

For the people in the back

This lecture will highlight the legacy of Betsey Stockton, who was born into slavery in Princeton, NJ. Upon being released from servitude in her early twenties, Betsey embarked on a journey to educate young children. Stockton dedicated more than 3 decades of her life to educating the children of impoverished African Americans primarily in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Since that era, African Americans have made tremendous strides and are represented on every level of society. For many, education has served as a valuable vehicle to transport them to their current social, economic and political location. However, without diminishing the tremendous success of the African American community as a whole, it is imperative to acknowledge and address the segment of the African American community that continues to be impoverished, shackled by institutional racism, subpar education and other forms of discrimination and oppression.

The Betsey Stockton lecture will challenge participants to revive the legacy of Betsey Stockton, an African American woman who by educating poor African American children empowered them to thrive and provided a path forward. The Black church is called upon to continue the legacy of educating and advocating for quality education for all children, without consideration of race or economic status. As individuals, participants will be challenged to seize opportunities to educate and uplift the disenfranchised people within their sphere of influence. "Lift as we climb" must continue to be our motto if we are to close the gap between middle class and lower income African Americans.

The lecture will conclude with a review of the recent Supreme Court decision to repeal affirmative action, related implications for African Americans and strategies to mediate the negative impact of the decision and other impediments to the success of the people in the back.