



## Serbino Sandifer-Walker, M.A.

*Interim Assistant Dean & Assistant Professor*

In the early 90s, I left the trenches of full-time reporting to take on a new challenge in the academic halls at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas. Since coming on board, I have made some unprecedented achievements in the journalism area. The most important achievement has been motivating and empowering students to be passionate about learning and succeeding academically and professionally. Each semester, I work to establish partnerships with the students to ensure that they are engaged in the learning process. Many of the students are first generation college-attendees. Some believe initially that they cannot succeed even though they are in a college setting. I create a learning environment that empowers the students. Albeit vigorous, my teaching strategies offer students hope that they can achieve anything with hard work. I have developed interpersonal communicative strategies to help students move past epistemological limitations. As a result, many of these students have graduated and become successful professionals.

It's gratifying to see the transformation in students as they began to realize that they have the ability to succeed in the academic setting and become productive professionals. I have used my years of experience as an educator, journalist and advocate of underserved and African-American learners to investigate how innovation, social networks and technology stimulate intellectual growth and improve academic performance. Studies show that African-American youth are big consumers of social networks and are the largest demographic on Twitter and Instagram. However, no one has explored the impact that these social networks have had on black learners' intellectual growth or academic performance. I think these areas are fascinating and untapped. I am exploring these areas and writing about them. I have worked with the Center for Effective Pedagogy for African American Learners and will be expanding my research for urban, suburban, rural and challenged learners.

As an award-winning multimedia journalist, journalism professor who is breaking new ground in digital storytelling, where journalists use cutting-edge technology, social media, mobiles and tablets to tell in-depth news stories in multi-media platforms, I founded the nation's first social media correspondents team on a college campus. The Social Media Correspondents (SMC) group, Social Media Correspondents, cover under told stories in underserved communities with traditional video and audio gear, mobiles and tablets. I also created the hashtag #TwitterNewsChat as a social media news feed that focuses on posting pertinent local, national and international content. The SMCs live-tweet, live-cast and live-photo from various news events across Houston and Southeast Texas using the hashtag #TwitterNewsChat.

I also created the historic website, Houston Student Movement, Houston Student movement, which chronicles Houston's civil rights movement in the early 60s. My work on Houston civil rights led the Texas Historical Commission to designate a historic marker in honor of Houston's first sit-in on the 50th anniversary on March 4, 2010. It was a labor of love and two year process to make this historic marker a reality. A multitude of Houstonians, current TSU students, and the original TSU students who led that first sit-in worked closely with me to ensure the designation of the marker at 4110 Almeda, the location of Houston's first sit-in, which is now a U.S. Post Office.

I am a founding board member of the National Association of Black Journalists Digital Journalism Task Force (DJTF). I served as President of the Houston Association of Black Journalists 2006-2007, when it was named Chapter of the Year by NABJ. I've covered hurricanes on the Texas coast and political elections in New York City. I've interviewed Rudolph Giuliani, Mario Cuomo, Whoopi Goldberg, Carly Simon and the nation's first Black network news correspondent, Joan Murray. I have had an exhilarating and exciting career; but nothing brings me greater joy than hearing from a former student who has become a successful professional. From CNN to Warner Bros. Studio Hollywood, my former students have made one of my dreams come true; ensuring diverse voices are represented in America's newsrooms, boardrooms, courtrooms and classrooms. They made it and I always knew they could do it! You can always find me making a positive difference in everything that I do.

I am a proud graduate of Texas Southern University and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, where I was named the Reader's Digest Scholar.

I am also the mother of a wonderful daughter and son and wife of an amazing husband.

Every day I feel blessed and thankful for the opportunity to have a positive spirit in everything that I do.