

# About Julian Kenneth Braxton



**Julian Kenneth Braxton** is the Director of Community and Inclusion and a member of the history faculty at the Winsor School in Boston, Massachusetts, where he has served for more than twenty-five years. He was recently appointed the inaugural Bezan Chair of Community and Inclusion, a permanently endowed position that reflects Winsor's deep and ongoing commitment to inclusion, belonging, and community life.

Julian's work is grounded in a lifelong commitment to public service, civic engagement, and education. Early in his career, he served as an intern in the district office of Congressman Charles B. Rangel and was later honored by the New York City Council with the Patrick Daly/Mother Hale Community Service Award for his work with *The Constitution Works*, a civic education program serving public school students. He earned a master's degree in Administration,

Planning, and Social Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where his academic advisor was renowned sociologist Dr. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot. As a Rockefeller Brothers Fund Leadership Fellow, Julian founded the Black Church Education Collaborative, a college-preparatory initiative for students attending historically Black churches.

Julian began his teaching career as a Howard Heinz Teaching Fellow at Sewickley Academy in Pennsylvania and has spent his career committed to teaching, leadership, and community engagement in independent education. He has held numerous national leadership roles, including serving as Co-Chair of the National Association of Independent Schools People of Color Conference and as a longtime member of NAIS's Call to Action Advisory Council, helping to shape conversations around equity, belonging, and institutional change.

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In addition to his work in schools, Julian is deeply engaged in national and regional educational organizations. He currently serves on the Alumni Council of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the New England Advisory Board for Facing History & Ourselves, the President's Council of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the Sphere Educator Advisory Board.

His contributions to the field have been recognized with several honors, including the Diversity Medal of Honor from the Glasgow Group and the Virginia Wing Outstanding Teaching Award.

Julian has a passion for listening to and sharing the stories of others. This is his way of uplifting the world. He has two podcast series: "Journey In Strength," where he interviews faith leaders about leading during challenging times such as these, and "Rear View Ahead," where he interviews historians and history makers about crucial moments in history and their connection to the present moment. Julian models what it means to take a stand by voicing his thoughts and concerns about the news of the day in regularly published letters to the editor in *The Boston Globe* and *The New York Times*. Julian often quotes his favorite historian John Hope Franklin when asked about his life's mission, "I want to be out there on the firing line, helping, directing, or doing something to try to make this a better world, a better place to live."



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## Remarks by Head of School Sarah Pelmas On the Occasion of Julian K. Braxton Appointment as the Inaugural Bezan Chair for Community and Inclusion



Julian's students past and present always say, *"I will be forever grateful that I had him as a teacher."* His passion and compassion are the reason that so many graduates head out into the world with optimism and love. As class of 2015's Anshi Moreno Jimenez says, *"true passion [like Julian's]...comes from a deep place of caring and good."* Julian embodies the ideals of passion for human rights and social justice, as well as compassion for others. *"Julian is one of the best people I know."*

His *Politics of Identity* course is a class that many students say *"revolutionized their thinking."* But a simple conversation with Julian can do that as well.

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As one colleague notes, *“Julian is [someone] who will listen without judgment, who will turn our questions over as carefully as we do ourselves, who wants to understand—and who will listen until he understands.”* Valentina Paez adds, *“Julian has the rare ability to empathize with everyone—and I mean everyone, especially people who think and act differently.”* This is what brings so many of us—students, faculty and staff and alums—to his office for a “chat.”

He helps students become leaders and shines most when guiding students who are absolutely steeped in their own outrage. He is on every committee because no one wants to make a decision without consulting him first. All the administrators have him on “speed dial.”

And he doesn’t confine his special way of seeing the world to Winsor. He routinely writes letters to the editor when the world needs a little dose of fact-based thinking.

Despite all these earnest accolades, he is also a sneaky and often overlooked participant in almost every practical joke played in the school.

As one colleague puts it, *“You work with Julian Braxton? THE Julian Braxton?”* Yes—THE Julian Braxton, who has taught, mentored, planned, and listened for over 20 years, and who remains a master teacher and mentor, devoted to this school.



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## Celebrating 25 Years At Winsor



I don’t think there’s a person in this school who doesn’t see Julian as a mentor, and as a wise counselor with a listening ear. Everyone with a problem or concern eventually makes their way to his office. Holder of our brand-new Bezan Chair for Community and Inclusion, he is nationally recognized as a leader in independent schools--and it’s a credit to his commitment to the Winsor community that he can juggle requests to participate on a panel honoring the legendary John Hope Franklin, trips to New York for Saturday Night Live tapings, trips to Washington DC to take Winsor employees to the Museum of African American History and Culture, Student Equity Board requests to talk about upcoming initiatives, morning commute conversations with colleagues about Spirit Week costumes, and near-constant student requests for guest speakers in classes, clubs and assemblies. Thank you, Julian, for your incredible commitment to both/and thinking, and for 25 years of reminding us all that “it’s complicated! - Sarah Pelmas

