ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: An oral history exploring the journey of African American doctoral recipients from 1970 to 1980

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DEGREE: Doctor of Education

COLLEGE: Teachers College

DATE: May, 2014

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The purpose of this study was to conduct an oral history of the lived experiences of nine African American doctoral recipients from 1970 to 1980, an era on the heels of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and the beginning of Affirmative Action in admission policies of Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). This study comprised of six males and three females, who self-identified as African American and received their doctorate degree between 1970 and 1980. Eight of the nine participants’ college of origin was an HBCU, however all of the nine participants graduated with doctorates from PWIs.

The data collection methods used for this qualitative study were biographical questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, which utilized semi-structured questions. The data analysis approach was coding categories that aided with sorting the data. Critical race theory (CRT) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. CRT was employed to analyze the lived experiences of these nine participants within American institutions such as K-12 schools, and colleges and universities. The findings revealed that race and racism played a role in the daily decision-making process of the participants, although it did not prevent these nine African Americans from receiving the doctorate degree.
This study presented counterstories told by a group of scholars who are depicted as being on the margin of society. It is crucial that the voices of those on the margin of society are included in the history of higher education. These scholars’ stories will contribute to the gap in the literature regarding African American doctoral recipients from 1970 to 1980. This study offers a profound story of the lived experiences of nine African American doctoral recipients during a period of vast social changes in American society.