

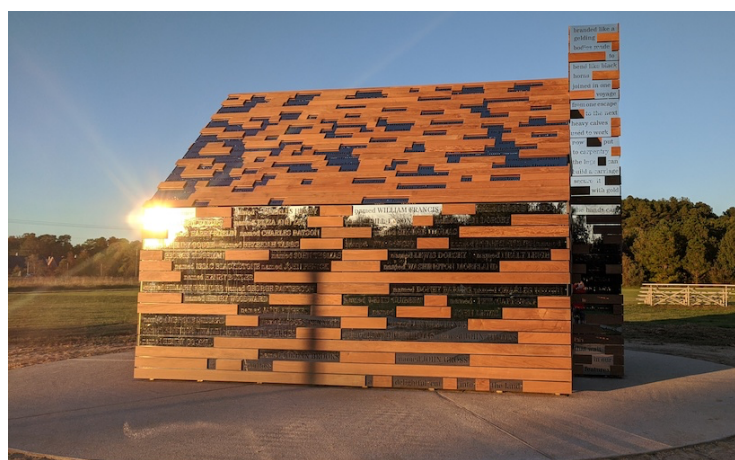
## The "Wednesday Word"

Dec 1, 2021

### "We Found Slave Artifacts on Our Campus"

A recent USA Today opinion article featured a powerful reflection from my friend and former Xavier University of Louisiana colleague, Dr. Tuajuanda Jordan. At the 2020 AABHE Annual Conference she served on the Presidents' Panel and shared amazing insights about being a college president and about being a Black woman leader. She is president of St. Mary's College located in St. Mary's City on the Chesapeake Bay in one of the southernmost parts of Maryland. Because of the location of her campus and the recent acquisition of slave shackles believed to have been used in the area, it was suspected that slaves could have been found on the site at some point in the College's history or perhaps prior to its founding. Following extensive research conducted by members of her faculty, it was not only determined that indeed Blacks were enslaved on the same grounds where her beloved college now sat but that St. Mary's College (or at least one of its staff) likely had a role in slavery as well.

Dr. Jordan opined, *"Faced with a choice between removing artifacts or honoring the enslaved; between boxing up our history or confronting it head-on, our community chose humanity and hope over anger, favoring a monument that would give voice to the enslaved – bringing their story to the fore."* With that "The Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples of Southern Maryland" was created. Located in a prominent space on campus, community members and visitors must all interact (it is an amazing structure that cannot be ignored) with this beautiful tribute to our enslaved forebearers.



AABHE would like to salute Dr. Jordan and her faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders for choosing such a demonstrable commemoration of a very dark period in this country's and their beloved St. Mary's College's

history. Following the 2020 tragic deaths of African Americans at the hands of police and vigilantes (so glad for last week's convictions in the Ahmaud Arbery murder) many folks and organizations were forced to reckon with or at least grapple with historic injustices. We salute all of the institutions who removed offensive monuments, markers, and street names; those who made substantive changes in policy regarding discrimination; and those who merely began the dialogue to create change. Some have argued that these are but symbolic changes; window dressing, if you will. Others suggest that these actions even if seen as "symbolic changes" have impact. They make a difference and history has shown that such a difference can have lasting effects. Included in these effects will hopefully be the righting of wrongs and justice for all.

Stay well, stay safe, stay COVID smart, and continue to do good work,



\*You can find the entire USA Today opinion piece by Dr. Jordan here:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/11/13/my-college-found-slave-artifacts-campus-heres-how-we-responded/6374506001/>

### AABHE Notes:

- Register now for our 2022 Annual Conference ...  
[Click Here to Register!](#)



The graphic features the AABHE logo (American Association of Blacks in Higher Education) in the top left. A yellow banner reads "American Association of Blacks in Higher Education". Below it, the text "2022 Annual Conference" is written in a cursive font. A circular photo shows four people (three men and one woman) standing together. At the bottom, a white box with a red border contains the text: "TRANSFORMATION, TIMING, AND TALENTS: Uncovering the Experiences of Blacks in Higher Education" followed by "March 14-15, 2022" in a bold, red font.