

Princeton University
Honors Faculty Members Receiving
Emeritus Status



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The biographical sketches were written by
colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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Howard Francis Taylor



Howard Taylor joined the Princeton sociology department in 1973, coming from Syracuse University, where he had taught since 1968 after three years as research associate and assistant professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. He earned his undergraduate degree in 1961 from Hiram College, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, and his Ph.D. in 1966 from Yale University. At Princeton, he had a profound influence in guiding the Program in African American Studies during its early years and in shaping the sociology department's undergraduate and graduate offerings in the study of race, social class, and gender.

To the many cohorts of Princeton undergraduates who benefited from his teaching, Howard is best known for his enormously popular SOC 241, "The Social Basis of Individual Behavior," in which his expertise in social psychology not only provided riveting material, but also persuaded high-achieving young scholars that they were shaped more by the social contexts in which they had been reared than they may have wanted to acknowledge. His sociological methods course became a mainstay of the department's undergraduate curriculum, teaching students how to design and conduct rigorous research and prepare them for junior and senior independent work. It was a course that attracted even students who were allergic to numbers. And his highly influential course on "Race, Class, and Intelligence in America," taught students to be skeptical of the very standardized tests on which they had excelled and to understand the role of these tests in perpetuating racial inequality. During the past decade alone, Howard taught more than 2,300 undergraduates.

Despite the popularity and size of his courses, Howard unfailingly gave of his time to mentor students individually, often holding office hours well into the evening. He played a central role in the lives of many African American students, serving both as a role model and friend, and he guided numerous students working on senior theses concerned with racial and gender inequality, discrimination, and social conflict. The titles themselves speak eloquently of their timeliness and importance: “Rehab vs. Incarceration: An In-depth Look at California Youth Correctional Facilities and Alternatives,” “Born to Breed: An Analysis of Black Teenage Motherhood,” “Who Controls African American Images in the Mass Media,” “Curb Servin’: An Analysis of Los Angeles Black Gang Culture,” and “Hindrances to Learning in Inner-City Public Schools,” to name a few.

Besides his undergraduate teaching, Howard worked with numerous graduate students who precepted in his classes and looked to him for guidance on their research. As a faculty colleague, Howard was known for his wry and sagacious wisdom at departmental meetings and on committees. He was a firm believer in telling it like it is.

But Howard was also a Princeton institution, more than just an esteemed member of the sociology department. He directed the fledgling Program in African American Studies from 1973 to 1988, playing a large role in establishing the basis for its continuing success and recent expansion. He served tirelessly on countless University committees, including the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, the Committee on Minority Affairs, the Human Subjects Review Panel, and as an adviser to the Caucus of Black Graduate Students, among others.

Beyond the University, Howard served on numerous boards, including the Board of Directors of the Congressional Institute for the Future, the Board of Trustees of Princeton Day School, and the Board of Trustees of Hiram College. He was a

member of the Advisory Board of the Princeton Chapter of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and a member of the National Advisory Council of the National Civil Rights Museum Hall of Fame. He was and is extraordinarily active in the profession of sociology, as anyone who attends the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association and the Eastern Sociological Society knows well.

Amidst all this, Howard's distinguished record of publication earned him and his department high distinction. He is especially well known for his book *The IQ Game: A Methodological Inquiry into the Heredity-Environment Controversy*, in which he demolished the rising popularity of arguments about race-based heritability differences in intelligence being advanced by Arthur Jensen and William Shockley, and for his earlier book, *Balance in Small Groups*, as well as for numerous journal articles and for his introductory sociology text, co-authored with Margaret Andersen. In 2000, he received the President's Award for Distinguished Teaching. He also received, in 1998, the DuBois-Johnson-Frazier Award from the American Sociological Association for distinguished research in race and ethnic relations; and in 1996 and 1997 served as President of the Eastern Sociological Society. In the 1998 citation for the DuBois-Johnson-Frazier Award, Howard was aptly described as a scholar with a "deep commitment to racial justice." Those of us who have had the pleasure of his collegueship at Princeton also know him as a person of true warmth and compassion.