



Kadir Nelson, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery

HeLa

WOMEN'S HEALTH
SYMPOSIUM

November 9, 2023
National Center for
Primary Care Auditorium




MOREHOUSE
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



**DR. ROLAND
PATTILLO**
1933-2023



Morehouse School of Medicine cherishes the memory of Dr. Roland Pattillo, longtime MSM faculty member who placed a face on the source of cells that led to striking medical advances with the telling of Mrs. Henrietta Lacks' story.

 
Dr. Roland Matthews Dr. Winston Thompson

26th
ANNUAL



HeLa

HENRIETTA
LACKS

WOMEN'S HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

Addressing Racial and Ethnic Gynecological Health Disparities

Thursday, November 9, 2023

2:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Morehouse School of Medicine

Louis W. Sullivan National Center for Primary Care

CME ACTIVITY

Accreditation Statement

The Morehouse School of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The Morehouse School of Medicine designates this live activity for a maximum of up to 1.75 AMA PRA Category 1 credit (s)[™]. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent to their participation in the activity.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:

1. Identify the impact of uterine fibroids, polycystic ovary syndrome, and endometriosis on the quality of life.
2. Identify and differentiate treatment options available for uterine fibroids, polycystic ovary syndrome, and endometriosis
3. Report how race and ethnicity influence uterine fibroids, polycystic ovary syndrome, and endometriosis.

Disclosure Statement

Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) in accordance with ACCME guidelines requires instructors, planners, managers and other individuals who are in a position to control the content of this activity to disclose any real or apparent conflict of interest they may have as related to the content of this activity. All identified conflicts of interest are thoroughly vetted by MSM for fair balance, scientific objectivity of studies mentioned in the materials or used as the basis for content, and the appropriateness of patient care recommendations. Full disclosure of speaker relationships will be made at this activity.

Resolution of Conflict of Interest

In accordance with the ACCME Standards for Commercial Support of CME, the Morehouse School of Medicine has implemented mechanisms, prior to the planning and implementation of this CME activity, to identify and resolve conflicts of interest for all individuals in a position to control content of this CME activity.

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

This information provided at this CME activity is for continuing education purposes and is not meant to substitute for the independent medical judgment of a healthcare provider relative to diagnostic and treatment options of a specific patient's medical condition.

2023 HELA WOMEN'S HEALTH SYMPOSIUM CHAIRS



Dr. Roland Matthews is chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Morehouse School of Medicine, and a board-certified gynecologic oncologist and attending physician at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. He graduated from Columbia College, and earned his M.D. degree, with a distinction in research, from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Dr. Matthews completed his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and completed a fellowship in Gynecologic Oncology at the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center.

Dr. Matthews is a Georgia Cancer Coalition (GCC) Distinguished Cancer Scholar and is currently the Director of the Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence at Grady. He is Vice President of the Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education (CORE) board, and serves on the executive committee of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Section of the National Medical Association. Throughout his career, Dr. Matthews' research, education and clinical activities have focused on reducing disparities in underserved communities.



Dr. Winston E. Thompson is a distinguished professor and researcher at the Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) in Atlanta, Georgia. He serves as the Professor and Chair of Physiology, Director of Research in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Director of the Mentoring Academy.

Dr. Thompson received his Artium Baccalaureus in Biology from Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, in 1986. He then earned his Master of Science in Endocrinology from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1988. Pursuing his career goal of becoming a research scientist, he received a joint PhD in Cell and Developmental Biology from Rutgers University and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in Piscataway, New Jersey, in 1993. In 1993, he joined the Department of Cell Biology as a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School under the mentorship of Dr. Everett Anderson.

In Dr. Thompson's laboratory at MSM, a team of researchers is committed to conducting research that focuses on understanding the etiology of uterine fibroids and endometriosis and identifying novel therapies for these gynecological disorders that impact Black women.



**DR. VALERIE
MONTGOMERY
RICE**

Dear Conference Participants,

Welcome to the 26th Annual Morehouse School of Medicine HeLa Women's Health Symposium. This year's theme is "Addressing Racial and Ethnic Gynecological Health Disparities" as we explore the root causes of and potential solutions for systemic inequities in gynecology. As an infertility specialist, reproductive endocrinologist, and Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, I have a personal connection to this issue, and I look forward to the discussions that will take place during the forum.

Our HeLa symposium this year is also an opportunity to pay tribute to Dr. Roland Pattillo, who passed in May. A longtime faculty member here at MSM, Dr. Pattillo founded the HeLa Conference in 1996. He was instrumental in raising awareness of Henrietta Lacks as an individual, aside from her untold contributions to medicine and research through the use of her cancer cells.

A Black woman who was a wife and mother of five children, Mrs. Lacks died of cervical cancer at the age of 31, less than a year after she was diagnosed. Without the knowledge or permission of Mrs. Lacks and her family, her cells were harvested before her death and became the world's first "immortal" cell line, which is still used to this day to reach countless medical breakthroughs in the fields of cancer, virology, polio, HIV/AIDS, and many more.

As we gather today, I want to express my gratitude to two individuals in particular who are committed to the present and future of the HeLa Symposium, Dr. Roland Matthews and Dr. Winston Thompson. On behalf of Morehouse School of Medicine, thank you for your dedication and for championing the HeLa Symposium.

Please join me in honoring Mrs. Lacks, the Lacks family, Dr. Pattillo, and their legacies. We can never thank them enough for all they have contributed to science and medicine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Montgomery Rice". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Valerie Montgomery Rice, MD, FACOG,
President and Chief Executive Officer
Morehouse School of Medicine

Dear HeLa Symposium Guests,

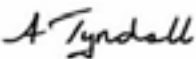
Thank you for joining Morehouse School of Medicine for our 26th Annual HeLa Women's Health Symposium. This event is one of the many ways that Morehouse School of Medicine embodies its mission of leading the creation and advancement of health equity to achieve health justice.

Over the nearly 50 years of MSM's existence, our dedication to education, research, clinical care, and service has never wavered. We are keenly aware of the systemic health inequities that people of color and their communities experience. As great as the challenges are, so is Morehouse School of Medicine's commitment to make the world a healthier, more equitable place for all people, here in Georgia and across the globe.

This year's HeLa Symposium, "Addressing Racial and Ethnic Gynecological Health Disparities," goes beyond discussions with healthcare experts and academics. This evening, we will screen the documentary "Below the Belt," which follows four patients as they urgently search for answers to explain their mysterious symptoms. The film exposes widespread problems in the US healthcare system, including how people's experiences are ignored and minimized, and explores how we can improve health care for everyone.

We hope that when you leave Morehouse School of Medicine today, you are informed, inspired, and invested in health equity and health justice.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Tyndall, MD, MPH
Executive Vice President of Health Affairs and Dean
Morehouse School of Medicine



PROGRAM

2:00–2:15pm	<i>Welcome</i>	Joseph A. Tyndall, MD, MPH Dean and Executive Vice President of Health Affairs Morehouse School of Medicine
2:15 – 2:25pm	<i>Honoring Dr. Roland A. Pattillo</i>	Roland Matthews, MD Professor and Chair, Obstetrics and Gynecology Morehouse School of Medicine
2:25 – 2:30pm	<i>History of Henrietta Lacks</i>	Winston Thompson, PhD, MS Director of Research, Obstetrics and Gynecology Morehouse School of Medicine
2:30 – 3:00pm	<i>The Health Disparities of Uterine Fibroids for African American Women: A Public Health Issue</i>	Alicia Christy, MD Roland A. Pattillo Lecturer Introduction by Tanika Gray Valbrun Founder of The White Dress Project
3:00 – 3:30pm	<i>Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome: A Metabolic Metabolic & Reproductive Disorder</i>	Katherine Sherif, MD Professor & Vice Chair, Academic Affairs, Department of Medicine Thomas Jefferson University, Sidney Kimmel Medical College Introduction by Sasha Ottey Founder and Executive Director of PCOS Challenge
3:30 – 4:00pm	<i>Empowering Awareness: Understanding, Diagnosing, and Managing Endometriosis Pain and Fertility</i>	Michael F. Neblett II, MD Assistant Professor Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility Emory University Introduction by Lauren Kornegay Founder, EndoBlack

4:00 – 4:10pm *Special Presentation* **Roland Matthews, MD**
Professor and Chair, Obstetrics
and Gynecology
Morehouse School of Medicine

4:10 – 4:15pm *Closing Remarks* **Winston Thompson, PhD, MS**
Director of Research, Obstetrics
and Gynecology
Morehouse School of Medicine

****RECEPTION****

5:00 – 5:10pm *Greetings* **Congresswoman Nikema Williams**
Georgia's 5th Congressional District

5:10 – 6:10pm *"Below The Belt" screening* **Attorney Shannon Cohn**
Director

6:10 – 7:00pm *Panel Discussion* **Moderator: Rose Scott**
Attorney Shannon Cohn
Alicia Christy, MD
Tanika Gray
Sasha Ottey
Lauren Kornegay

**FROM
THE LACKS
FAMILY**

On behalf of the Lacks Family, we would like to thank Morehouse School of Medicine and the late Dr. Roland Pattillo for their ongoing support and dedication in honoring Henrietta Lacks' legacy and promoting women's health. Henrietta's story has had a profound impact on the lives of many. It's heartwarming to see her remembered and celebrated through educational initiatives and events. Her story will continue to be told and inspire future generations.



ONGOING SUPPORT



Patricia O'Flynn Pattillo, in addition to being the widow of Dr. Roland A. Pattillo, is a former educator, and the founder/publisher of the ***Milwaukee Community Journal*** newspaper, the largest circulated Black newspaper in the state of Wisconsin, now celebrating its 47th year. In this role she has been honored by numerous local organizations and most recently as a Black History Maker by the City of Milwaukee in February 2023. She has been recognized by the Milwaukee Press Club's Hall of Fame, and she was the first female president of the National Newspaper Publisher's Association, NNPA, the Black Press of America.

Today, Mrs. Pattillo continues to administrator from her home, a tenured newspaper team that produces two newspapers weekly, plus a quarterly health magazine, "Healthy Start," and through the MCJ/PPP promotional arm she works with a collaborative media partnership that guides several health initiatives, most notably "All of Us/MCW, a President Obama Initiative that focuses on enrolling black/brown participation in research and precision medicine to increase minority health outcomes.

She has been involved with HeLa from its inception when the Lacks family was invited to Atlanta and former Mayor Campbell made the first HeLa Conference, held at the Morehouse King Chapel/Auditorium, Henrietta Lacks Day in the City of Milwaukee. Over the years, with Dr. Pattillo she worked to further the knowledge and contributions of Henrietta by donating the funds for the headstone in Clover, Virginia, for Henrietta Lacks Sonny Lacks and other family members are eternalized in the "Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" book by Rebecca Skloot where Dr. Pattillo is shown with this history-making event.

And on the stage, today, is the bronze bust, created by Jonas Perkins, funded by Dr. and Mrs. Pattillo, as a legacy of love and appreciation of the many scientific discoveries that continue to be made through the utilization of the immortal cells of Henrietta.

Thank you Henrietta Lacks and thank you Morehouse School of Medicine that remains the original home of the story of Henrietta Lacks and her import on science today and forever.

2023 HELA WOMEN'S HEALTH SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS



Dr. Alicia Christy received her undergraduate degree from Princeton University, graduated from Northwestern University School of Medicine with honors, and received a masters degree in Health Science and Clinical Research from Duke University School of Medicine. She completed her residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and completed her fellowship training in reproductive endocrinology and infertility at the National Institutes of Health. She is board certified in both obstetrics and gynecology and reproductive endocrinology and infertility.

She served as obstetrics and gynecology department chair, and Consultant to the Army Surgeon General while on active duty. She was a clinical researcher at NIH where her research focused primarily on the treatment of fibroids, and health disparities. She is a former co-editor of *Contraception and Reproductive Medicine*. She holds the rank of professor at the Uniformed Services University, and adjunct professor at Howard University School of Medicine. Dr. Christy is the former chair of the American Society of Reproductive Medicine Health Disparities Special Interest Group and was the VA liaison to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists committee on Healthcare for Underserved Women. Dr. Christy retired from the position of Deputy Director of Reproductive Health, Veterans Health Administration, in March of 2023.



Dr. Katherine Sherif is a leading expert on PCOS. As an internist in the 90's, she was studying insulin resistance when she discovered a special group of women with exaggerated insulin resistance: women with polycystic ovary syndrome. She started prescribing insulin sensitizers in the 90's based upon the work of Italian clinical investigators. In 2000, she co-founded the first academic center for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome with Dr. Shahab Minassian. Dr. Sherif is also a top speaker and a writer in a number of areas including menopause, hormone replacement therapy, omega-3 fatty acids, and heart disease in women. She is author of ***Women's Health in Clinical Practice: A Handbook for Primary Care and Hormone Therapy: A Clinical Handbook***.



Dr. Michael Neblett II graduated Summa Cum Laude from East Tennessee State University (ETSU). After receiving his medical degree from ETSU Quillen College of Medicine, he completed his GYN/OB Residency at Emory University. Dr. Neblett recently completed his Fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility along with a masters in biomedical sciences at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. During his fellowship training, he was

selected as an inaugural Society of Reproductive Surgeons surgical scholar. Now back in Atlanta, Dr. Neblett has joined the REI faculty at Emory University as an assistant professor specializing in reproductive surgery. His surgical interests include uterine leiomyomas, advanced stage endometriosis, adenomyosis, Asherman syndrome, tubal reversals, and complex Mullerian anomalies.

2023 HELA WOMEN'S HEALTH SYMPOSIUM PANELISTS



Lauren Kornegay, a proud Oxon Hill, MD native and Morgan State University graduate, was diagnosed with endometriosis at the age of 20, igniting a journey filled with pain and challenges. This diagnosis brought forth a journey filled with pain, challenges, exhaustion, and uncertainty, all commonly associated with this disorder. Driven by her mother's wise words—"If there's a void, fill it, and if you want something done, do it yourself"—Lauren decided to create a space where there was none. In April 2019, she established Endo Black Incorporated, a platform dedicated to connecting African American women and women of color living with endometriosis.

Under Lauren's leadership and steadfast guidance, Endo Black, Inc. has also forged impactful collaborations with George Mason University's College of Public Health, culminating in the successful completion of the research study, Endo-Served and two others underway. Lauren's influence transcends the bounds of Endo Black, Inc. and her expertise has been a valuable asset to the Society of Women's Health Research Endometriosis Education Working Group and ENACT Core B Stakeholders Advisory Board.

Lauren Kornegay's unyielding dedication and resolute advocacy have amplified the voices and experiences of the demographic they serve. Her mission is unequivocal: to ensure that no one feels isolated in their struggle with this condition and to galvanize tangible change and recognition within the community.



Sasha Ottey is the Founder and Executive Director of PCOS Challenge: The National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association. She started the organization after being diagnosed with PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) and experiencing dissatisfaction with the availability of support resources for women with the condition.

As Executive Director, Ms. Ottey built a coalition of over 70 major national and international health organizations and led the first successful legislative advocacy effort in the U.S. Congress to recognize the seriousness of PCOS, the need for further research, improved treatment and care options, and for a cure for PCOS. She also led efforts to designate September as PCOS Awareness Month and recently held the PCOS Patient-Focused Drug Development meeting to inform the FDA and industry about patient experiences, needs, and priorities for treatments for PCOS.

One important area of focus for Ms. Ottey is improving healthcare disparities caused by gender, ethnicity, race, geography, body size and other factors. She is currently leading the PCOS Global Health Equity Coalition-building efforts to address health disparities within the field of PCOS.



Tanika Gray Valbrun is an award-winning journalist, educator, and non-profit founder with a passion for women's health. After her personal struggles with uterine fibroids, including two myomectomies, Tanika was inspired to create The White Dress Project. This non-profit organization is dedicated to providing support for women suffering from fibroids and raising awareness and education about the uterine fibroid epidemic.

As the founder of The White Dress Project, Ms. Gray Valbrun has successfully worked with doctors, health advocates, and elected officials across the country to get legislation passed declaring July as "Fibroids Awareness Month." She is recognized as a thought leader and patient advocate for uterine health.

In addition to her advocacy work, Ms. Gray Valbrun is a Senior Content Producer for a global news organization where she has been awarded three coveted Peabody Awards for her contributions in journalism. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mass Communications with a concentration in Broadcast Journalism from Florida International University and University of Maryland with a Certification in Radio and Television.



Rose Scott is an award-winning journalist and host of the midday news program "Closer Look" heard on Atlanta's NPR, station 90.1 FM – WABE.

In her role as a co-host and now host, Rose has interviewed foreign heads of states, cabinet members, U.S. ambassadors, numerous consul generals, state and local elected officials as well as civic and social leaders. Closer Look has become a signature broadcast for the community and brings together viewpoints from all sectors of society.

She leads the "Closer Look" team in presenting discussions centered on affordable housing, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, immigration and criminal justice reform. With more than two decades of reporting in Atlanta, Rose has covered education, minority health issues, Atlanta historically Black colleges and universities, gender issues and sports.

ABOUT DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER SHANNON MCCOY COHN



Director & Producer **Shannon Cohn** is a filmmaker, storyteller and social movement builder who is passionate about building awareness and activating change in global women's health. She has worked across Africa, Europe, the Middle East & the Americas on topics related to gender equity and combating stigma and taboo. Her new PBS film, *Below the Belt*, looks at each of these issues through the lens of endometriosis ("endo"), a condition that affects approximately 200 million girls and women around the world. Despite its pervasiveness, it takes an average of 8 to 10 years to be diagnosed. *Below the Belt* premiered nationally in the US in June 2023 on PBS. *People Magazine* is touting it as a film that "will save lives." The personal and inspiring film, more than 10 years in the making, weaves together the intimate stories of a diverse selection of women navigating barriers to quality healthcare.

Shannon's passion for raising awareness about and driving societal change around women's health comes from her own personal experience. She first experienced symptoms at 16 and spent 13 years searching for answers before she was diagnosed at the age of 29. *Below the Belt* is her second documentary on this subject. Her first, *Endo What?*, was hailed by *The Guardian* as "film of the year" and by *Newsweek* as "the first step in a plan for change." It provides an accurate base of knowledge about endometriosis straight from experts – something shockingly difficult to find about the disease impacting 1 in 9 women.

Shannon attended the Graduate Film Program at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and has made several other feature and television documentaries. Before she was a filmmaker, she lived and worked at the largest Liberian refugee camp in west Africa helping establish health and education programs and was an international law attorney who was part of the legal team that prosecuted Enron in the largest white-collar crime investigation in FBI history.

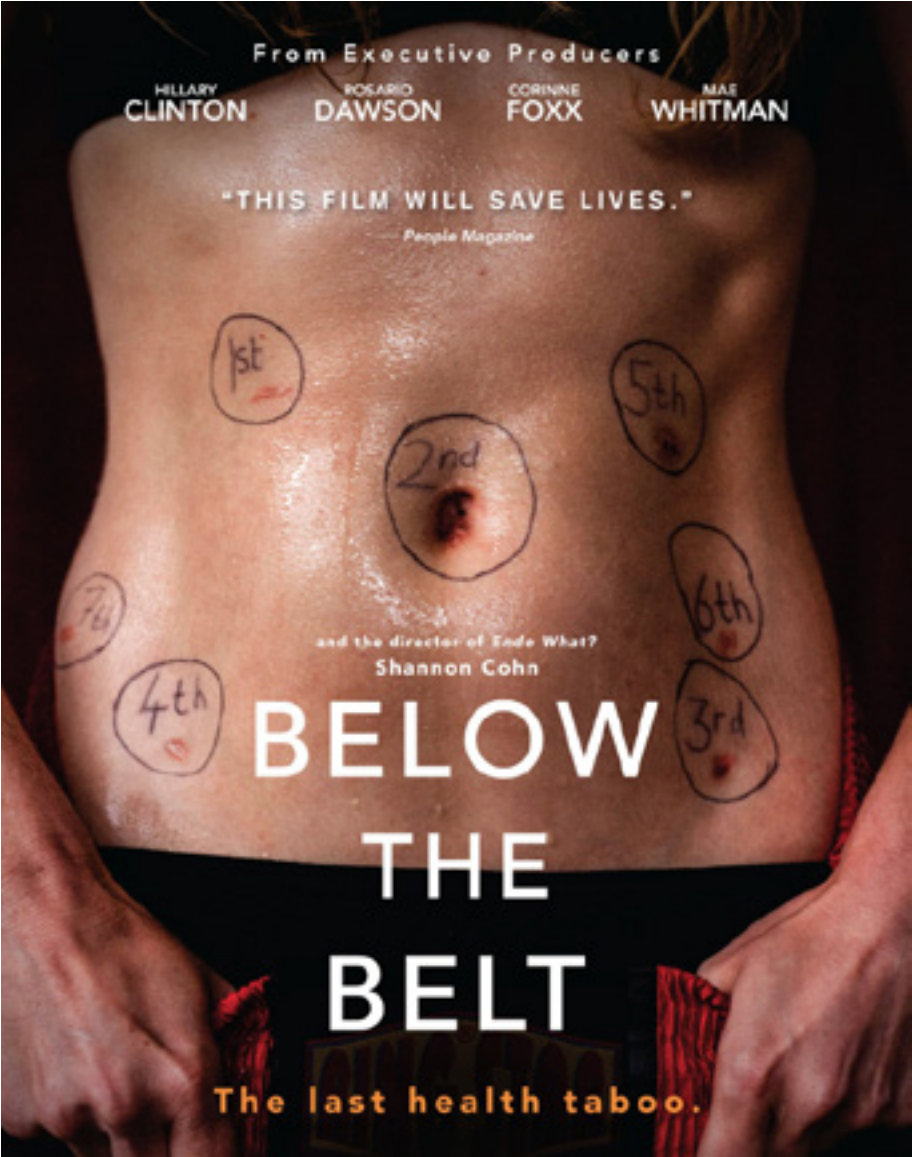
THANK YOU TO HELA COMMITTEE

Jamille Bradfield
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Jasmine Clark
Tony Collier
Kaleb Comer
Jenifer Cooper
Travis Copeland
Shondria Convington
Walter Douglas
Danielle Franklin
Dorian Harriston
Teiko Johnson
Charlotte Jones
Lauren Kornegay
Robert Landers
Amanda Magdalenski
Dr. Roland Matthews
Denise McGee
Bridget Miller
Dr. Creshema Murray
Sasha Ottey
Walicia Patterson
Rose Scott
Dr. Winston Thompson
Tanika Gray Valburn

REMEMBERING PADARRAH MOSS



Morehouse School of Medicine remembers our IT family member, **Padarra Moss**. Padarra was integral to the success of the HeLa Women's Health Symposium for many years. He is missed but his presence is felt.



From Executive Producers

HILLARY
CLINTON

ROSARIO
DAWSON

CORINNE
FOXX

MAE
WHITMAN

"THIS FILM WILL SAVE LIVES."

— People Magazine

and the director of Endo What?

Shannon Cohn

BELOW THE BELT

The last health taboo.