IN THIS ISSUE

2018 ELECTED OFFICIALS ................................................................................................................ 3
SPOTLIGHT ON MARSHA BERA-MORRIS .................................................................................. 4
IAA ADMITS ITS 72ND FULL MEMBER ASSOCIATION – GHANA ........................................ 6
ANNUAL MEETING VOLUNTEER EVENT .................................................................................. 6
NEW DESIGNEES .......................................................................................................................... 7
SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2018 IABA ANNUAL MEETING ....................................................... 8

Mission of IABA

The International Association of Black Actuaries is a professional and student member organization whose mission is to contribute to an increase in the number of black actuaries and to influence the successful career development, civic growth and achievement of black actuaries.

Vision of IABA

To be the world’s leading actuarial organization dedicated to influencing diversity by developing and recognizing the achievement of black actuaries.

Contact Information:
IABA, PO Box 270701, West Hartford, CT 06127
Email: iaba@blackactuaries.org
Phone: 860.906.1286 Fax: 860.906.1369
Website: www.blackactuaries.org
Newsletter Committee: Guillaume Moussa, Actuary DAV, CERA (Chair), Alicia Young, Efua Mantey, ACAS, Stacia Brown, FSA, Grace Kabwe, Louis-Landry Mwizero, Jailyn Clark

The Voice | Newsletter of the International Association of Black Actuaries

2 The Voice | Newsletter of the IABA
2018 Elected Officials:

**PRESIDENT:** Tenesia McGruder, FSA, MAAA
**VICE PRESIDENT:** Jamala Arland, FSA, MAAA
**TREASURER:** Kristin Johnson
**SECRETARY:** Kwame Davis, FCAS, MAAA
**STUDENT LIAISON:** Paulus Ackah
**DIRECTOR:** Stephen Abrokwah, Ph.D., ASA, CERA, MAAA
**DIRECTOR:** Nicassia Belton

**Tenesia McGruder, FSA, MAAA** is an Actuarial Consultant at Optum. Prior to joining Optum, she worked as an Actuarial Analyst at Anthem, and also worked in Pension Consulting at Towers Watson. Tenesia graduated from the Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Actuarial Science and she received her Fellowship designation in 2014. Tenesia has served as Foundation President, Atlanta Affiliate Leader, Student Liaison, Scholarship Chair, and on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee of the International Association of Black Actuaries.

**Jamala M. Arland, FSA, MAAA** is Vice President and Actuary for Long Term Care Inforce Management at Genworth Financial. She has had prior roles at Genworth in life valuation and annuity pricing. Prior to joining Genworth, she worked at Ernst & Young LLP in New York, NY. Jamala was born and raised in Barbados, and graduated from the University of Waterloo in 2003 with a Bachelor of Mathematics in Actuarial Science and Statistics. She got her Fellowship designation in 2008. Jamala has served as Treasurer, Secretary, Mentoring Chair, and on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee of the International Association of Black Actuaries. She is also a member of the Society of Actuaries’ Long Term Care Council and the American Academy of Actuaries’ Long Term Care Reform Subcommittee. Jamala enjoys playing tennis.

**Kristin Johnson** is an Actuarial Associate at Brighthouse Financial. Prior to joining Brighthouse, she worked as an Analyst with Prudential and also worked in Risk Management for GE Capital. Kristin graduated from the South Carolina State University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and continued her education at the North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University where she obtained a Master of Science in Applied Mathematics. Kristin has served as a Boot Camp Presenter and is on the Finance and Scholarship Committees for the International Association of Black Actuaries.

**Kwame Davis, FCAS, MAAA** is a consulting actuary with Willis Towers Watson. He hails from Trinidad and Tobago and moved to the US in 2001. He is a Howard University alum of class 2005 and serves on the board for the center for insurance education. He is a Fellow of the Casualty Actuarial Society. He currently serves as co-chair for the DC affiliate for the last few years. He also currently serves on the joint committee on encouragement of actuarial diversity, CAS diversity and webinar committees. He has also been a champion of Diversity initiatives at his employer, Willis Towers Watson involved with recruiting and various inclusion initiatives.

**Paulus Ackah** was born in Ghana and moved to the United States in 2012. He is a first generation senior at Georgia State University and serves on the Board of Directors for the Student Alumni Association. He is also a 2016 recipient of the IABA Scholarship. Before receiving the scholarship, he was a member of the 2015 IABA Boot Camp class. Paulus is passionate about motivating people and helping them to reach their goals. Last year, he was an intern at Prudential Financial. Currently, he is an intern at Lincoln Financial Group.

**Stephen Abrokwah, Ph.D., ASA, CERA, MAAA** is as an Assistant Vice President and Marketing Actuary at Swiss Re and has been with the company since 2013. Stephen serves as the primary point of contact for quoting, treaty and mortality consulting work for his clients, and has also been a part of the Swiss Re team focused on the middle market strategy, predictive analytics, and assisting clients with innovative ways of closing the mortality protection gap. Prior to Swiss Re, Stephen worked with PricewaterhouseCoopers within the Audit and Assurance line of business, specializing in the audit of companies within the financial services as well as the energy and mining industries across the West African sub region. Stephen holds a Doctorate degree in Economics with fields of specialization including International Economics, Development Economics, and Econometrics. He also holds the ASA and CERA actuarial credentials and is a member of the American Academy of Actuaries. His research publications range from issues pertaining to Social Health insurance to Accelerated Underwriting and Predictive Analytics in life insurance.

**Nicassia Belton** is the Associate Director of Precollege programs at the University of Maryland. She spearheaded the development and implementation of the first BSc program in Actuarial Science at a Historically Black Institution in 2008 and first IABA student-led affiliate in 2012. She has served on the Corporate Advisory Council and chaired the Education Committee for IABA since 2010. In 2012, she founded the IABA Boot Camp, now in its fourth year. Nicassia has been a Board member for IABA since 2013. Nicassia holds a MS in Mathematics with a specialization in Computational Finance from Purdue University, a BSc in Mathematics from Morgan State University and currently completing her doctoral degree in Mathematics Education.
SPOTLIGHT ON

MARSHA BERA-MORRIS

By Efua Mantey

During the recent Annual Meeting held in D.C, I had the honors of meeting with the first black woman to become a fellow of the Society of Actuaries in 1978. Below is a summary of the conversation that ensued between us.

1. Tell us a little about your background and the path you took to your current position.

I am retired as an actuary. My last positions included some self-employment work, work as a consulting actuary for Watson Wyatt Worldwide (nka Willis Towers Watson), and part time work for the Department of Defense. The last work mentioned resulted from an appointment by President W. J. Clinton to the three-man Military Retirement Board of Actuaries, with an accompanying appointment by Secretary of Defense Perry to the three-man Military Education Benefits Board of Actuaries. Both Boards, later combined into one, were oversight boards.
I grew up in a small town on the Jersey shore. I always like math and found it relatively easy. So I majored in math and got a B.A. in math from Swarthmore College (PA). I took some graduate-level math and math-ed courses at the University of Chicago, and taught high school math in and for the city of Chicago for about 4-1/2 years. I then decided to look at other math-related fields for a possible, different career.

2. Why did you decide to become an actuary?
I decided to try the actuarial field after some exploration, after an aptitude/career counseling test, and after a warm, welcoming conversation with an HR representative at John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company. I was attracted by the idea of making progress through exams, mostly without human intervention. My time at John Hancock, with its rotations, gave me a better idea of what an actuary does. I was most interested in pensions.

3. If you weren’t an actuary, what else could you see yourself doing?
I’d probably have remained in teaching — somewhere.

4. What are some of the more interesting assignments you’ve worked on?
I enjoyed working on all aspects of defined benefit pension plans—funding, plan design, administration (including QDROs, or Qualified Domestic Relations Orders) — both private and governmental.

5. What would you say is your biggest achievement?
I don’t know. The most unusual work, highly enjoyable, was the work with DOD Boards of Actuaries, with its periodic reports to the Congress and to the President. I also enjoyed setting up, doing, and supervising QDRO work. Not an achievement of mine, I was informed that I was the first black female to attain fellowship in any of the actuarial bodies in the U.S. I did work thereafter on the Society of Actuaries’ Subcommittee on Minority Recruiting. I was also one of the co-founders of NABA (nka IABA).

6. What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever received during your career?
Stay focused; don’t get distracted or discouraged.

7. If you could do anything throughout your profession differently, what would it be and why?
When I started out, I did not anticipate the downturn in defined benefit pension plans. I might have sought broader actuarial experience.

8. What is your message to young up and coming black actuarial students who are looking to move forward in their careers?
Same as #6., above. Plus try to network and try to find a mentor who is helpful and in whom you have confidence.

9. How did you become a successful actuary?
I don’t know that I feel that successful but... It took a lot of time, work, studying, a lot of keeping at it kind of thing. And I was good at math.

10. What are some of the difficulties you met during your exam taking process/ in your career and how did you overcome?
Well, um I just kept on going. Every once in a while, early in my experience, I wondered if my clients were pre-selected for me to some extent for their liberalism/ their willingness to see what a black female could do. Because there were very few black actuaries, and not that many female consulting actuaries, I think I was kept away from some of the tougher clients, some unions for example. I don’t know if that’s true or not, but I sometimes had that feeling.

11. What do you like doing in your free time?
Although I am retired, I don’t feel like I have a lot of free time. I like to sing (in choirs) and play the piano. I was a choir director/accompanist for a small church choir for about 12 years. At present, I sing in — and play a little for — 3 choirs. I am an assistant to the director of one of the three choirs. And I am a member of the local branch of NANM, the National Association of Negro Musicians, which organization is open to professional and amateur musicians and to music lovers.
IAA Admits its 72nd Full Member Association - Ghana

By Guillaume Moussa, APSA/ESA President, MSc Math, Actuary DAV, CERA, Chair IABA newsletter committee

The International Actuarial Association (IAA) is pleased to announce that it has admitted the Actuarial Society of Ghana (ASG) as its 72nd Full Member Association (FMA). The ASG has been IAA Associate Member for more than 15 years. The ASG was established in 1996, has a membership comprising 34 fully qualified actuaries, and is currently led by Mr. Stephen Yeboah.

The ASG objectives include: regulating the practice of the actuarial profession in Ghana, promoting the actuarial profession while fostering relationships amongst actuaries within Ghana and internationally.

The IAA Council has approved the motion to accept the Actuarial Society of Ghana as FMA through its June 2017 electronic Voting Ballot. This was announced during the Council Meeting on October 8, 2017 in Chicago. Mr. Stephen Yeboah was in attendance and thanked Council for its vote of confidence.

Annual Meeting Volunteer Event

This year’s Annual Meeting kicked off with a community outreach event targeting mathematically talented black students in the US. Over 150 people attended the event and assisted with the creation of career awareness “kits”. Each table was responsible for putting together a mailing to these targeted students. Items included in the mailing were: information sheet on the actuarial profession; information sheet on IABA - including a free membership offer; a personalized note from someone describing why they love the actuarial profession. Addresses were then hand-written and stamps were applied.

Given the personal appearance nature of the envelopes, we are hoping for a high “open” rate. Students receiving the mailing were identified by exceptionally high math SAT scores. IABA will continue to follow up with these students to see how many enter the Actuarial pipeline in the future.
NEW DESIGNEES

RACHEL AMALO
Associate of the Society of Actuaries

JONAS BROBBEY
Associate of the Society of Actuaries

EFUA MANTEY
Associate of the Casualty Actuarial Society

STEPHEN ABROKWAH
Chartered Enterprise Risk Analyst

THEOPHILUS CHUKWUEKE
Associate of the Society of Actuaries

LILITH MCGHEE
Fellow of the Society of Actuaries

JONATHAN APPLEWHITE
Fellow of the Society of Actuaries

PHILLIP FLOYD
Associate of the Society of Actuaries

JOEL OFEI
Associate of the Society of Actuaries

DANIEL BARASA
Chartered Enterprise Risk Analyst

DOMINIC LEE
Associate of the Casualty Actuarial Society

DEON PETTIFORD
Associate of the Society of Actuaries

BEN BERGER
Fellow of the Society of Actuaries, Chartered Enterprise Risk Analyst

FUAD LIGALI
Associate of the Society of Actuaries

TRENT ST. ROSE
Chartered Enterprise Risk Analyst
SAVE THE DATE

2018 IABA ANNUAL MEETING

Westin Peachtree Plaza
Atlanta, GA
July 26 - 28, 2018