



UCCM NEWS

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANS @ STANFORD

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My Undocumented Journey *by Florence Adewale, MS in Engineering, '17*

During my senior year of high school, a fellow student in my class was expelled because our school district had a zero-tolerance policy regarding weapons on campus. As far as I know, her brother left a renaissance festival knife in the back of the car that they shared. She had no idea it was there, but campus police saw it in her car the next day. When her final verdict was shared during my high school political science class, I stormed out the class in tears. It was very out of character for me. I never showed emotion in that way and definitely was not the type to storm out. I remember the confusion among classmates given that I did not have a close relationship with that student. What no one knew that day was that my outburst of emotion was not about that student particularly—it was about doing all the right things, yet being labeled in such a way that you would be denied access and remain unqualified due to a situation that you had no control over. Surely her college chances, hence her future, was being tampered with, as mine was, not for a zero-tolerance violation, but because I was undocumented.

I moved to America from Nigeria as a young child and started first grade here. I quickly fell into the American way of life as most immigrant children do. By all accounts, I felt that I was *American* until I reached the age of sixteen and could not get a driver's license. I came to the understanding that certain papers made immigrants *American*, and I did not have them.

The inability to drive legally was minuscule in comparison to what I faced in the years ahead, academically and emotionally. When my friends threw me surprise party to celebrate my admission to Cornell University, I did not quite know how to explain to them that I could not attend. My high school English teacher was the first person outside my family that I revealed my status to when I could not give her a good reason not to attend Cornell when my family's income level would guarantee me full financial aid. As an undocumented student, I was not eligible for any form of federal aid and most forms of other aid including loans. I was considered an international student and therefore not in the same pool as other students that I had shared American classrooms with the past twelve years.



Florence Adewale

I submitted over fifty college applications that year. While getting accepted to college was usually not a problem, I could not afford to pay out of pocket and raising the amount of money necessary for me to attend college in a year did not seem feasible either. I was rather unsure about my future and quite frankly about myself. The unforgiving rhetoric about "illegals" in my home state of Texas could not possibly be describing me. I did not know what I was. I wanted to be just another *American* teenager. There was no box for to check on my college applications, no category to fit my situation. When I called admission offices, fearful to say that I was "illegal", I would try to explain that technically their application required me to apply as an international student, but that I had lived

most of life here in the states. Schools asked me to send TOEFL scores (English fluency exam), visas, and other forms of documentation that I either did not have or that were not relevant to me. I spent most of my hours not taken up by my studies and varsity basketball researching every possible way for me to attend college but often came up where I had started—apply as an international student and pay directly out of pocket. I coped with my feelings of isolation by spending hours online trying to understand what it meant to be an undocumented teenager. All the resources and networks available now and did not exist in 2009. I eventually stumbled on something called the *Dream Act*, got hopeful, but soon realized it had failed to pass many times before (finally passed through an Executive Order as DACA the summer of 2012—I cried as Obama announced that students who are how I once was could go to college and work). As far as I knew, I had no future in America, I would not go to college, and eventually—I would face deportation.

I come from a working-class immigrant family. I often think about my story of education. I was that student who submitted all my assignments early, stayed up all night when it was necessary, and was overscheduled between academics, extracurricular activities, and family obligations. Since as far back as I could remember, I believed that if I remained disciplined and worked hard, I would have choice in life. That belief was somewhat challenged my senior year of high school because I no longer mattered—my status did. That year was the hardest, scariest, most frustrating year of my life.

My Undocumented Journey (*continued*)

A Texas law in combination with financial access at a Texas university changed everything for me that year. Texas House Bill 1403, allowed certain categories of students including undocumented students to receive in state tuition at public colleges and universities given that they signed an affidavit agreeing to apply for permanent residency at their earliest opportunity to do so. Additionally, Texas A&M University had a version of the FAFSA called the TASFA that qualified certain students including undocumented students for state grants and other private merit and need based aid. A couple months before high school graduation, I received my financial aid letter from Texas A&M. It was enough for me to attend at the in state-tuition rate. I was going to college. (I still get chills watching that Target ad showing student reactions to their college admissions letter.)

My mom fought tirelessly to find and pay for a good immigration lawyer who was taking on my case and helped me reapply for a green card. The emotional turmoil I thought was over for at least the time being, but my college experience proved to be more isolating than my senior year was. I was black, I was a woman, I was undocumented—and I studied engineering at one of the most conservative predominantly white institutions in the country. By the end of my freshman year of college, I had the “n” word scrawled on my door in the honors dorm and then had the incident minimized to just some drunk people playing around by the dorm RA, I listened to classmates berate undocumented students, and I read the many emails from my fellow aggies fighting to repeal the bill that made it possible for me to attend A&M. Students who had privilege and access were actively fighting to take away my opportunity. I was angry at them, but they also made me angry at myself. I often doubted my worth and whether I deserved the same opportunities as those students at all.

I mastered what I had been training myself to do since first moving to America—hiding in plain sight. It was easy, the black immigrant population remains largely unseen in mainstream culture and excluded from conversations about immigration. During a small university sponsored gathering of a small group of other undocumented students at A&M to walk us through our legal issues, I sat in the back, did not want anyone to recognize me and left as soon as possible. When I had immigration hearings in Houston, I would make up excuses about why I was leaving school in the middle of the week. My brother who I last saw when I was a child remains a mystery to most of my friends. Hiding extended to every facet of my life including my faith. Unfortunately, church was also a place where I did not feel free to truly share in respect to this situation as “Illegal” did not sound particularly holy to me. (I shared once with a youth pastor and did not leave the conversation encouraged to share ever again. With that said, I was encouraged to share openly for the first time and write this by my community of faith here at Stanford) I remember feeling so beaten down at one point that I tried to share with another girl in bible study. Being that vulnerable to someone who found it hard to even imagine my life was too much and I broke down in tears unable to speak. It was easier to continue hide and put a smile on my face than it was to explain my family or immigration situation.

Despite it all, I found ways to thrive in college because I understood so deeply how fortunate I was to be there at all. I deeply valued being in college because I knew that a college education would give me choices.

I wanted that in my life. I especially wanted to be able to write my own story despite the story that society has already written about women like me.

My sophomore year of college, I cried my second biggest tears of joy on the floor of my door room. I became a legal permanent resident November 10th, 2010. My legal woes were behind me, but my past still wrecked me daily.

My junior year, a student with the best of intentions asked if I was an international student in front of a large group of my dorm friends because she saw my name in a file in the international student's office where she worked part time. I have never felt as naked as I did in that moment as everyone stared at me awaiting a response. I clumsily said I am not sure why that would be there and another student suggested maybe there was another Florence Adewale floating around A&M.

That year, I also met the man responsible for my biggest tears of joy. It took me many more years to share honestly the man who has loved me so genuinely from the start and has opened his heart to me and all that I came with.

Today, I am ashamed of how much I allowed myself to be consumed by shame due to my status. I cared too much how people would see me. Years that I could have joined the fight that paved the way for me to attend college, years that I could have been a part CMSA, an incredibly courageous group of students at Texas A&M fighting for undocumented students, years that I could have helped change the *single story* of the undocumented immigrant, I spent wallowing in shame. I let it scar me so deeply that I still struggle with it today. I hated that I was undocumented so much that I just wanted to separate it from my experience. I was fun, smart Flo—not undocumented Flo. The truth though is that I was fun, smart and undocumented Flo. I was undocumented for more than a decade, it is every bit part of my story, weaved intricately into my journey. As I finish writing this, I just left the wedding of one of my best friends in college. I thought about this story and I once again tried to separate my undocumented status from my experience as I danced with many people I experienced my first two years of college with. I was again tempted to attempt to create an “alternative truth” because undocumented did not seem to fit on that dance floor. That voice that I let win for so many years was there again telling me that the people I danced with are not supposed to have friends that were undocumented, but I was reminded being undocumented should not mean that I do not belong.

The current political climate has evoked an emotional response from me—for many people in my community which is how I came to begin sharing. I became a US citizen May 10th, 2016 and it seems that it could not be timelier. I voted in my first election last year. Eight years ago, I thought I was not going to college. I graduate this June with my Masters from Stanford. I recognize that this is usually not how the story continues for most undocumented people who arrive in this country as children. I recognize that just a different decision from the immigration official who reviewed my case would mean that I would in line to be deported to a country I left more than two decades ago. While I do not have the all the solutions to our broken immigration system, I do have my story. The more we can all share our stories, the more we can be part of one another's journeys.

The Stanford Daily

Stanford's Moral Voice Should be Commensurate with Its Privilege *by Rev. Geoff Browning, UCCM/PC@S Campus Minister*

This article was originally published in the Stanford Daily on April 14, 2017

There has been a great deal of concern about the rhetoric and policies of the new Trump administration. Trump's promise to "build a wall," "ban Muslims," and deport "bad hombres" has produced anxiety for many, fear for others and terror for those that have been directly impacted by such threats. [One video shows](#) a child's father being taken away by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as she is heard sobbing in the background.

The students of [Stanford Sanctuary Now \(SSN\)](#) have organized a significant coalition of students to request that Stanford declare itself a "sanctuary" campus, among other demands. [In a meeting with Stanford President Marc Tessier-Levigne](#), Stanford has agreed to enact some of the goals of "sanctuary" while avoiding the label. The students have made several demands, some of which the administration has agreed to, some of which have yet to be fulfilled, and some the administration has denied. It is encouraging that the administration is willing to engage the students in this important dialogue.

So why should any of this matter? After all, it would seem that relatively few students and workers at Stanford are likely to be affected by these policies and rhetoric. The university President has said he doesn't want to raise the university's profile any more than necessary lest the university become a target of retaliation. Indeed, both Trump and Jeff Sessions, the U.S. Attorney General, have indicated that they intend to target those cities and institutions who declare themselves sanctuaries.

But let's be clear, these are not normal times. Since Trump's election, the [incidence of hate crimes and threats have skyrocketed](#). These incidents included everything from verbal harassment to graffiti to shootings and arson against mosques. Those targeted include women, people of color, Jews, LGBTQ and

of course Muslims. We have seen some of these incidents [right here on the Stanford campus](#) and in the [Bay Area](#).

And let's not forget that Trump himself has used racist language and encouraged violence, even offering to pay the legal bills of those who commit violence. This is an affront to all our values as a society and an academic institution. So while the university has acceded to some of the requests of SSN, the university can and should do more.

The Stanford administration has declined to declare itself a sanctuary campus because, they say, the term is "not well-defined." And yet that is exactly why the university can and should declare itself a sanctuary without fear of retribution. The Trump administration will attempt to make cities, states and institutions pay a cost for attempting to do what they believe is in the best interest of their citizens and communities. But without a well-defined meaning of the term, their efforts will amount to little more than jousting at windmills.

But there are at least three more reasons for Stanford to declare itself a sanctuary campus. First, it would provide an unequivocal declaration that Stanford, consistent with its own "Fundamental Standard" values, intends to protect all those within the Stanford community. While the Stanford administration has made some tentative steps toward protecting those who are undocumented, it has remained mostly silent. Timidity emboldens the oppressor and does not reassure those who are most at risk.

Second, there is safety in numbers. Imagine the possibilities of such a declaration: schools, communities, and churches by the thousands, all over the country declaring themselves sanctuaries, declaring that they refuse to allow families to be torn apart



ICE and Police conduct immigration raids

and their communities harmed. Imagine what injustice could have been prevented if more institutions – including schools and churches – had spoken out leading up to the Holocaust or the Japanese internment or any number of other atrocities. As [Pastor Martin Niemöller said](#), "First they came for the socialists, and I didn't say anything because I wasn't a socialist... Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't say anything because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me."

Finally, if Stanford declares itself a sanctuary campus, not only would the university be renowned for its technical and academic prowess, but it would be viewed as a moral leader willing to stand up to the growing xenophobia and violence of this president and his administration. Imagine the possibility of the most prestigious universities around the country standing up to bigotry and hate.

There are times when we should play it safe, and there are times when we should take risks, especially when we can use our prestige, power and privilege to protect others and preserve the values of our institutions and communities. Stanford has an abundance of all three that it can use to protect this community and create hope and pride in its leadership. The Trump administration will not last forever, but history will ask, which side were you on?

The Work for Peace+Justice Studies at Stanford Continues

By Cole Manley, B.A. History, 2015

The Peace+Justice Studies Initiative (PJSI) is in the final year of our Hoagland Award for Innovations in Undergraduate Education. We are working with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford, as well as the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE) and several other programs, to collaborate on academic and curricular initiatives we feel would be most helpful going forward. With a new President and Provost guiding Stanford, now is the time to support peace and justice studies.



Cole Manley

The PJSI traces its recent history to 2012, when a group of students, faculty, and community members began meeting. In the spring of 2013, our group coalesced as the PJSI and applied for and received a grant from the [Hoagland Fund for Innovations in Undergraduate Teaching](#) to develop ideas and curriculum for Peace and Justice Studies at Stanford.

Peace studies is such a broad field that it was necessary to think carefully about our program's niche and definition. There were certain programs we looked to for inspiration, such as the University of Notre Dame's Peace Studies program, Tufts University's Peace and Justice Studies program, and American University's International Peace and Conflict Resolution program, among others. These programs had succeeded in generating student engagement, faculty leadership, and innovative courses of study.

Since we began this work, new peace studies programs have begun in highly respected institutions. A prominent example is [OxPeace--Oxford Network of Peace Studies in the UK](#). As part of our research into existing programs, and with support from Geoff Browning and



Aircraft missile assault over Vietnam

other members of the United Campus Christian Ministry, Jocelyn Lee and I completed a documentary film, [Reimagining Violence](#), exploring some of the most well-established peace studies programs in the nation and why Stanford needs a peace and justice studies program. We have since screened the film on campus, at a national student peace conference, and to local community members.

As stated on our website, we conceptualized Peace+Justice Studies by focusing on four areas: (1) nonviolence, violence, and civil resistance; (2) peace-making; (3) transformative justice; and (4) well-being. Unlike some peace studies programs which focus more narrowly on conflict resolution, we see questions about peace as inextricably linked to questions about justice and injustice, and questions that require an interdisciplinary approach involving history, political science, gender studies, comparative studies in race and ethnicity, and many other fields. Our leadership and advisory boards include faculty from History, Symbolic Systems, Electrical Engineering, Theater and Performance Studies, Neurosurgery and Religious Studies.

This interdisciplinary focus is reflected in several new courses we have brought to Stanford developed. In addition, each quarter for the past four years we have maintained lists of existing and new courses that we feel relate to peace and justice studies. This is just a beginning effort. The listing of these courses can be found here: <https://peacejustice.stanford.edu/courses>.

Along with courses, we have also hosted two major conferences at Stanford: "Nonviolent Action Amidst Violent Conflict", and "Ways to Justice: Perspectives on Nonviolence, Civil Resistance, and Self-Defense." Work is under way to compile presentations from "Ways to Justice" into a book available online and in print. These conferences have helped explore ongoing debates in the field of peace studies, such as the merits and efficacy of nonviolent and violent resistance, peace-making as a tactic or as a way of life, and other such questions.

Our events and performances have drawn hundreds of people from around the Bay Area. These include a new play, "Words and Images to End All Wars: Commemorating the Centennial of World War I," which was performed in 2015 and 2016, and "Democracy Now: Twenty Years Covering the Movements Changing America," with Amy Goodman.

As our short history reveals, the PJSI has already succeeded in bringing attention to the field of peace studies at Stanford through both new courses and public events and conferences. But we continue to seek support to strengthen our mission and broaden our outreach and impact. Learn more at our website: <https://peacejustice.stanford.edu/>

At Stanford, Martin Luther King, Jr. is at the Back of the Bus

By Alex Richman Paul Ramsey, B.A in African and African-American Studies, '17

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The King Institute is housed in temporary buildings at Stanford

Biking past the Science and Engineering Quad reveals an interesting dichotomy at Stanford. Behind you, the impressive and technologically-advanced buildings puts Stanford's academic excellence on proud display. But just ahead lies a much different picture.

In the shadow of Y2E2, you'll find a row of shabby portables known as Cypress Hall. Located on the margins of campus, few Stanford students know where the hall is; even fewer are aware that one of these modest, outdated buildings is home to one of the world's largest collections of scholarship regarding the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1985, Coretta Scott King asked Stanford History Professor Clayborne Carson to direct the King Papers Project, a collaborative effort to document, publish, and archive thousands of Dr.

King's personal papers. Expanding on the work of this project, in 2005 Dr. Carson founded the [Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute](#).

The Institute has published seven volumes of the King Papers, in addition to producing plays performed internationally, training scores of student researchers, producing [an online King Encyclopedia](#), and developing educational resources about the African American Freedom Struggle. The Institute has been visited by civil rights leaders, freedom fighters, even the Dalai Lama; the Institute's most recent scholar in residence, Dr. Clarence Jones, was Dr. King's personal attorney - the man who snuck out King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" from Birmingham Jail.

As the King Papers Project expanded out of its original Meyer Library office, the University of-

ferred Dr. Carson Cypress Hall D as a temporary facility, promising a permanent, more functional space would come. But whenever he inquired about the status of the new space, he received the same reply: just wait a few more years.

Today, the King Institute remains in Cypress Hall D.

While Dr. Carson has been patiently waiting for a new home for the Institute, Stanford has [invested billions of dollars into renovations and new projects](#) - such as the Science and Engineering Quad directly across from the King Institute. The contrast between these two spaces offers a stark visual manifestation of many students' criticisms that the University has failed to prioritize both [the humanities](#) and [supporting faculty of color](#).

As an institution that prides itself on a commitment to both disciplinary and social diversity, it would make sense for Stanford to center the work of the Institute's humanities scholarship, research training, and public outreach program. [In a recent article](#), Stanford acknowledges that the work done at the Institute is important and uncommon, noting that it is "one of only a few large-scale research ventures focusing on a single African American."

The fact that Stanford has these artifacts is an incredible honor for this university. So why do so few know about it?

The work of the King Institute today is more important than ever. Following the 2016 election, it is important to remember the stories and actions of those who came before us and apply their lessons to the challenges that lie ahead. Dr. King's life is an extraordinary example of the principles and practice of nonviolent resistance, compassion and empathy, and an unending will to confront and challenge the forces of injustice and evil.

There is no denying that this school is, to use Dr. King's words, a "vast ocean of material prosperity." There is no shortage of resources here. The opening of the new \$87 million McMurtry Building in 2015 is an encouraging and important start to a greater commitment from the University to the arts and humanities.

There is still more work to be done.

The King Institute is a critical asset essential to Stanford scholarship. It is time that the University acknowledge this, and I invite the new President and incoming Provost to fully support the important work done there.

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