

# BLACK MATH HISTORY

## HIDDEN FIGURES REVEALED



### SAMUEL KANKAM OSU MATHEMATICS, 2013

*"To age every day and stay the same is counter intuitive to nature. The tragedy of life is often not in our failure, but in our complacency; not in doing too much; not in our living above our ability, but rather in our living below our capacities."*

*-Benjamin E Mays -*

**Hometown:** Accra, Ghana and Columbus, Ohio

**Current Occupation:** Masters Student in Mathematics and Adjunct Lecturer

**Professional Goal:** Tenured Mathematics Professor

**Interests:** Sports; Music; Movies; Active life; Health; Video games

## MY MATH STORY

Describe an experience (or more than one) that helped you discover/cultivate your interest in the mathematical sciences.

A few experiences and people cultivated my interest in mathematical sciences; my middle school math teacher cultivated my love for math and math education. The disparities in the educational system in Ghana catalyzed my passion for math education. Throughout my experiences, I witnessed my peers in the same grades as me in my neighborhood public school perform grade levels below me in math; this educational injustice sparked my inner teacher at a young age. At The Ohio State, I encountered a higher level of math that intrigued me and pushed my thinking. My professor, Dr. Darry Andrews, supported and mentored me through problematic mathematical concepts and continued cultivating my love for mathematics. These combined experiences have shaped me into a passionate math educator who cultivates the love of mathematics in others through support and mentorship.

How has your math degree influenced your life after graduation?

After graduating in 2013, I began an education fellowship tutoring middle school scholars in mathematics at a charter school in Newark, NJ. My degree allowed me to become a mathematics teacher and support the growth of the math department by establishing a robust and rigorous math tutorial curriculum. I continued to work in the school as a grade level leader, culture team member, instructional coach, and Director of Tutorial Curriculum- Mathematics from 2014 to 2021. Currently, I am able to use my mathematics degrees as an adjunct lecturer pursuing my master's degree in pure math at Rutgers University - Camden.

How has your math degree influenced your life after graduation?

As a former K - 12 teacher, receiving calls from former students or parents of former students thanking me and showing appreciation keep my passion for mathematics alive. I have witnessed my students who I have taught for the past five years as middle mathematics teacher go on to graduate high school and attend various prestigious colleges/universities. I have also coached several new teachers and propelled them into becoming master math teachers who still impact students' lives in the classroom. I am proud to continue my education to earn my master's degree in pure math, hope to achieve a Ph.D. in the same realm, and ultimately become a tenured mathematics professor.



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