

ASSOCIATION OF RICE ALUMNI
MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Nominee Chandler Davidson Phone (713) 669-0521 Fax _____
Address 3727 Glenhaven
City/State/Zip Houston, TX 77025 Rice Class Year(s) N/A
Degrees/Majors/Years/Institutions BA 1961 (Texas), Ph.D. 1969 (Princeton)
Occupation/Professional Field Sociology
Current Title/Position Radoslav Tsanoff Professor Emeritus of Public Affairs, Rice University

The Meritorious Service Award is designed to recognize Rice alumni, faculty, staff, or friends who rendered significant, sustained voluntary contributions of energy, time, and creativity towards the advancement of the university. The following criteria will be considered:

- a) enrichment of some aspect of the Rice community through ongoing dedication and support
- b) commitment to the lifelong vitality of the University

Please attach a letter of recommendation describing the merits of the nominee. Consider the following question in support of the above criteria: **Does this candidate exemplify someone who would be described as a tireless ambassador or emissary on Rice's behalf.**

Please note that incomplete nomination forms cannot be considered.

Nominated by Alexander X. Byrd Phone 713-906-1547 Fax _____
Address 6340 Main Street
City/State/Zip Houston, TX 77005

Please list two other people (i.e., colleague, classmate) whom you have asked to write a letter of support to further validate your nomination.

Name Monique Shankle Relationship Classmate
Address PO Box 20453 Houston, TX 77225-0453 Phone 832-605-4152
Name Jan West Relationship Colleague
Address Rice University MS #200 Phone 713-348-6759

Please return nomination material to:

or fax to: 713-348-5210

Office of Alumni Affairs – MS 520
Rice University
P.O. Box 1892
Houston TX 77251-1892



Alexander X. Byrd
Associate Professor, Department of History

18 October 2012

Office of Alumni Affairs–MS 520
Rice University
P.O. Box 1892
Houston, TX 77251-1892

Dear Selection Committee:


It gives me great pleasure to nominate Professor Chandler Davidson for the ARA's Meritorious Service Award. As a beloved professor, highly accomplished researcher, and a valued colleague, Chandler's contributions to the university have for more than forty years gone well beyond even the very high standard to which Rice holds its tenured faculty. His scholarship on modern voting rights has helped to shape and define a field that was in its infancy when Chandler began his research program at Rice in the late 1960s. For more than three decades, his teaching helped to set the foundations and frame the structure for what is now, arguably, the finest undergraduate teaching department on campus: the department of Sociology. Lastly, his service to the university has been remarkable indeed. Agree or disagree with the conclusions he came to hold concerning the university and whether we should continue to compete in division one athletics (and I certainly disagreed with him on this point) Chandler deserves plaudits for his tireless work helping to ensure that our rhetoric concerning the athletics at Rice ever strove to match our practice. But it is in the area of making Rice a university for everyone (not simply for the boys and girls imagined by the university's founder) that Chandler's service to Rice has been truly exceptional. Since Rice's desegregation, no member of the faculty has poured more of themselves into the work of molding the university into a genuinely open and diverse community of scholars than has Chandler.

All good scholarship matters. Chandler's research is distinguished by the fact that his scholarship has mattered and continues to matter in a highly contentious realm that directly affects all of us: the area of voting rights. He has written and edited well-regarded scholarly work concerning the impact, protection, and sapping of minority ballots. Beyond this, moreover, he has ushered this work into the public sphere in ways that have benefited all of us by raising the level of the public discourse through the inclusion of the most careful scholarship. Chandler's willingness to serve as an expert witness or consultant in trials addressing issues at the heart of our democracy perhaps best exemplifies his commitment to marrying his research to matters of real-world consequence. The fact that the pace of his consultancies and reporting has hardly slowed since his retirement speaks volumes to his continuing dedication to testing his work in the wider world.

In the way we generally measure such things at Rice—by listening to alumni who have had some time to reflect on their education and its relevance for their subsequent lives—Chandler was clearly one of the university's finest teachers during his career at the university. He was awarded the George R. Brown Award for Superior Teaching four times, and earned the Brown Award for Excellence in Teaching once. His dedication to undergraduate teaching showed in other ways as well. Chandler was always and remains very clear-eyed on the trade offs between what has long been been Rice's core mission (executing a second to none undergraduate program) and our aspirations (to build excellent graduate programs as well). For a while, as departments in the School of Social Science adopted 2-1 undergraduate teaching loads as part of an effort to increase research output among the faculty, Chandler and the Sociology department (which he chaired for more than a dozen years over the course of his career) continued to serve undergraduates by not forgoing their customary 2-2 teaching loads.

By his notable contribution to the research profile of the university and through his dedication to undergraduate teaching, Chandler has made an enormous contribution to Rice's growth and success over the last four decades. But as important as he has been to the university in these two areas, it is by dint of his service to Rice students themselves that he has made an absolutely invaluable contribution to Rice. Throughout his career and for a great many students, Chandler has been the member of faculty who made real the university's stated commitment to valuing and serving all of its students. So when the university's gay and lesbian students first organized a campus organization to serve their interests and to help improve their lives at Rice, they sought out Chandler to serve as their faculty advisor. They did not choose him by accident. I am certain that they saw in him what I saw in him when he came and spoke to first yearly meeting of the Black Student Union in 1986. Gathered in the basement of Lovett College with fewer African American students than I was used to seeing during home room at my former high school, I was a little anxious. Parts of the just completed O-week had me wondering what type of university I had gotten myself into. When Chandler walked in excitedly, side-by-side with Catherine Clack and then delivered a short, punchy talk concerning what we had to look forward to, and who was here to help, I knew exactly who he was: An ally. Chandler advised the Black Student Union (and then the Black Student Association) for more than twenty years. He introduced us to our forebears, answered our questions, helped up understand how the university worked. In emergencies, to some of us he lent money. At the end of our time at the university, he reached out to graduating African American seniors and over lunch (for me it was Japanese) listened to our plans for what lay beyond Rice. He was constantly at work helping to build black community at Rice, and inasmuch as the university as a whole—faculty, staff, and students together—have made good on the promise of desegregation here on South Main we certainly owe Chandler Davidson a great deal.

Sincerely,

 Digitally signed by Alexander X. Byrd
DN: cn=Alexander X. Byrd, o=ou,
email=abyrd2@rice.com, c=US
Date: 2012.10.19 10:36:10 -05'00'

Alexander X. Byrd

October 15, 2012

Association of Rice Alumni
Nominations Committee
Office of Alumni Affairs – MS 520
Rice University
PO Box 1892
Houston, TX 77251-1892

Dear Nominations Committee:

I am submitting this letter in support of Chandler Davidson's nomination for the Association of Rice Alumni Meritorious Service Laureate Award. As an undergraduate who matriculated in 1969, I first became acquainted with Chandler as part of the group of professors who recruited and championed the cause of black students in the early 60's and 70's. I can only imagine that a young professor with a family and a desire to have tenure must have had much on his personal plate. Yet he took the time to not only attract young students to Rice, but also to mentor and support them once they were here.

In those days, as there were no African American professors on campus, Chandler served as an excellent surrogate. He was the professor who was willing to serve as a faculty advisor for the Black Student Union and other groups. Over time, professors of color came onboard, yet Chandler continued his support through the decades. He is still a faculty advisor and informal historian of the BSA/BSU to this day. Even though he admits his memory is not as good as it used to be, he bridges the decades with information about rituals such as the MLK vigil, which is one of his favorites.

Chandler's support of black students at Rice has impacted young academicians nationally. When Chandler mentored and advised Linda Williams, the first African American student to matriculate at Rice and graduate, he mentored decades of black students from around the country. Linda was almost single handedly responsible for nurturing, encouraging and causing most of the black PhD's in political science in this country to pursue this course. So in a sense, Chandler was once again, a surrogate grandfather for this accomplishment. He encouraged Linda to pursue a Woodrow Wilson fellowship and graduate school. Without his wisdom and guidance, much of what happened in Linda's professional life and hence the life of her students may never have occurred.

Chandler not only supported his students in life, but he was there to support their families in death. I will never forget the poignant and educational trip to Lovelady, Texas on which I accompanied Chandler five years ago. We traveled there to attend Linda Williams' funeral. In true Chandler fashion, we dropped off campaign signs in Crockett, Texas for another former student who was at the time running for the Texas senate. Then we journeyed to pay our respects to Linda's family and say our farewells. I remember thinking, wow, what a professor, what a role model for others in his profession to follow.

If I can provide any additional information that will assist you in making this decision, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at 713 210-9336 or Jan.F.West@rice.edu.

If ever there was a time in his life that Chandler needed and merited such an award, it is this year. I hope that the committee will realize that he is truly deserving of all positive considerations for the 2013 award.

Sincerely,

Jan F. West
Class of '73

**Monique V. Shankle
P. O. Box 20453
Houston, Texas 77225-0453
(832) 605-4152
mvshankle@hotmail.com**

October 16, 2012

**Laureates Nominations Committee
Office of Alumni Affairs – MS 520
P. O. Box 1892
Houston, Texas 77251-1892**

Dear Laureates Nominations Committee:

Please allow this letter to serve as support for Dr. Chandler Davidson's nomination for the Meritorious Service Award.

I served as one of Dr. Davidson's research assistants from 1983 through my graduation from Rice in 1986. I cannot say enough good things about Dr. Davidson and his good deeds on campus, in the community, and in the country.

Dr. Davidson has enriched the Rice community by supporting all students and especially minority students at Rice since his arrival on the campus in 1966. Dr. Davidson knew the value of diversity early on. Some probably didn't realize that having a diverse student body was beneficial to the University as well as to the students themselves. He along with a few other Rice faculty did not allow the climate of the 1960's and 1970's to prevent them from doing the right thing. He helped to recruit minorities to attend Rice as well as mentor and advise them over the decades. In fact, he was instrumental in Linda Faye Williams' admission to Rice and her subsequent graduation as well as other Black alumni. Linda Williams was a member of the class of the first two Black graduating undergraduates admitted to Rice after the University

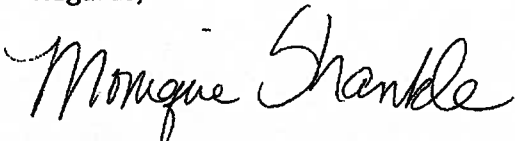
abandoned its charter provision that limited enrollment to white students. Linda went on to become a stellar professor of political science at some of the country's top universities prior to her passing.

Dr. Davidson's support of all students at Rice extends for over four decades. He has always fought for the students and spoke up for the students when they were not present. There are numerous reports on record regarding minorities and athletes at Rice of which he has contributed over the decades. His actions over these four decades exemplify his ongoing dedication and support of the betterment of the University. His support of the students has been steadfast and has never wavered.

Further, his decades of research on the Voting Rights Act has been influential not only in the lives of students at Rice but in the lives of Americans as a whole. Dr. Davidson's interests include racial and ethnic politics, minority voting rights, and social inequality.

In sum, Dr. Davidson's four decades of commitment to the diversification of the student body exemplifies his commitment to the lifelong vitality of the University. He has proven to be an excellent professor and a wonderful asset to Rice University as a whole. He is a wonderful, caring, honest man who helps others, and he always has a smile on his face. It is with much pleasure that I have the opportunity to submit this letter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monique Shankle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monique Shankle

Class of 1986