**Rev. lola S. Gresham Russell, Phd**

**HerSTORY of Involvement with AME/WIM**

**AME/WIM EXPERIENCE**

**QUALIFICATIONS – 2010 TO PRESENT**

* Attended four Quadrennial Conferences of Women in Ministry: Philadelphia (8th Conference - 2010); Charleston (9th Conference - 2014), Birmingham (10th- 2018), and Detroit (11th- 2022). Was actively involved in planning the 9th Quadrennial Conference for WIM as a member of the E-Board.
* Since October 2022, visited and engaged with AME/WIM in 12 Episcopal Districts in the United States, the AME Global Development Council held in Sandton, South Africa, and the Rededication of the F.C. James Center in Lesotho (18th Episcopal District). Episcopal Districts 1-13, 15, 16, and 18 have been visited since becoming an AME/WIM in 2010.
* Participated in WIM Maximizing Ministry Sessions, by contributing to the discussions through questions in the chat and volunteered to extend prayers during Connectional WIM Calls for Prayer.
* Serves as a WIM advisor at the Episcopal District, Annual Conference, and Presiding Elder District levels as a mentor and recruitment leader for leaders and fosters increased membership and participation through advocacy and engagement. I recently supported the Episcopal District President by efficiently collecting data from three conferences within a tight timeframe, contributing to the advancement and growth of our AME/WIM leadership through collaborative efforts.
* Presented at the Atlanta North Georgia Conference (ANGC) Women in Ministry “Twelve Days of December” in 2020; the Operation Voter Turnout “Stroll to the Polls” virtual rally collaboration with the Sixth Episcopal District along with sorority, community, Morris Brown College and other Atlanta University institutions, and other women led organizations, January 4, 2021; and was the keynote presenter at the 2023 Sixth Episcopal District WIM Midyear luncheon.
* Contributed four submissions to the AME Review, two to the Secret Chamber, and three articles to Episcopal District devotionals with a focus on using womanist theology and a women-centered lens as an AME/WIM officer or member.
* Developed ideas, coordinated events, and created opportunities for WIM in the ANGC to socialize and fellowship outside of church meetings to strengthen the bonds between us:
  + Dinner and movie event to see *Woman King* in September 2022.
  + Private Advanced Screening and fundraiser for *The Color Purple* remake on December 10, 2023. The theatre was sold out.
* Authored article for the Second Episcopal District WIM newsletter on the SHIFT Leadership Network program and the innovative leadership of the Rev. Cynthia Parnell McDonald, PhD, executive director. The program includes a component on mentoring WIM.
* Leveraged extensive professional background as a Gubernatorial and Congressional campaign (GA’s first Black woman elected to Congress) and official staff leader and senior level press officer and communicator with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and talking points, policy documents and strategies for meetings and statements for General Board and WIM E-board meetings. Pitched media coverage for the 2014 Connectional WIM Quadrennial in Charleston, S.C. – the late Rev. Dr. Keturah Cooper was interviewed about the church’s role in the midst of an Ebola Pandemic in Liberia. These skills were also used to initiate a strategic thinking process that developed benchmarks for each year of the quadrennial to evaluate board progress.
* Provides leadership as either nominating or elections chairperson or member for the Sixth Episcopal District WIM; recruited and mentoring existing and potential leaders from within to lead to grow the impact of WIM within the district or for the Connectional E-board.
* Works as an advisory member of the Sixth Episcopal District Board with President Veronica Lewis, M.Div. and as an assistant/advisor to the ANGC Coordinator Hope Sims Sutton, D.Min., M.Div. I actively promote and contribute to the planning and execution in a support capacity for both,
* Collaborator, creator, and presenter for a new project of the Atlanta North Georgia Women in Ministry called “The Esther Room.” From January to May 2024, the A series of panels and discussions using the Hebrew text of Esther as a strategy to teach women how to operate and navigate in the ministry in which they serve by focusing on the power and significance of mentoring, sisterhood, leadership, and working collaboratively. This three- month Saturday Zoom call was very successful and included participants from throughout the Episcopal District and two other Episcopal Districts.
* Envisioned and then co-presented a Connectional prayer call for the five women candidates for bishop in 2016. This herstoric prayer call coalesced women in ministry and provided integral support for these candidates.
* Submitted three scholarly articles to the *AME Review*, two articles to the *Secret Chamber*, and three devotions to Episcopal District Christian Education publications for Lent and Advent. Wrote article for the Second Episcopal District Baltimore District WIM newsletter on “When a Spiritual Journey Leads to a Shift.” The article featured the grant funded SHIFT (Supportive, Holistic, Innovation for Thriving in Ministry) program director and grant writer Rev. Cynthia McDonald, PhD.

**CONNECTIONAL HERSTORIOGRAPHER AME/WIM**

**October 2010 – December 2016**

* Managed the editing of all General Board and General Conference reports from 2011 to 2016 in collaboration with President Kim Detherage, Esq. These reports are a herstorical record of the work of WIM at the Connectional and Episcopal district levels.
* Updated and edited the Herstory of AME WIM, beginning with the position paper at the 1976 General Conference that was written by Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, PhD. up until 2016.
* Developed, designed, and managed printing of the first official Connectional AME/WIM merchandise to increase the visibility of our brand at AME meetings. This included shirts, a membership pin, and then a herstoric Jarena Lee pin that was worn on her posthumous ordination as an elder in the AME Church at the 2016 General Conference in Philadelphia. As a third-generation pastor in the AME Church and fourth generation member whose love for the church was nurtured by a family who taught me to serve with excellence, the merchandise was designed to create learning opportunities and visibility for our professional organization.
* Coordinated and managed the AME/WIM booth at two General Conferences (2012 and 2016) where we sold official merchandise, provided space for AME/WIM authors to sell their books, sold a reprint of the noted “Positioned to Lead: Take Thou Authority” anthology in 2016, and solicited volunteers from Episcopal districts to volunteer at the booth.
* Worked in collaboration with the Third Vice President, the Rev. Dr. Erika Crawford, once she joined the E-board on the monthly email WIM newsletter. Created the concept and wrote HerStory articles on AME/WIM who were often unseen and unheard during Women’s History Month and wrote comprehensive feature article on AME/WIM in academia. Also contributed articles to the newsletter on our herstory and AME WIM who made herstoric contributions.
* Collected herstoric papers from previous AME/WIM Presidents and passed those on to the newly elected AME/WIM President Erica Crawford, D. Min., M.Div. in 2016.
* Interviewed and created a PowerPoint, “Bricks without Straw” on the herstory of Women in advisors Ministry in collaboration with WIM Advisor Dr. Jacquelyn Grant Collier. All former commission chairs, connectional presidents, and bishops were included in this herstorical project.
* Efforts extended to social media platforms -- grew the initial official AME/WIM Facebook page that was created by now Bishop Francine Brookins, Esq. Created guidelines, posted content, and increased participation from approximately 600 to more than 2,000 followers who also contributed content.
* Advocated and provided leadership for strategic planning agendas during Connectional WIM planning meetings, emphasizing the importance of setting clear benchmarks for each quadrennial goal.
* Contributed to the AME/WIM anthology of articles on the WIM theme of “Navigating the Space between Call and Response” that was published in the *AME Review*.
* Initiated the creation of an AME/WIM database to collect key information about women clergy in our church. It was the first comprehensive repository of data of active, superannuated, and supernumerated AME/WIM who were students, pastors, chaplains, academics, presiding elders, and bishops. The database included educational, ordination, herstory in the denomination, demographic information (Episcopal District, Presiding Elder District, Pastoral and Board Assignments (Board of Examiners, Finance, Trustee et al.), and bi-vocational information. More than 500 women created profiles that were used to provide a sample of AME/WIM. The data was presented at each General Board Meeting during my tenure.
* Directed discussions and presented the importance of creating a model for our four-year planning agenda with benchmarks to accomplish for each strategic goal for the quadrennium at our Connectional WIM planning meetings each year.
* Solicited, collected, wrote, and co-edited the AME/WIM anthology of articles on the theme “Navigating the Space between Call and Response” that was published in 2014 at the WIM Quadrennial. A reprint was also released at the 2016 General Conference.
* Remained engaged and active as Connectional WIM Herstoriographer (2010-2016) in my Episcopal District, Annual Conference, and Presiding Elder District WIM organization and provided leadership and support for planning and strategies.
* Featured in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution Religion page in May 2008 on my ordination as itinerant deacon in the Atlanta North Georgia Annual Conference. The overall focus of the story was on how more women were entering ministry. There were 30 women and two men ordained in my class.

**SIXTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT HERSTORIOGRAPHER AME/WIM – 2010**

* Collaborated with Conference Coordinators/Herstoriographer to collect stories of WIM who were pioneers in their districts.
* Attended first WIM Quadrennial in Philadelphia, PA, 2010
* Provided education and training on the role and importance of the herstoriographer position – position typically not filled.
* Presented at Episcopal District Meetings and spoke to conference coordinators regarding the importance of filling the herstoriographer position.