

**A MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

Honoring Dr. Carolyn E. Johnson

Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion Emerita

CAROLYN ELAINE JOHNSON, Ph.D., born on October 6th, 1947, in Indianapolis, Indiana to Retha Scott and William Johnson, was a light to all who knew her. A woman of profound faith, wisdom, and boundless love, she lived a life dedicated to her family, her community, and her calling to make the world a better place. Following her passing on November 17th, 2024, Carolyn's life was celebrated on November 30th in Indianapolis and March 29th in West Lafayette.

From an early age, Carolyn dreamed of becoming a teacher—a dream she fulfilled with great distinction. She began her education at James Whitcomb Riley Public School #43, where she cultivated a lifelong love of poetry and literature, and graduated from Shortridge High School, known for its academic excellence. Carolyn went on to earn her bachelor's and master's degrees from Indiana University, participating in a trailblazing teacher education program that integrated liberal arts into elementary education. Her passion for learning led her to Purdue University, where she earned her Ph.D. and launched a career dedicated to empowering others.

Carolyn began her work at Purdue in 1985 as a senior research associate in the African American Studies and Research Center (AASRC) in the College of Liberal Arts, where she regularly taught a course titled "Black Women Rising," coordinated an annual symposium on African American Culture and Philosophy in addition to numerous other programs and events, and served as chief editor of the academic newsletter "Nommo: Power of the Word" and as interim director of AASRC several times.

Throughout her career, Carolyn's expertise in planning and guiding discussions enabled countless people to push past their own anxieties toward meaningful dialogue. Having worked in 115 countries around the globe, she was guided by a deep appreciation for the complexities of the human experience and a strong conviction that it is by voicing the things that make us uncomfortable that we truly learn about ourselves and each other.

In 2006, Carolyn was named director of Purdue's Diversity Resource Office, where she was instrumental in building out numerous programs and initiatives that supported the professional development of students, faculty and staff. From 2008 to 2009, she served as interim chief diversity officer and, from 2017 to 2019, as special advisor to the provost. In 2019, she was appointed associate vice provost for diversity and inclusion, a position from which she retired in 2021.

Carolyn joined Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.—Tau Chapter in the fall of 1966 and later joined the Chi Phi Omega Chapter, where she served in a variety of positions over the course of her 58 years of dedicated sisterhood. In the local community and beyond, Carolyn was an engaged advocate for positive change through her service as executive director of the Hanna Community Center, a member of the President's Council of DePauw University and as a board member for numerous organizations including Bennett College, the Urban League, the American Red Cross, the NAACP, Girl Scouts of America, United Way, YWCA and L'Institut œcuménique de Bossey at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. An active member of the United Methodist Church, she held numerous leadership roles related to her church life, including service as president of the global organization, United Women in Faith.

Carolyn's compassion, intellect, and determination touched countless lives, creating ripples of kindness that will endure for generations. For her family and friends, she will always be remembered not just as a transformative leader and educator, but as a woman of extraordinary heart. She taught us all to see the beauty in our differences, to lift others up, and to meet life's challenges with grace and resilience. Carolyn's presence will be deeply missed, but her spirit will remain in the hearts of all who knew her and honor her legacy of love, hope, and an unwavering belief in the goodness of humanity.

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher D. Munt, PhD
Senior Director, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging