

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, DR. KEVIN WASHINGTON, PH.D.

Greetings!

It is with great humility that I greet you as the 44th president of the Association of Black Psychologists! This is an extremely exciting time to assume the leadership of an organization that has had such a powerful impact on our world society. When this organization was initiated I was 3 years old. The founders were addressing matters of appropriate psychological testing and supporting educational opportunities for Black children in a largely racist U.S. educational system that saw Black children as intellectually inferior. These beliefs of inferiority were not limited to children, as the founders of the ABPsi found it necessary to start an organization that spoke to the mental health needs of Black people.

In a resounding voice that seems to be a precursor to the current “*Black Lives Matter*” movement, individuals assembled themselves in 1968 in Oakland California and stated with their actions that we have a voice that is worthy of being listened to when it comes to the mental health and psychological well-being of Black people and we will be heard. They were saying then that Black Lives Matter. It was out of that proclamation of African/Black humanity that the Association of Black Psychologists was born.

Although we are 47 years removed from the founding of the ABPsi, we are seeing many of the same conditions that were present in 1968. What is birthed out of these current conditions will be a spectacle to behold as it further sets us on a course to honor the humanity of all people, especially those that have been most despised. These actions will become the inheritance of our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Today, we see many levels of activism that is leading the charge in the “*We Can’t Breathe Movement*”, “*Black Lives Matter Movement*” and the “*Million Man March 20 year Commemoration March*”. Times and conditions are similar in the U.S. to those of the initiation of the ABPsi. We are at a period of birthing a new reality. It is up to us to determine if within the next 50 years ABPsi will be advancing different aspects of Black/African Humanity or if we will not be addressing such matters at all. We have the power to make this place better and more beautiful through our collective actions and vision of a new reality for Black people. It is with that seriousness of forward thinking that I assume the role of President of the Association of Black Psychologists.

At this time in our history we are actively engaged in the process of freeing people from the mental anguish of dehumanization and devaluation. We firmly support the idea that Black Minds Matter because we know that all people have inherent worth and value. We are an organization that is dedicated to impacting positive change in the lives of people of African descent globally who encounter events of disenfranchisement. Our efforts are to assist all people with respecting the fundamental rights of humanity. We start with impacting change and providing support to Black mental health professionals first so that they may be armed with the requisite skills, resources and support to be the best professionals that they can. We serve these professionals and fortify them with what they need in order to be better equipped to serve the community at large, whether in the classroom, boardroom or courtroom. We stand together at this time to Liberate Black Minds because Black Minds are essential to the survival and thriving of all humanity.