

# **Amorie Robinson, Ph.D.**

## **Candidate for National Secretary**



It is my privilege and honor to run for the distinguished position of Secretary in service of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) board and membership. I am a Clinical Psychologist working and living in my native hometown Detroit, fully-licensed in the state of Michigan since 2007. I am full-time at the Wayne County Third Circuit Court-Family Division Clinic for Child Study (juvenile court) and part-time psychotherapist at Northland Clinic. I also teach, supervise, and mentor graduate students at the Michigan School of Professional Psychology. I received my M.A. in Educational Psychology and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Michigan where I later taught several courses in Women’s Studies and Psychology. Much of my career has been spent conducting cultural competency trainings for mental health providers and educators as well as mentoring students and young community organizers.

Certified Trauma Specialist-Clinical, National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children; Certification in Brief Strategic Family Therapy, University of Miami BSFT Institute; and Certified in “A Silent Crisis” Safe Schools Training, Michigan Department of Education.

Publications have included articles and book chapters related to the psychology of Black lesbian youth, a population within Black communities that are often neglected or marginalized. My latest chapter in a book entitled Black LGBT Health, I discuss the resiliencies of Black LGBT youth in the juvenile justice system. In my writings, I have coined the term “attractiveness” to replace “sexuality” when appropriate.

Presentations, workshops, and trainings have included LGBT cultural competency for mental health providers and educators working with youth, families, adults, and couples, stress management, facilitating multicultural dialogues, clinical work with Black children and adolescents, and secondary trauma.

My interest in serving on the ABPsi national board stems from my personal history as well as my life-long devotion to the liberation of Black people and inspiring social change. I am proud of the fact that my mother co-founded the Michigan ABPsi chapter in April of 1968 and was the chapter's first Secretary. As a co-founder of the transition from a Michigan chapter to a Detroit chapter in 1996, I had the joy of serving as the Detroit chapter's second Secretary. I would gratefully accept the chance to earn this fulfillment of a family legacy as Secretary for the national ABPsi board with humbleness and pride.

As a grassroots co-founder and board member of numerous nonprofit organizations throughout the past 25 years, I have developed a deep regard for the productivity and dedication of board members. Having graciously volunteered in various capacities on national and local boards /committees, I offer a wide range of experiences in having worked as a team player. For example, I

- co-founded the Ruth Ellis Center for LGBT youth who are homeless, and remained on its board for 15 years,
- served as board president and co-founder of Karibu House, Inc. since 1989, an organization dedicated to creating an LGBT of color community center in Detroit,
- served as the Conventions Coordinator on the board of the Association for Women in Psychology for three consecutive years while a doctoral student in the 1990s,
- served as Secretary for the Black Students Psychological Association and assisted with creating space for the Black Women's Health Project Support Group during my doctoral program,
- and served on the Hope Grants Advisory Committee for the Community Foundation of Michigan for 20 years, that does grantmaking for local grassroots organizations.

Much of my community organizing has centered on creating support groups in my city such as the A.L.O.R.D.E. Collective and The James Baldwin-Pat Parker Society serving the Black LGBT community in Detroit. After my earlier years of serving on the All-African Liberation Committee to create programming for uplifting our local communities, I became Chairperson for the Kwanzaa Planning Committee, which continues today. For the past 3 years, I served as the national leader for the laity ministry of Unity Fellowship Church, and for 2 consecutive years, I spearheaded the organizing of a two-day retreat for Detroit's Black community that focused on cross-attractionality safe space dialogues.

After my years of serving as Secretary for the Detroit ABPsi chapter, Elder Dr. Paris Finner-Williams, unexpectedly, decided to informally appoint me as chapter President in 2009 after 5 years of chapter inactivity. I remain thankful that Elder Paris believed in me enough to regroup and re-develop the grounding that was firmly established by our Michigan ABPsi foremothers and forefathers. It has been an active and enjoyable journey. At present, our chapter is organizing the 2017 ABPsi Midwest Regional Symposium and planning our 4th Emotional Emancipation Circle.

As Secretary of the ABPsi board, I look forward to co-building what is needed for the organization to move forward. Some of the qualities that I can bring to the table are my commitment to excellence, dependability, attention to detail, organizational skills, trust in the group process, openness to learning, optimism, and interest in ABPsi's evolution into an even more positive future. I also offer a background of my creativity. Examples include playing the violin, djembe drumming, and illustrating coloring books and storybooks for Black children. The first coloring book I published was in 1974 and endorsed by the Michigan ABPsi. I have voluntarily participated in the African drumming during the national convention's traditional ceremonies for the past 3 years; this past year I was successful in encouraging two other women to join in.

A special interest of mine has been empowering young people and ensuring that their voices are heard. Given that they are the future of ABPsi, in specific, and of our communities, in general, I feel that it is important to invest in their professional growth and well-being. Beyond my required duties as Secretary, I envision myself

mentoring newcomers into further involvement in ABPsi. At recent national conventions, I have enjoyed facilitating three of the First Time Attendees workshops, providing me the opportunity to meet, support, and empower young people.

I believe there is a place in ABPsi for scholarship and clinical practice that embraces all of the rich complexities of who we are as Black people. I have a profound appreciation of the multiple intersected variations of Black identities that make up our Association. My strong background in bringing Black LGBT awareness and education to psychologists and Black organizations would serve ABPsi well. As someone who has experienced first-hand oppression from multiple sides of my Blackness, I realize how significant our Association is to the world at large, and, therefore, the importance of providing a welcoming and validating environment. Once in office, I wish to further develop opportunities for more Black psychologists to join, participate, and contribute, including Black LGBT psychologists. At this critical moment in time, ABPsi can continue to play a key role in helping to unify and heal our communities in a powerful way.

Broadening membership can make a profound difference in strengthening the financial infrastructure when we approach this endeavor through engaging and establishing strong relationships with members and potential members. Like most national nonprofit organizations, there are challenges that are financially-related. ABPsi can benefit from assessing and reevaluating the strategic plan on a quarterly basis, work toward expanding revenue sources, maximize the resources already available to us, create avenues for fundraising opportunities, and diversify sources of applying for grant funding. Developing effective ways to communicate operational and financial needs between the board and staff, and establishing efficient ways to ensure checks and balances, are sure to contribute to a stable and healthy financial state.

In closing, I wish to work collectively with board members to serve the best interests of ABPsi, use sound judgment to make the best possible business decisions, and to become a supportive resource. It will be a pleasure to serve under the leadership of Dr. Huberta Jackson-Lowman and help continue to invigorate the accomplishments of the previous boards. If elected, I pledge to do my part to make the Association one that our members and our communities can be proud of, acknowledging that progress is an intentional process. I am aware of the importance of accountability and that this position is a sacred privilege of service to be taken seriously and with integrity. I appreciate your vote for Amorie Robinson as Secretary.

Thank you.