

BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER

1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Honorary Doctorate – Claytee White

MEETING DATE: March 6-7, 2025

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

None have been more integral to the history of southern Nevada, nor representative of the Rebel Spirit, as Claytee White. Relocating to Las Vegas in 1992, Claytee had no intention of returning to the classroom since completing her undergraduate degree at California State University, Los Angeles nearly two decades prior. But her passion for education and inquisitive personality led her to UNLV, pursuing a Master's Degree in History. She was particularly curious about the history of Southern Nevada including Black history, Black studies, women's history, and women's studies. She also found, like herself, many of her classmates were non-traditional and there was an interest in collecting and telling the stories of people who made Las Vegas so special. After completing her Master, she began work toward a doctorate at the College of William & Mary. However, before completion of the degree, she was asked to come back to UNLV to serve and lead as the inaugural Director of the UNLV Oral History Research Center in the Libraries' Special Collections & Archives.

In this role, Claytee's mission was to reach beyond traditional historical records to capture the fragile and elusive history of Southern Nevada through eye-witness accounts from members of the Las Vegas community; a passion she developed as a graduate student. Under her leadership, the Oral History Research Center has conducted over 4,000 interviews and covered a diverse array of Southern Nevada History, such as the origins and early growth of Las Vegas; the history of early healthcare in Las Vegas; the historic John S. Park and West Charleston neighborhoods; and the little-known musicians who played behind some of the legends of the Las Vegas Strip. Claytee focuses on shining a light on Southern Nevada's rich, and sometimes complicated and controversial, cultural history. It's difficult to understate the pivotal role that Claytee has played in making sure so many historical events are properly documented and archived. She even launched a project to collect first-person accounts of the December 6th shooting.

In addition to her position with UNLV, Claytee was the founding member of the Las Vegas Black Historical Society, serves as a board member of the Obodo Collective, serves as the treasurer of the Women of Diversity Productions Inc, and is the author of "African American Women Migrants: A Las Vegas Odyssey," which appeared in the publication of the Nevada Women's History Project, and "Eight Dollars a Day and Working in the Shade: An Oral History of African American Migrant Women in the Las Vegas Gaming Industry." Claytee's work with the historic Westside of Las Vegas has been transformative in preserving the history of this vibrant community. She has meticulously documented the stories of residents who experienced the challenges and triumphs of living in this historically African American neighborhood, capturing narratives about segregation, civil rights, and the evolution of the Westside. Through partnerships with community leaders, local organizations, and UNLV, Claytee has ensured these stories are preserved, fostering a deeper understanding of the Westside's pivotal role in shaping Las Vegas.

Additionally, Claytee has been awarded the Judith Winzeler Award for Excellence in the Humanities in 2019, the Humanitarian Award at the TMG Entertainment Network's 21st Silver State Awards, the Distinguished Pioneer Award by the Las Vegas chapter of the Nevada Coalition of 100 Black Women, and the 2012 Medal of Justice from the State Bar of Nevada.

Because of her extensive work to preserve the oral history and culture of Southern Nevada, and her integral role in UNLV's culture, UNLV presents Claytee D. White for an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

UNLV President Keith E. Whitfield requests approval to award an honorary doctorate degree to Claytee D. White.

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

Claytee's extensive work deserves to be recognized and awarded.

5. CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- Access (Increase access to higher education)
- Success (Improve student success)

- Close Institutional Performance Gaps
- Workforce (Meet workforce needs in Nevada)
- Research (Increase solutions-focused research)
- Coordination, Accountability, and Transparency (Ensure system coordination, accountability, and transparency)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

6. INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

7. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

Please see background and / or Honorary Degree Nomination Form.

8. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

9. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

Do not award Claytee White an honorary degree.

10. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:

The Chancellor’s Office recommends approval.

11. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____

Amends Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____

Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____

Other: _____

Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No X _____

Explain: _____



Honorary Degree Nomination Form

1. Degree to be Awarded:

Honorary Doctorate Honorary Baccalaureate Honorary Associate

2. Please state the name and address of your nominee for an Honorary Degree:

Claytee D. White

3. Honorary degrees may be awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the improvement of the quality of academic programs and academic life at the requesting institution, or to distinguished visitors. Person currently holding public elective office shall not be eligible to be nominated for an honorary degree, except that the Board of Regents reserves the right to waive this limitation at its own discretion in extraordinary circumstances.

4. What are your reasons for nominating this person (Attach additional pages, if necessary.)

Please see attached document.



President

11/6/25

Date

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Institution

11/6/25

Date

(B/R 1/87, 10/98, 3/03; Added 6/05; A.3/07, 11/07, 12/07)

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