

My name is Marion Wallace and I would like to serve as your southern regional representative. I am committed to the ABPsi mission of liberation, empowerment, and enlightenment of people of African descent. Growing up, I lived in a predominately African-American city, went to a predominantly African-American elementary and middle school, and had primarily African-American friends. For comfort, I chose to attend a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Surprisingly, this is where my first multicultural experience occurred. I was immersed in a new environment and, although familiar with “Black” people, I had foolishly ignored the difference between race and culture. It was there, in college, that I was forced to recognize the importance of not only an individual’s race but also his/her culture, heritage, and idiosyncratic differences. I have incorporated this lesson into my professional work as a psychologist, educator, and researcher. As your representative, I will be mindful of our collective and independent experiences, and use this knowledge to meet the needs of Black psychologists and future psychologists.

I feel I can be a valuable asset to The Association of Black Psychologists. Particularly, I have experience in the assessment and treatment of a wide range of disorders. I have worked in medical, residential, and community settings and have experience working with interdisciplinary teams. I can use these experiences to promote the advancement and growth of our members, student and professional. I am keen to cultural and idiosyncratic differences that may influence work, life, and the work-life balance. I am also passionate about working with people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and I am dedicated to facilitating positive outcomes for the Black community.

A solid economic structure is vital for the success of an organization. I served as President for the Black Graduate Student Organization, and understand the complexity of raising funds in order to keep an organization thriving. I plan to use traditional (e.g., fundraisers, benefactors, grant funding) as well as nontraditional (e.g., crowdfunding, social networking sites) ways to secure financial stability for the ABPsi mission.

As in every association, there are internal and external opportunities and challenges. One of the biggest external challenges we face as an organization is stigma. The stigma of being inferior, as individuals and as an organization. This stigma also creates an internal challenge, which we can use as an asset. I have dedicated my research career to examining ethnic differences as they relate to self-perception. I have co-authored manuscripts examining the Black self-esteem advantage as it relates to socially desirable responding, the development and validation of the Inventory of Microaggression Against Black Individuals, and the influence of ethnicity on the relation between narcissism and youth problem behaviors. Lastly, I presented at symposiums where I discussed factors influencing the utilization of mental health facilities among African-Americans and the role of microaggressions in the therapeutic relationship. As Black psychologists we can pull from the internal challenge of disseminating quality research that is tailored for our community, to address the external challenge of being stigmatized by a culture that was not created for us.

I believe the most rewarding internal opportunity we have is the capability to foster and cultivate opportunities for future generations. I am an early career psychologist, which inherently creates barriers and obstacles that must be navigated. However, this task does not seem as daunting with the mentoring and guidance I’ve received through my tutorage with AbPsi. Together we can instill knowledge, pride, hope, and optimism for present and future psychologists.

I appreciate your time in considering my nomination, and I look forward to the opportunity of serving you. I want to inspire as a woman, a scholar, and as a person from African descent. Please feel free to contact me for questions or additional information.