Quilter; and staff and students at Inkster High School and Mumford High School. Extra special gratitude is given to Sonia Sanchez for her furtherance and promotion of our efforts. Special acknowledgements are tendered to Martha Baiyee, Nancy Copeland, Marion Dokes-Brown, Doris Fields, Lynette Findley, Heather Neff, Toni Stokes Jones, M. Michelle Rosemond, Sharon Abraham, Carole Benedict, Denise Lilly, Shawn Quilter, Regina George, Beth Johnson, Virginia Harder, Jaclynn Tracy, Charnessa K. Paige, Donna K. Woodiel, and Patricia Williams-Boyd.

This text is a labor of love for several reasons. Our quest was to provide a depiction of African American females that had breadth and depth, illustrating the intersecting impact of race and gender as well as the myriad of competing influences on the lives of Black females. Early in the project, my mentor, dean, friend, and collaborator Vernon C. Polite fell ill and within months passed away. The progression of this venture was bittersweet. In him, I witnessed that hope has a face and that the difficulties of life provide opportunities for our spirits to be lifted, our faith to be renewed, and for wisdom to take root.

Vernon C. Polite was a wise man who lifted others as he climbed and a case in point for resiliency—a manifestation of African American determinism over centuries. Similar to our elders and ancestors, generations of African American women are the personification of resilience as the carriers of culture. It is my hope that the intersectionality of identities and the humanity and buoyancy of African American females comes to life for readers of this volume.