

The Legacy of Claudia Hampton, the Trailblazing Black Leader Who Fought for Affirmative Action

Donna J. Nicol uncovers the accomplishments of Hampton—the first Black woman trustee at California State University—and her fight to save affirmative action.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, May 7, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Donna J. Nicol sheds light on the remarkable achievements of Dr. Claudia H. Hampton in her new biography titled, "Black Woman on Board: Claudia Hampton, the California State University, and the Fight to Save Affirmative Action." Nicol is a professor of history at California State University Long Beach and an expert on U.S. higher education and the history of African American women's educational activism, having spent the last three decades researching these subjects.

Scheduled for publication on May 7, 2024, by Boydell & Brewer/The University of Rochester Press, "Black Woman on Board" chronicles the life of Hampton, the California State University (CSU) system's inaugural Black woman trustee, who later became the board's first female chair. Over two decades (1974-1994), Hampton spearheaded a relentless campaign to establish and protect affirmative action policies within California's public higher education system.

Hampton's story is one of resilience, grace, and an unyielding commitment to justice and equity. A visionary leader, she utilized her platform to champion marginalized communities and challenge prevailing norms, particularly amid the mounting white resistance to the 1960s Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. Meticulously tracing Hampton's career trajectory, Nicol spotlights her lesser-known yet equally significant accomplishments, including her appointment by President Reagan to the Advisory Panel on Financing Elementary and Secondary Education.

Nicol's work not only delves into the history of affirmative action but also explores the strategic tactics Black women educators employed as influential power brokers within predominantly white academic institutions. Offering unprecedented insights into university governance, Nicol unveils the subtle forces at play behind educational policy-making. From state legislators to influential benefactors, the decisions of these behind-the-scenes actors profoundly shaped the educational landscape during Hampton's tenure. "Black Woman on Board" examines Hampton's adept resistance to such influencers through what Nicol has coined "sly civility"—a strategic utilization of the soft power cultivated among Hampton and her peers to dismantle barriers that might have impeded the advancement and preservation of affirmative action policies.

In an era marked by renewed attacks on diversity initiatives and efforts to suppress conversations around race and identity, Nicol's work asks the timely question, "What lessons can we glean from the past to inform our collective struggle for a more just and equitable future?" Hampton's legacy provides an answer, inspiring readers to confront systemic inequities head-on and advocate for a more inclusive vision of public higher education. In illuminating the ways that Hampton and her cohorts transformed the CSU system, this book makes an important contribution to the history of higher education and the historiography of Black women's educational leadership in the post-Civil Rights era.



About the Author

Dr. Donna J. Nicol is the Associate Dean of Personnel and Curriculum and professor of history in the College of Liberal Arts at California State University Long Beach.

About the Book

"Black Woman on Board: Claudia Hampton, the California State University, and the Fight to Save Affirmative Action" by Dr. Donna J. Nicol offers a rare view inside the university boardroom, uncovering the vital role Black women educational leaders have played in ensuring access and equity for all. Published by Boydell & Brewer/The University of Rochester Press on May 7, 2024, it reflects on the accomplishments of Dr. Claudia H. Hampton—the first Black woman trustee at the California State University—and her twenty-year fight to save affirmative action.