

Catherine Meeks, Ph.D.

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Awarded the President Joseph R. Biden Lifetime Achievement and Service Award in August 2022, Listed by Georgia Trend Magazine as one of the 500 women to watch in Georgia in 2022

Retired Clara Carter Acree Distinguished Professor of Socio-Cultural Studies, Author, Community and Wellness Activist and Mid-wife to the Soul. Former Founding Executive Director of Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing

Educational Background: BA in Speech Education from Pepperdine University (Calif.) , Master in Social Work, Atlanta University (Ga.), Ph.D Emory University(Ga). MSW Thesis focused upon Jung, Afro Centrist and Oncology. Ph.D focus was on Jungian Psychology, African and African American Women's Literature. Dissertation: The Mule of the World: An Exploration into Sexist Oppression with Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker

Vocational Highlights: Taught African American Studies at Mercer University for 25 years where an interdisciplinary approach to issues of race, gender and class raised the consciousness of many students. In addition to this there were many opportunities to engage other issues as a professor in the Freshman Seminar Program, Senior Capstone Program, Human Services and Psychology Departments.

Following the Mercer tenure two years were spent serving as a Loaned Executive to the Mayor's Office in the City of Macon directing the Mayor's Youth Violence Task Force. During this time the high-profile nature of this volunteer job led to an invitation from Wesleyan College to join their faculty as the Clara Carter Acree Distinguished Professor of Socio-Cultural Studies. This position was held for nine years until retirement in 2008.

Community Involvement: The activities in this section coincided with the 34-year academic career which is highlighted above. Founding Director of the Lane Center for Community Engagement and Service at Wesleyan College, Director of Aunt Maggie's Kitchen Table, a family resource center located in a public housing facility, serving an underserved population and winner of the Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter Award for Community and Campus Partnership. Organizer of Standing on Their Shoulders: A Celebration of the Wisdom of African American Women, a nine-year project which identified and honored 100 African American Women and published a coffee table book highlighting their lives. Founding member of the Center for Racial Understanding, organizer of city-wide marches against violence, organized and implemented major community wellness fairs and events such as weight loss programs for indigent women and food and clothing drives. Created a library at Aunt Maggie's Kitchen Table and organized a project to allow the children in the housing complex to build home bookshelves and fill them with new books donated by a local bookstore. Along with this funding was acquired which made it possible for third grade students to participate in a writing workshop and publish their stories in individual books at the conclusion which were placed in their school library and provided a copy for them to take home.

Current Community Involvement: All of my current community work involves running the

Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing and allows me to do a wide variety of work. My current work includes organizing and implementing spiritual retreats and conducting workshops on a variety of wellness and spirituality issues, teaching courses on Jungian Psychology, racial diversity, cultural issues, and spiritual development. All of this work is being done under the mandate to help the Episcopal Church and any others who wish to engage our pedagogy to address the issue of oppression in their respective communities. This work is done locally, nationally, and internationally.

Partial List of Awards, Past and Present: Georgia Sociologist of the Year, Leadership Macon Alumnus of the Year, NAACP Earl Shinholster Freedom Fund Award, Distinguished Servant Leadership Award (Wesleyan College) Quillian Outstanding Teacher Award (Wesleyan College). W.E.B. DuBois Award for Distinguished Community Service, Spencer B. King Distinguished Teacher Award (Mercer), Career Women's Network Woman of Achievement, WMAZ Television Straight from the Heart Award for Community Service, Girl Scouts Woman of Achievement, 2022 Bishop's Cross Recipient from the 10th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

Awarded Honorary Doctor of Theology Degrees from Virginia Theological Seminary and Seminary of the Southwest in Spring of 2023 and a third degree will be conferred from the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University in October 2024.

Publications: Author of eight books with a 2022 publication titled **The Night is Long but Light Comes in the Morning: Meditations on Racial Healing**, Publication of Memoir: **The Quilted Life: Reflections of a Sharecropper's Daughter will be out in February 2024.**

Penned a bi-weekly newspaper column for the Macon Telegraph, and daily wellness vignettes which were read on the radio for one year Currently writes a bi-weekly blog and produces a podcast which are posted on the Center for Racial Healing website.