

J. Blaine Hudson

1949 - 2013

Blaine Hudson will be remembered as a consummate administrator, scholar, teacher and activist. He impacted countless people with his intelligence, compassion, courage and commitment.

Born in 1949 in Louisville, J. Blaine Hudson began his fight for social change in junior high school, when he was refused admittance to a downtown movie theatre. At the University of Louisville, he demonstrated in 1969 at the Arts and Sciences Dean's Office (where he would later serve as Dean until the time of his death), demanding improvement in education opportunities for African American students. He and several fellow protestors were arrested and tried under the newly enacted Kentucky Anti-Riot Act. The charges were eventually dismissed, but Hudson was forbidden by the judge to return to campus for one year. He also lost his prestigious national AFL-CIO Scholarship because of his arrest record, although the organization sent him a letter in support of his position. Hudson was later allowed to re-enroll but lost credits for the semester in which he was expelled. After the Black Student Union made some gains on campus, its members expressed their community concern by founding "Stop Dope Now" in 1970.

Dr. Hudson was a lifelong Louisville resident. He earned his Bachelor of Science and Master degrees of Education from the University of Louisville. He earned his Doctorate of Education degree from the University of Kentucky. From 1974 to 1992, while teaching part-time, he held staff positions at U of L, including University Staff Grievance Officer.

He joined the faculty of the Department of Pan-African Studies full-time in 1992. He served as Chair of the Department (1998-2003) and as an Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences (1999-2004). In 2004, he was appointed Acting Dean of the College and, after a national search, was appointed permanent Dean in 2005. He served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Louisville from 2005 until his death in 2013.

Dr. Hudson's teaching and research focused on the histories and cultures of persons of African ancestry throughout the world, inter-cultural education, diversity, and the history and social psychology of race. He contributed to the establishment of international programs in seven countries. He was author of *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* (2002), and *Encyclopedia of the Underground Railroad* (2006) and coauthor of *Two Centuries of Black Louisville: A Photographic History* (2011).

During his career, he chronicled the history of African Americans in Louisville, served on boards and commissions across the state and worked to solve the problem of gun violence in Louisville. He conducted the research for 10 historical markers and served as a historical consultant for the Farmington and Locust Grove historic homes, the Muhammad Ali Center, and the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage. He served on the Board of Directors of the Muhammad Ali Center and as Chair of the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission and the Kentucky State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

He was active in local and regional racial and social justice organizations and coordinated and taught in the Saturday Academy, a community education program focusing on African World history and culture. He led the effort to create a Freedom Park on U of L campus in an effort to counterbalance the Confederate statue that has stood nearby the main campus since 1895.

He died on January 5, 2013.

An excerpt from one of Dr. Hudson's favorite poems: "I am a part of all that I have met; Yet all experience is an arch where thro' Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades, For ever and for ever when I move. How dull it is to pause, to make an end, To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!" -From "Ulysses" by Lord Alfred Tennyson, 1833



At left, Dr. Blaine speaks to a class at the Saturday Academy, a community education program that he coordinated to teach African World history and culture.

(This photo was posted on the internet by a student of the class whose name could not be discovered by the commission.)



Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians

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