

*We dedicate the 2022 Women of Color in the Academy conference to bell hooks**

(September 25, 1952 – December 15, 2021).



Raised in segregated Kentucky, bell hooks was the daughter of a janitor and a maid. An avid reader, with poets Gwendolyn Brooks and Elizabeth Barrett Browning among her favorites, hooks was motivated to seek higher education and explore the realm of learning, which she would later describe as “the practice of freedom” and “a place where paradise can be created.”

She earned a B.A. from Stanford University, an M.A. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and a Ph.D. from the University of California – Santa Cruz in English literature. As a faculty member, she taught at multiple colleges and visited universities across the country. Some universities where she lectured include the University of Southern California, University of California – Santa Cruz, San Francisco State University, Yale, Oberlin College, and the City College of New York. Ultimately, she returned to Kentucky in 2004 to become a Distinguished Professor in Residence at Berea College.

A prolific writer, hooks authored over 40 books, including five children’s illustration books and numerous poems about race and feminism. She pioneered the concept of intersectionality in feminism. Her work has had a profound impact on the teaching of feminism in the academy, showing that the goal of gender equity cannot be achieved without fully and honestly addressing race and sexuality. Her 1981 book, *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, has become a staple on college syllabi. She was a thought leader, a brilliant scholar, and an academic who used her pen to challenge society to be our better selves. A recurring theme in her work is the beauty of women of color and the value of our voices. Today we honor the memory of a sister whose ideas live on with us.

**We use lowercase letters to respect her own usage.*