The 2019-2020 Academic Year marked a momentous occasion in the life of the Lewis Walker Institute. First, we welcomed a new Director, Dr. Luchara Wallace, Associate Professor of Special Education. Dr. Timothy Ready returned to faculty status in the Department of Sociology and longtime Administrative Assistant Senior, Mimi Adbul (Tanya Bellamy) retired after 32 years of service to WMU. Second, we spent a year celebrating the Lewis Walker Institute’s 30 years of service to the WMU and Greater Kalamazoo Communities. The wide array of programming began with a presentation by Daryl Johnson, former US Department of Homeland Security Analyst, on the Right Wing Resurgence. We hosted a book club on *How to Be an Antiracist* and welcomed, author Ibram X. Kendi to campus. In celebration of Native American/Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month, Dr. Luchara Wallace, PhD, Director
LenNada Warjack, Lenny Foster, and Levi Rickert presented *A Conversation with Native American Activists: Lessons in Healing, Resistance, & Leadership*. We also hosted a series of Lunch and Learns entitled Freedom Fridays where we discussed issues related to immigration law and reform.

Movies were a key component of our University and community engagement during the 2019-2020 Academic Year. November was a busy month for us. In addition to our other programming, we also hosted the first of a series of screenings of *Push Out: The Criminalization of Black Girls in America’s Schools*. In January, we hosted a special screening of *Just Mercy* and a post-movie discussion. Finally, in the month of February we hosted a month-long film festival *The Top 10 Hip-Hop Films of All Time* featuring special guests Supa Emcee, Mz Korona, MC Sha-Roc, DJ Conscious, and Brian “Champtown” Harmon.

We had plans to host the first Great Lakes Symposium on Mass Incarceration, but that and the remaining programming planned for the Spring semester had to be tabled due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Although the 2019-2020 Academic Year did not culminate in the way we’d planned, we were able to pivot our summer programming to remain a relevant and trusted resource to our community. Following the murder of George Floyd, we hosted a series of three Community Conversations on the State of Our Union. The conversations included WMU students, Walker Institute leaders, and community representatives. They proved to be much needed conversations during a very difficult time.

“It has been an honor to serve our WMU and greater community as we grapple with real issues related to race and ethnic relations in our communities.”

-LUCHARA WALLACE

Our WIRE Youth Development programming continued to grow and expand during the 2019-2020 Academic Year. One special feature of this year’s summer science and math camp was the

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introduction of the Summer Learning Symposium where camp participants presented academic-style poster presentations to parents and distinguished guests. In addition to our 2019 Summer Science and Math Camp, 2019-2020 Saturday Academy was also introduced. It provided a monthly math and science extension for the youth who participated in the summer science and math camp. This year we received funding through the Stryker-Johnston Foundation and the Jack and Jill of America Foundation to support our youth programming.

The learning symposiums served as the perfect culminating activity to celebrate the students' learning. Students were assigned teams in which to document their learning. Some students were more comfortable giving individual presentations. Those students were encouraged to give individual presentations. The exhibit, content, and the process of the presentation were all critiqued. WMU administrators, staff, family members, parents, community members, and students were invited to come celebrate the students culminating project.

2019-2020 Programming Partners