



Uplift

MEMPHIS

Uplift

THE NATION

INITIATING & SUSTAINING SOCIAL CHANGE



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS

The Benjamin L. Hooks
Institute for Social Change

Double the Hooks Institute's Capacity to Reduce Racial, Economic and Other Disparities in the Mid-South

The Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016. We are implementing an urgent, bold and courageous campaign to help overcome racial, economic and social disparities in Memphis and the Mid-South. The Institute is positioned to emerge as a preeminent institution leading the push for problem-solving strategies in the civil rights arena.

With unwavering commitment to equality for all, we are launching a new initiative—*Uplift Memphis: Uplift the Nation*.

Our mission is teaching, studying and promoting civil rights and social change.



The Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change implements its mission of teaching, studying and promoting civil rights and social change primarily through teaching, research, innovative initiatives and community engagement. Founded

in 1996 by the late civil rights activist Benjamin L. Hooks in partnership with University of Memphis officials, the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute

for Social Change is an interdisciplinary center at the University of Memphis. The Hooks Institute addresses contemporary racial, social, economic and other disparities. We build on the legacy of human and civil rights activism of our namesake.

Benjamin L. Hooks was an activist

from the early days of the civil rights movement, serving as the first African American commissioner at the U.S. Federal Communications Commission and the executive director of the NAACP. The Hooks Institute's programs embody the highest ideals

of service, activism and commitment reflected by the life of Benjamin Hooks.

“Founded in 1996 by the late civil rights activist Benjamin L. Hooks in partnership with University of Memphis officials, the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change is an interdisciplinary center at the University of Memphis.”

We can strengthen communities by aggressively tackling inequality, especially disparities related

to poverty, race, health and the economy. Through its own initiatives and through partnerships with business, University and community stakeholders, the Hooks Institute is prepared to lead the effort to make Memphis and the Mid-South a pioneer in tackling social justice issues.

“While many human and civil rights gains were made during the 1960s, the Hooks Institute sees this century as a new frontier with formidable challenges facing our community, nation and the world. As the lifetime of civil rights activism of our namesake demonstrated, hard work, perseverance and meaningful alliances create lasting change. This is a great template from which to shape and implement the work of the Hooks Institute.”

Daphene R. McFerren, Executive Director
Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change
at the University of Memphis

The prevailing condition of people in Memphis and the Mid-South creates an urgent call for immediate action. For the Hooks Institute, the moment to act is now.

A perfect storm for grand-scale collaboration among universities, businesses, government, community leaders, activists and others has been fueled by the persistent and growing problem of poverty and social injustice. There is a collective realization that regardless of one's background or social group, poverty and racism negatively impact all.

I Tackle Socio-Economic Disparities

Memphis is one of the poorest cities in the United States among urban areas with a population over one million. The 2016 (published in September 2017) poverty rates in the Memphis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (southwest Tennessee, northwest Mississippi and southeast Arkansas) for African Americans (28.3 percent) and Hispanics (30.1 percent) were more than twice the poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites (9.4 percent). The Memphis metropolitan area poverty rates for African Americans also were higher than the national poverty rates for African Americans (23.8 percent) and Hispanics (21.0 percent) for the same period, according to the U.S. Census.

In 2016, female-headed households in the Memphis MSA represented 19.4 percent of families, 50.4 percent higher than the 12.9 percent national average. Unmarried women were delivering half the births, a rate that was 40 percent higher than national figures. These trends affect poverty rates since female-headed households

are more likely to have incomes at, near or below the poverty line. High poverty rates correlate to high infant mortality rates, high rates of obesity, low educational attainment, lack of employment opportunities, high-rates of incarceration and depressed economies. Neither Memphis nor the nation can fully benefit from the enormous talent of residents because too much of it remains suppressed beneath a blanket of poverty.

The Hooks Institute's programs can help create shared prosperity in Memphis by uplifting those who suffer from racial, socio-

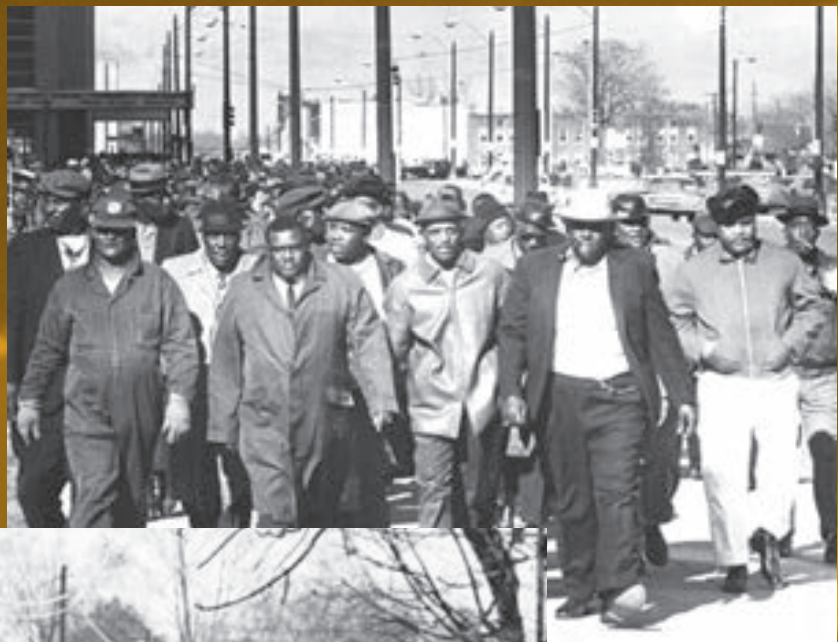
economic and other disparities. Through research and evidence-based approaches, community engagement initiatives and partnerships with non-profits and philanthropic organizations, businesses and members of the community, the Hooks Institute at the University of Memphis is uniquely positioned to continue developing real, lasting and replicable solutions that transform the lives of people in the Mid-South and the nation.

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Top Image: 1968 Memphis sanitation workers march. Source: Memphis Press-Scimitar Newspaper Morgue, Special Collections Department, University of Memphis Libraries.

Middle Image: John and Viola McFerren leading protestors to the Fayette County, Tennessee Courthouse. March 1965. Photographer: Art Shay, *LIFE* Magazine.

Bottom Image: Memphis State Eight, the first African American students to attend the University of Memphis, then Memphis State University. 1959. *The Commercial Appeal*. Special Collections Department, University of Memphis Libraries.







Expand University of Memphis and Hooks Institute Partnerships

The Hooks Institute is a crucial partner in the Mid-South for creating transformative change. The work of the University of Memphis through the Hooks Institute touches all aspects of Memphis, with partners that include state and county governments, national corporations, hospitals, non-profits, philanthropic organizations, citizen groups and many others.

Memphis is the perfect place to launch the Hooks Institute's *Uplift Memphis: Uplift the Nation* campaign, a robust effort to initiate and sustain broad institutional and social changes that positively transform people and communities. While reflecting on the achievements of the civil rights movement, Benjamin Hooks remarked, "We've come a long way, but it's like nibbling at the edge of darkness." The Hooks Institute is positioned to go beyond nibbling. The Institute seeks to shed substantial light on this darkness by leading the Mid-South in innovations and problem-solving through research, community building and direct intervention programs.

In December 2006, the Carnegie Foundation designated the University as a "community engaged" institution because of its active engagement in and commitment to the greater Memphis community.

Top Image: Hooks African American Male Initiative members at the 2018 Hooks Institute Join Hands for Change Benefit. Mar. 1, 2018

Bottom Left Image: HAAMI member, Shumecio Ford, speaks to the 2017 Hooks Institute Join Hands for Change Gala audience about the HAAMI program. Apr. 20, 2017.

Bottom Right Image: Olympic swimmer, Cullen Jones, encourages Splash Mid-South swimmers to make big splashes. Source: Methodist Le Bonheur Hospital.



I Build Capacity to Initiate Social Change

In March 2016, an inaugural gift of \$273,000 from the estate of the late Benjamin and Frances Dancy Hooks helped launch fundraising to support the Institute's *Uplift Memphis: Uplift the Nation* campaign to ensure the emergence of the Hooks Institute as an authority in dealing with civil rights issues. With additional support from the community, the Institute seeks to double its capacity to help transform the lives of people in the Mid-South.

“I don’t see a scenario where promoting civil rights and social change won’t be needed in the immediate or distant future. As long as there are issues that warrant discussion, the Hooks Institute has a major role in that dialogue.”

Logan Meeks, Hooks Institute Advisory Board Chair (Jan. 2014–Jan. 2018)



Engage Community Involvement in Civil Rights and Social Justice Issues

The Hooks Institute is the essential resource, community partner and leading research center on civil rights and social and economic justice in the Mid-South. It has partnered or led collaborations with community members and leaders from various sectors, including the philanthropic, non-profit, government and business communities, to further its scholarship and community engagement initiatives. With doubled capacity, the Institute will secure essential and impactful partnerships with local and national entities; create, preserve and disseminate social justice knowledge; and develop and implement programs and initiatives that reduce disparities and alleviate the suffering of marginalized populations.

For more than 20 years, the Hooks Institute has had an impressive track record of community engagement, scholarship and programming. Our high-quality programs include university and community engagement outreach, symposia and lectures. Over the last several years, attendance at our events have exceeded 1,000.

We have seen the community respond to our leadership:

- The Hooks Institute's collaborative efforts to increase swimming proficiency among minority youth have been supported by parents and children from diverse households, civic leaders and the media.
- A collaboration between the University of Memphis and Memphis area community leaders to publicly address polarizing issues confronting our society.
- An initiative to increase the retention and graduation rates of African American males attending the University of Memphis is supported by various University, corporate and nonprofit communities.

With additional funding, the reach and impact of the Hooks Institute will be greatly expanded for the benefit of the greater community.

Financial support for community outreach and engagement would enable the Institute to increase, sustain and expand its partnerships with universities, businesses, government, community leaders, activists and others to help solve persistent disparities that have been fueled by the persistent and growing problem of poverty in the Mid-South.

Image: (Left to Right) Daphene R. McFerren, Executive Director, Hooks Institute; Dr. M. David Rudd, President, University of Memphis; and Patricia Hooks Gray, daughter of the late Benjamin L. Hooks, reveal a gift from the estate of Benjamin L. and Frances D. Hooks. Mar. 2016.

Increase Research Publications, Grants and Awards

Today's 21st century problems, rooted in racism, poverty and inequalities of the past, require study and research to develop thoughtful strategies and evidence-based solutions. The Hooks Institute awards grants and other recognition to University of Memphis faculty and graduate students as well as scholars from other institutions. This bolsters the Institute's goal of developing effective and innovative programming in the humanities and sciences to tackle systemic injustices.

Hooks Institute grants have included funding for HIV prevention; websites and documentaries on civil rights history; and research on best practices for achieving swimming proficiency for minority youth. Other grants supported research about the impact of race in Memphis to examine the ways ordinary individuals use contemporary movements to create coalitions and define their identities.

The Hooks Institute also spearheads research and scholarly initiatives about issues that educate and inform the community, civic leaders and

policy makers. An example is the Hooks Institute's annual Policy Papers, including the 2017 publication *Bending the Arc Toward Justice: Including the Excluded*. Written by University of Memphis faculty members and other scholars, these publications analyze census and other data to explain the challenges facing communities in Memphis, and issue a call to action for cooperation among university, business and government sectors to help solve systemic problems. This and other publications have been disseminated broadly and are available on the Hooks Institute's website.

The Hooks Institute seeks to increase the number and size of its research grants and publications that strive to identify best practices to ameliorate socio-economic disparities. This would place the tools of rigorous research at the service of the community, providing insight in how national, racial and socioeconomic disparities can be improved.

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Image: Dr. Nabil A. Bayakly speaks about his 2017 Hooks Institute Policy Paper "Memphis and Islam: Integrating Muslims and Islam into the Community Fabric" to the audience of the 2017 Hooks Institute Open House. Oct.5, 2017.





I Develop Multimedia Projects to Inform and Empower

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

George Santayana

The Hooks Institute has created a multimedia platform on civil rights history as it unfolded in the Mid-South for diverse audiences throughout the world. This is crucial. Much of our civil rights history may not be known or understood, or some view it as distant history having little or no relevance to our lives today. Yet persistent social justice challenges remain. The Institute needs urgent support to preserve, analyze and disseminate information about racial and social justice along with the history of the Mid-South civil rights movement.

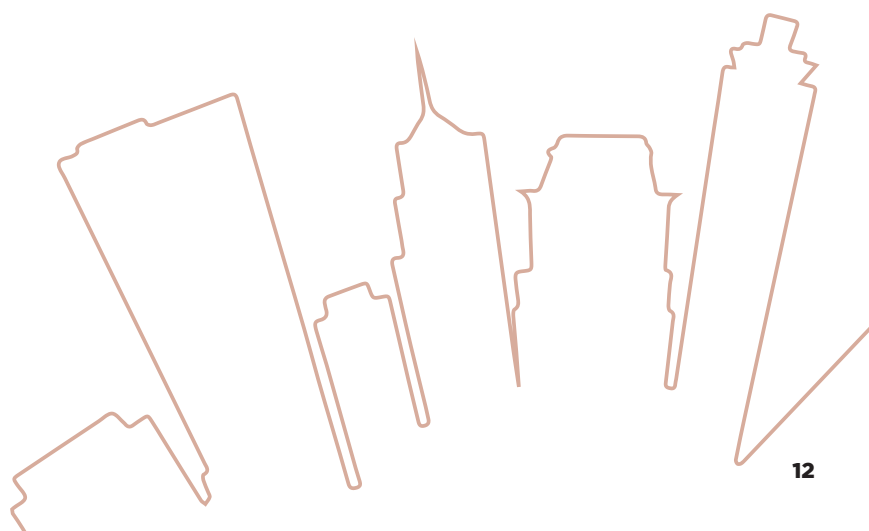
I Website

The Hooks Institute's website and social media platforms allow users a self-paced study of the civil rights movement. They provide historical benchmarks that help the community evaluate our nation's progress on civil rights. The websites and platforms include the following:

- The digitization of the personal papers of Benjamin L. Hooks. Increasing access to the papers of Hooks encourages scholarship and analysis on past events to evaluate the legacy of Hooks and other seminal events that impact the past and ongoing issues of racial inequality. The Hooks Institute launched this website in April 2017.
- An online project, "Mapping Civil Rights History." A Geographic Information System (GIS) maps seminal civil rights locations by satellite in Memphis and the Mid-South, including the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers strike.
- An online blog, "Uplift Memphis, Uplift the Nation: The Blog for Community Engagement," encourages a diversity of voices and perspectives on the topics of civil rights and social justice.
- An online project, "Tent City: Stories of Civil Rights in Fayette County, Tennessee." This website is the only one in the United States dedicated to this rural grassroots movement. It is the primary publicly available educational resource on this movement for educators in Tennessee and elsewhere. In 2014, the Tennessee State Board of Education added the study of this movement to the social studies standards for elementary and high school students. The website features historical analysis and video that provides first-hand accounts from movement activists.

Top Image: Tent City: Stories of Civil Rights in Fayette County, Tennessee is the only online resource covering that movement and is used by educators from around the country.

Bottom Image: The GIS Mapping project is one of many resources available on our website.



I Documentaries

The Hooks Institute's award-winning documentaries educate, inform and entertain to advance the cause of civil rights and social justice. These documentaries have been broadcast in markets that include West Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri and California. The following documentaries were produced, or funded in part, by the Hooks Institute:

- *Ida B. Wells* (2019)
Production is underway on this documentary about civil and women's rights activist and journalist Ida B. Wells (1862-1931). In the late 1800s, Wells championed a zealous effort to combat the lynching of African Americans in the South, fueled in large part by the lynchings of Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell and William Stewart in 1892 in Memphis. Wells' courageous activism continues to influence modern social justice movements.
- *The Civil Rights Movement: A Cultural Revolution* (2014)
This documentary on the civil rights movement's influence on music, fashion and culture is broadcast on local public television and streamed on YouTube. The film received the Silver Telly Award (2014) and the People's Telly Award (2014).
- *The Memphis 13* (2011)
A documentary on school desegregation in Memphis, funded in part by the Hooks Institute, was broadcast on local public television and has been shown at universities around the country.
- *Freedom's Front Line: Fayette County, Tennessee* (2008)
A film on African Americans' demand for the right to vote in this rural community was broadcast on local public television for several years and received the Director's Choice Award at the Black Maria Film Festival, Newark, New Jersey.
- *Duty of the Hour* (2016)
This film on the life of Benjamin L. Hooks has been broadcast on public television stations nationally and locally including WKNO (Memphis) and KCET (Los Angeles), one of the largest independent television stations in the nation. The Hooks Institute will continue to market the film to the top 25 public television stations in the United States.

The Hooks Institute's award-winning documentaries educate, inform and entertain to advance the cause of civil rights and social justice.

Financial support would sustain and allow for the expansion of the Hook's Institute's multimedia reach.

Top Image: Reece Auguiste, director, *Duty of the Hour*, prepares Benjamin L. Hooks for an interview. Source: Markhum L. Stansbury.

Middle Image: Image: (left to right) Marty Deull, Video Producer, University of Memphis; and Nathaniel C. Ball, Media and Programs Coordinator, Hooks Institute, interview HAAMI member Fletez Dyson for short film on the Hooks African American Male Initiative. Dec. 2015.

Bottom Image: Raumesh Akbari, Tennessee legislator, interviews for Hooks documentary on Ida B. Wells. Oct. 30, 2017.



Target Disparities By Empowering People

The Hooks Institute responds to, engages and serves the community through direct intervention. Our programs include:

- ***Hooks African American Male Initiative (HAAMI)***

In spring 2015, the Hooks Institute launched HAAMI, which focuses on increasing the retention and graduation rates of African American males attending the University of Memphis by enriching each student's academic, personal and career readiness development. While there has been an increase in the graduation rates of African American males, additional improvement is essential to economic development. Because African Americans are the majority of the City of Memphis and Shelby County, the success of Memphis is inextricably tied to their success.

- ***Splash Mid-South***

In 2009, Splash was created after the drowning deaths of two African American youth in Memphis city pools. The program was spearheaded by community partners, including a Memphis hospital, the City of Memphis, other non-profits and the Hooks Institute. A historical lack of access to pools and closure of pools in response to demands for integration in the 1960s limited African Americans access to swimming. Program results include tangible, positive outcomes: thousands of children have completed swimming lessons or water safety instruction. The

Hooks Institute has published best practices from this program to disseminate nationwide.

- ***Critical Conversations***

In 2015, the Office of the Provost at the University of Memphis and the Hooks Institute launched Critical Conversations, a University and community initiative to leverage the collective wisdom, insights and experiences of the university and broader community to address civil rights and social justice issues. Event topics have included First Amendment rights, the impact of immigration policies, LGBTQ rights and the volatile environment created by inflammatory interactions between the police and communities. Our proactive approach allows for discussion of concerns and questions in a calm, respectful and thoughtful forum. Our efforts help to facilitate the goal of a democratic civil society that values diversity, inclusivity, civil and human rights and non-violent movements and initiatives.

- ***Self-Empowerment; Community Uplift***

The Hooks Institute has led voter registration efforts on campus. It has also held financial literacy classes focused on financial responsibility and empowerment.

Top Image: Members of the Hooks African American Male Initiative.

Middle Image: A session of Critical Conversations with students from the University of Memphis. Oct. 15, 2015.

Bottom Image: Hooks Institute student volunteers register students to vote.

| Advancing Our Mission

Through research and community programs, the Hooks Institute seeks to overcome racial, health and socio-economic disparities in the Mid-South. We seek to identify best practices from our efforts so that there can be dissemination for replication throughout the nation. Funding efforts like these will allow the Institute to explore and implement innovative strategies in research, education and programming. The *Uplift Memphis: Uplift the Nation* initiative will provide funding for the Institute to transform the Mid-South by creating equal access to prosperity for all.



Uplift Memphis / Uplift the Nation

I Share Our Vision for a Bold and Daring Future

The Hooks Institute urgently needs your financial support to sustain and expand our efforts in Memphis and the Mid-South to advance social justice and the unfinished work of the civil rights movement. Based on a strong foundation of research, community engagement, creative works and publications on civil rights and social justice, we are committed to sustaining and expanding this urgent work. The Institute is well positioned to have a significant impact locally and nationally.

Your generous financial support will allow the Hooks Institute to create strategies and implement tactics to reduce racial and social inequalities in Memphis and the nation.

“The College of Arts and Sciences is proud to house the Hooks Institute, which continues the legacy of service to others by Benjamin Hooks and connects the history of the civil rights movement to social justice issues today. The HAAMI program illustrates the Institute’s innovative efforts to remove disparities to aid African American male students in graduating from college. These efforts honor Benjamin Hooks and other civil rights activists who fought for a more just and inclusive nation where all people could reach their full potential.”

Dr. Thomas Nenon, Professor and Dean,
College of Arts and Sciences, the University of Memphis



“My wife and I feel honored to be among the first black Americans to have enough money to [give to] causes other than just our family.”

Benjamin L. Hooks, Nov. 4, 2009

Top Image: 2015 Hooks National Book Award winning author James McGrath Morris speaks about his award winning book, *Eye on the Struggle*, to a crowd on the UofM campus. Nov. 15, 2016.

Middle Image: UofM community and community members listen to Benjamin L. Hooks. Nov. 4, 2009

Bottom Image: (Left to Right) Elena Delavega, Hooks Institute Associate Director and former HAAMI member Flatez Dyson speak at the 2016 Hooks Institute Gala. Apr. 21, 2016.



