

## Acknowledgements

*“But may great kindness come of it in the end.”* This is the last line of one of my favorite poems, shared with me by my English teacher more than a decade ago. As I think about my endless gratitude for so many special people who have made this dissertation possible, I also think of this phrase from this poem because, through all the trials and tribulations on this long journey, so many beautiful people have shown me kindness along the way. And, it is this uncommon kindness that has made this dream of a Ph.D. a reality when there were many moments where I thought this dream might fade away. It is truly impossible to give thanks fully to all the people who have contributed to my intellectual and personal development, but in these few pages to follow, I will attempt this colossal task.

### **To my committee:**

First, and foremost, I want to thank my advisor and dissertation sponsor, Professor Ansley Erickson. I first entered Teachers College as a master’s student, and Professor Erickson—also new to Teachers College—kindly became my advisor, and immediately I experienced her brilliance and tried to absorb all that I could. Her classes were both inspiring and engaging, our one-on-one meetings were always insightful, and I had the great fortune of seeing an extraordinary historian and scholar meticulously refining her craft. To say that I have learned so much from her, particularly considering both of us were growing in different roles—her as a professor, me as a student seeking to be *like* her as much as I could—would be an understatement. When I decided to stay at Teachers College and become her first doctoral advisee, I was honored—and still feel that way many years later. Over these years, Professor

Erickson has truly taught me how to be a historian and the great responsibilities we historians have, molding me into the scholar that I am today. The ways in which I think about urban policy, create historical arguments, and understand the world around me is because of her brilliance and her sharing that brilliance with me time and time again. She has pushed me intellectually far more than I ever thought was possible, and this dissertation work on Harlem Prep, quite simply, is because of the countless conversations and hundreds of hours that *she* has spent over the last eight years dedicated to making this work the best it could be. Her commitment to my scholarly development—to my writing, to my work with youth, to my intellectual growth, to my logistical concerns about being a doctoral student, and beyond—and to this dissertation specifically has been unwavering, even in times of tension and struggle, and I will forever be grateful for all that she has done to help me craft this Harlem Prep story into one that I can now proudly share with the world. Since the first day I met her and throughout this journey together, for all that she has given me, I have always wanted to make her proud just as *I* was so proud to say that she was my advisor. I hope that this dissertation achieves that goal. Moreover, I know that it is the first of a long, fruitful career of dissertations she will usher and many student dreams she will help fulfill.

Next, I want to thank Professor Ernest Morrell, who forever changed my life trajectory. I remember when I was an unsure and insecure freshman at UCLA, from the Midwest, trying to find my way, when I stumbled into his education class more than a decade ago. In that class, I learned about critical pedagogy, educational inequities, and above all, about myself—and it put me on the path that I continue on to this day. For the next three years at UCLA, Professor Morrell became a mentor—he inspired me, shared his wisdom, and supported me in all my personal and professional endeavors. As I decided to go to Teachers College for graduate school, he also had moved there to become director of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education

(IUME), and my involvement at IUME defined my existence in graduate school. I cannot express enough how grateful I am that he invited me to work in the Institute as I made the nerve-racking move across the country. Although he had his other students to now advise in New York City, he continued to generously guide me and believe in me during the high and lows of graduate school. While his feedback and our discussions about Harlem Prep were of course insightful, above all, it was his support and belief in my abilities that proved invaluable. Over the years, I have witnessed his capacity to inspire, and his beautiful warmth that he shares with the world. Professor Morrell's contagious love has molded my conscience, and his worldview—of optimism, of critical hope, and of love—has guided me throughout my writing of Harlem Prep. This work would not be what it is without his example: of how to produce scholarship steeped in love and justice. And, above all, without him, I would not be the person I am now today.

I also am grateful to my other committee members who have similarly inspired me in countless ways and have made this work possible. First, Professor Sonya Douglass Horsford generously agreed to serve on my dissertation proposal committee and on my defense committee. Although she was new to Teachers College with her own students, responsibilities, and many personal and professional engagements, she was happy to serve and shared key insights at my proposal hearing that helped shaped my dissertation in important, meaningful ways. While I regret that I did not seek her wise counsel more throughout the process, still, I witnessed and absorbed (both in person through her many talks and by reading her work) her scholarship on race, education leadership, and civil rights in ways that deeply influenced my work and writing on Harlem Prep. And, her comments and notes at my defense will be the foundation for future scholarship as I revise my dissertation in the years to come. I am thankful for her help, guidance, and astute feedback, and for her supreme kindness she has always shown to me over the years.

Next, I want to thank Professor Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz. Although she is new to my work on Harlem Prep, she is certainly not new to me. I cannot express enough how much her aura of love and kindness has provided inspiration to me during some of my darkest days of this journey. In my many moments of self-doubt, I would see Professor Sealey-Ruiz on campus—giving one of her uplifting talks or just in the hallway—and then I would immediately feel a rejuvenation to keep on going. Her warmth, love, and affirmation that she has shared with me since my first days at Teachers College to my last are hard to fully describe. Moreover, I learned so much from her scholarship, too. The way in which she articulates love into her acclaimed research on literacy has provided me a blueprint to do the same, and I only hope that my work on Harlem Prep can provide a fraction of the impact that her work—and her as a person—generates each day. Her beautiful spirit, kind words, and insightful comments at the dissertation defense will also guide me in my future research on Harlem Prep for many years to come.

Last, but certainly not least, is Professor Tyrone Howard, who has also influenced my life and growth as a scholar in profound, uncharted ways. I first met Professor Howard as a second-year student at UCLA, and his race and education class—and later his graduate class, which he kindly let me take as an undergraduate—remains the foundation in which my scholarship rests. My bookshelf, which I have curated and slimmed over the years, is still prominently lined with books from those courses many years ago, and the way in which I understand myself as a racial being and my role as a scholar is because of him. Above all, however, over the last decade, Professor Howard has been my steadfast champion, believing in me and building me up in times when I did not always believe in myself. He is the essence of everything I admire in a scholar: brilliant, yes, but generous, affirmative, hopeful, and exceedingly dedicated to student success. As I crafted this Harlem Prep story, everything I learned from his classes, his scholarship, and,

mostly, from his existence is deeply embedded in this story—and me getting to this point would not have happened without him and the support he has offered throughout the past decade. I am overwhelmed with gratitude that I had the great fortune of learning from him at UCLA and to now be able to conclude this Ph.D. journey once again with him by my side.

I also want to thank and acknowledge Professor Samuel Roberts, who kindly served on my dissertation proposal committee. His insightful feedback at my proposal hearing, based on his own historical work on Harlem, was crucial to how I understood the era and to the development of the project more broadly. I am grateful for our correspondences and his role in also shaping this work.

**To my colleagues at IUME and other beloved friends:**

Beyond my extraordinary committee, this dissertation—and my completing this journey—would not have happened without the Institute for Urban and Minority Education, or IUME, as we call it. First, I am enormously grateful to Professor Morrell and Professor Erica Walker for their generous financial support throughout the years as a Graduate Research Fellow. I want to especially thank Professor Walker, who, as the new IUME Director, continued to provide financial support even though I was no longer living in Los Angeles as she had her own amazing students to support and include at IUME. It is a fact that I would not have completed this dissertation without this support the last two years. I do not take it lightly and it has been humbling to receive these funds in this capacity, and to continue being part of such an inspiring group of scholars. Still, beyond the generous funding support, it hard to put in words what the Institute has meant to me more broadly: my sanctuary and oasis of affirmation and love throughout my graduate experience. The space itself was a place of empowerment—it was a

place of refuge for me and others. I am thankful for it and the role it has played. But, like any space, it is the people that make a space special—and so it is the beautiful people of IUME that I am truly indebted to and have made fulfilling this dream possible.

Thus, I first want to thank and acknowledge IUME Assistant Director Veronica Holly: my teacher, my mentor, my colleague, and my beloved friend. As a young graduate student, moving to New York City (never having traveled to the East Coast) and knowing nobody, Veronica became both a mother-like figure personally, and a scholar and educator for me to learn from professionally. It was a privilege to have the great fortune of learning from her example. In my darkest moments—and in my highest joys—she was there with me every step of the way. She has been my sage and my saving grace, showing me through her actions and through her advice, how to function in academia and how to “be” as a young man and scholar. Our shared journeys together and meaningful conversations, hours at a time, are some of my most cherished memories of my life in NYC. She has helped me navigate my personal and professional identity, and it is her inspiration that has helped me write the Harlem Prep story—it would not exist without her. Teachers College—and the world—is a better place because she is in it, and I am personally a better person and a better scholar because of her. I will forever be grateful for her love, support, and friendship and all that I have learned from her in many facets of life.

I could not have completed this journey without Sandra Overo, either—another colleague and friend who has been a bedrock of support, help, and friendship over these years. Her selflessness, kindness, and generosity that she has shown towards me—and her logistical magic (and patience) in helping me in so many ways—is impossible to recount. She has been there in moments of doubt too, and truly every step of the way from the very beginning to the very end, orchestrating, time and time again, surprises, reservations, advice, and help as I navigated

Teachers College and graduate school more broadly.

I also want to thank my friends and former colleagues at IUME in this journey that always believed in me and I learned from on a daily basis inside and outside the office. First and foremost, there is Phillip Smith, one of the most brilliant and beautiful people on this Earth—and it was (and still is) a privilege to learn from him and to call him a friend. Despite our many surface differences—racially, culturally, career-wise, and geographically—there are few people who have understood me like he has and who has supported me in my pursuit of a doctorate with such sincerity. His generosity and selflessness is unmatched, and I am grateful for all that he has given to me throughout this process. Our conversations about graduate school and about research have been a guide in many of these trying times, and advice on how to “keep being me,” and to believe in myself and my work on Harlem Prep has been vital to completing this dissertation.

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There are a few other people who have influenced my work and doctoral journey. One of those important people is my friend and amazing scholar—and also now a professor—Nick Juravich. Nick, then a doctoral student in Columbia University’s history program, has been an extraordinary friend and someone who I have learned so much from. Our work has many similarities, focusing on marginalized peoples, in Harlem, around education; and our intellectual

circles often crossed at conferences, lectures, and through a shared affiliation with the Harlem History Education Project co-directed by Professor Erickson. When I needed an example of what a doctoral student should be doing, I looked to Nick; and when I needed an example of what in-depth, historical research and analysis looked like, I looked to Nick, too. I am grateful for our many, many conversations about Harlem Prep and all the feedback, advice, and insights he has provided to me on this work over the many years.

Another person I want to thank is Bill Rueckert at the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation (and Chairman of the Teachers College Board of Trustees). A few years ago, Bill offered me the incredible opportunity to write the history of his family and their century-old philanthropic organization. I was humbled by the offer, but admittedly nervous if I could undertake this large responsibility. After much thought, I wisely accepted, and the subsequent journey over more than two years of intense work—and guidance from Bill and former executive director Phyllis Criscuoli—was one of the most wonderful, humbling experiences of my life. I learned much from the entire experience of researching, planning, and then writing a book (eventually published by Teachers College Press) that later helped me undertake the dissertation process in much the same fashion. Moreover, Bill was kind, generous, and helpful at all times, and his support and belief in me in my final stages of my Teachers College journey was a further motivator to complete this journey.

Speaking of learning, thank you to Mr. Jobst, my high school English teacher, who I had the great fortune of learning from for two years. It is he who first put me on this path, perhaps even unconsciously, as it is through him that I found my love for education and made me initially realize my love of writing. The way I write and the way I teach is very much of reflection of all that I learned in those formative adolescent years. I will always be grateful.



The wonderful people at El Camino College (where I currently teach), particularly Dr. Cynthia Mosqueda, also deserve thanks. Getting to know Cynthia (who directs the First Year Experience program) and the entire First Year Experience team has been a true joy—and Cynthia has been so supportive in my pursuit of the Ph.D. Considering that I wrote the dissertation in Los Angeles, Cynthia has kindly encouraged me and been a pillar of support on the West Coast. Moreover, working in the First Year Experience program as a tutor—and now being a U.S. history professor at the college—has brought meaning and purpose that has greatly influenced my writing. At the same time that I was writing about the past dreams of Harlem Prep students and the powerful pedagogy by the school’s teachers, I was also teaching young students and humbly trying to help their dreams come true in the present. This juxtaposition brought a beautiful perspective to my dissertation work. Thank you to all my FYE colleagues, my wonderful students at El Camino College, and Dr. Mosqueda for making all of this possible.

All doctoral students know that their research is aided by archivists and those who make this work possible. I am very thankful for the many archivists who have helped me along the way, particularly those at the Rockefeller Archive Center, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Archive at Columbia University, and the New York City Municipal Archives. Each of these institutions and the kind people who run them were vital to this work.

**To the Harlem Prep community:**

Above all, this dissertation is owed to the Harlem Prep community: teachers, students, and former administrators who have so kindly contributed to my research and to my learning of Harlem Prep. This project is dedicated to each to them, but it is also *because* of them. The years

spent speaking with alumni, hearing their stories, and traveling all throughout the city (and sometimes beyond) was both thrilling and extremely humbling. The Harlem Prep community opened up their homes and workplaces to me, sharing their stories, memories, and cherished recollections—and entrusting me to handle them with care. As I spoke with one alumnus, I was then referred to another; as I received pictures, documents and more from one person, I would receive helpful tips about research threads from another. This project would, frankly, not exist without the generous stories and materials that dozens of alumni have shared with me, both formally and informally. More than anything, however, the Harlem Prep community opened up their hearts to me, and so generously welcomed me into their sacred Harlem Prep family, inviting me to social gatherings and online groups, as if I was one of them. I will never be able to express how humbled and grateful I am for the kindness and love shown to me over the years. This wonderful group of people includes: Hussein Ahdieh, Josie Alvarez, Keywanda Battle, Frank Berger, Aissatou Bey-Grecia, Stephanie Butler, Sandy Campbell, Alberto Cappas, Casey Carpenter, Beverly Grayman-Rich, Penny Grinage, Ajuba Bartley-Grinage, Mwanajua Kahamu, Bari Haskins-Jackson, Peter Hopson, Clifford Jacobs, Sherry Kilgore, Sterling Nile, Martin Nur, Henry Pruitt, Ed Randolph, Francisco Rivera, Jr., Craig Rothman, Harry Smith, Joshua Smith, Kadajah Wilson, and many others that I have spoken with on the phone, via e-mail, or in-person at one point or another. I only hope that I can repay the love that each of these kind people have shared with me through my own sharing of their Harlem Prep story. This work is for them.

Within this group, however, there are a few special people that I want to specifically thank. Cliff Jacobs was the catalyst in this journey. Back in 2013, as I learned about Harlem Prep and was searching to find some way to learn more, he kindly answered an unsolicited e-mail from a graduate student and agreed to speak about his experience at his office. After a wonderful

interview in which he took time out of his busy work schedule, Cliff then gave me a list of names and contact information of others who might be willing to speak with me, and from there, the project bloomed. I am indebted to his graciousness in setting me on this path.

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Carpenter. She is, truly, a testament to their wonderful legacies and is a beautiful soul that I am privileged to know. It has been a pleasure spending time with Casey over the years, and she, too, has been selfless in her help of this project. We have organized talks together, she has welcomed my wife and I into her home in New Jersey on multiple occasions, we have rummaged her attic for documents, and she has also provided insight time and time again on the work of her parents in ways that are essential to this story. My portraits of Ed and Ann would not be what they are if it was not for her generous help and friendship. She is their living legacy.

Finally, there is Sandy Campbell, a former Harlem Prep teacher. How do I thank someone whose contributions to this project—and to my life in New York City—are so consequential and go beyond mere words? The love that he has given to me is unmatched and embedded into my heart. I first met and interviewed Sandy with a group of young people at Teachers College. After that, Sandy generously helped connect me with his former students, facilitating interviews and correspondences, and eventually driving me to and from interviews and gatherings all throughout the city. The list of questions I have asked him and favors I have asked *of* him over the last six years are too plentiful to count; so, too, are his thoughtful and honest answers, comments, and feedback about my in-progress work. Over the years, we shared dinners together, museum visits, and many, many, many laughs—and some tears, too. His generosity to help me on this Harlem Prep journey turned into a friendship, and our friendship then grew into a deep bond that can only be explained through mutual love and admiration. Together, through his many years of selflessness and work in helping me research the Harlem Prep story, Sandy became my closest confidant, and this project would not exist without his contributions, energy, spirit, and love. At the same time, despite his proximity to the story, Sandy also—humbly—gave me the intellectual space to write it as I saw fit. His trust and belief in me

means more to me than I will ever be able to express. There are many people who made this dissertation and the telling of this story possible in these pages, but none are as significant or as meaningful or as special as he is. Thank you, dear friend, for everything and more.

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As a first-generation student, the meaning of this Ph.D. is monumental, and it is my family and loved ones who I wish to share this accomplishment with. This is their degree as much as it is mine, and it is them who have opened the doors to make this opportunity possible. To my beloved grandparents, those living and those passed on, I owe this Ph.D. to them. The sacrifices they have made, the love they have given, and the wisdom they have imparted, have shaped my path in life. I love you all, for always. To my aunt, uncles, and cousins, thank you for always being in my corner. Growing up together in St. Louis has made me who I am today, and I will never forget that. To my brother, sister-in-law, and nephews, thank you for everything and supporting me in this long journey. I look forward to our many great times together now that this dissertation is completed! And, to my parents, and mom especially, there are no words to express all that you have done for me. Mom, everything I am is because of you—your sacrifices, your dedication, and your love. To be your son is perhaps the greatest honor I could ever have.

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As I reflect on all of these people who have allowed this work to come to fruition, I return to one more line from my favorite poem. “*I know hope, but I do not know its form.*” Such a phrase always seemed fitting to me. I have always known hope, too, but had never been able to truly understand how it manifested—until these years. Thus, it is through this journey that I have found hope’s form: through people, and the stories that they tell. All of these friends, mentors, colleagues, and loved ones have been my form of hope over the years. And, as I share this dissertation with the world, it is my wish that this beautiful story of people at Harlem Prep is the form that can give others hope, too.

With gratitude and love,

Barry M. Goldenberg

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