

To the Harlem Prep community:

Above all, this dissertation is owed to the Harlem Prep community: teachers, students, and former administrators who have so kindly contributed to my research and to my learning of Harlem Prep. This project is dedicated to each to them, but it is also *because* of them. The years spent speaking with alumni, hearing their stories, and traveling all throughout the city (and sometimes beyond) was both thrilling and extremely humbling. The Harlem Prep community opened up their homes and workplaces to me, sharing their stories, memories, and cherished recollections—and entrusting me to handle them with care. As I spoke with one alumnus, I was then referred to another; as I received pictures, documents and more from one person, I would receive helpful tips about research threads from another. This project would, frankly, not exist without the generous stories and materials that dozens of alumni have shared with me, both formally and informally. More than anything, however, the Harlem Prep community opened up their hearts to me, and so generously welcomed me into their sacred Harlem Prep family, inviting me to social gatherings and online groups, as if I was one of them. I will never be able to express how humbled and grateful I am for the kindness and love shown to me over the years. This wonderful group of people includes: Hussein Ahdieh, Josie Alvarez, Keywanda Battle, Frank Berger, Aissatou Bey-Grecia, Stephanie Butler, Sandy Campbell, Alberto Cappas, Casey Carpenter, Beverly Grayman-Rich, Penny Grinage, Ajuba Bartley-Grinage, Mwanajua Kahamu, Bari Haskins-Jackson, Peter Hopson, Clifford Jacobs, Sherry Kilgore, Sterling Nile, Martin Nur, Henry Pruitt, Ed Randolph, Francisco Rivera, Jr., Craig Rothman, Harry Smith, Joshua Smith, Kadijah Wilson, and many others that I have spoken with on the phone, via e-mail, or in-person at one point or another. I only hope that I can repay the love that each of these kind people have shared with me through my own sharing of their Harlem Prep story. This work is for them.

Within this group, however, there are a few special people that I want to specifically thank. Cliff Jacobs was the catalyst in this journey. Back in 2013, as I learned about Harlem Prep and was searching to find some way to learn more, he kindly answered an unsolicited e-mail from a graduate student and agreed to speak about his experience at his office. After a wonderful interview in which he took time out of his busy work schedule, Cliff then gave me a list of names and contact information of others who might be willing to speak with me, and from there, the project bloomed. I am indebted to his graciousness in setting me on this path.

Next, thank you to Aissatou Bey-Grecia, Peter Hopson, Hussein Ahdieh, and Casey Carpenter. Each of these beautiful individuals have welcomed me into their lives and taught me the Harlem Prep way. I am grateful to Aissatou, a lifelong Harlemite, for not only kindly allowing for an interview, but offering key insight about Harlem Prep and the Harlem community more broadly, helping me understand the school and all the racial dynamics of the era. As a racial, cultural, and geographic outsider to Harlem, Aissatou's friendship and help has been invaluable to this project and I will always be grateful. Her example has inspired me to share this story the best that I can. Peter Hopson, too, has become a cherished friend. Peter has answered my e-mails and phone calls on countless occasions. If I had a question about Harlem Prep, Peter would be the first person to answer! He has welcomed me to his home multiple times, helped facilitate oral history interviews (in addition to his own), and has responded time and time again to my inquiries on different aspects of the school. This project and my understanding of Harlem Prep are profoundly better because of the myriad of ways Peter has contributed to this project. Dr. Hussein Ahdieh, a former Harlem Prep administrator, has also been invaluable to this dissertation. His photographs that he has kindly shared, his unique perspective, and his writings (including his book) have enhanced this project in many ways. He has been generous

with sharing his research and time, and has been my biggest fan, kindly sharing and promoting my work. I am so thankful! The ways in which he has mapped out the Harlem Prep story has been a blueprint for me, and I stand on his shoulders due to all the work that he has already done is helping share the story of this school. Next is Casey Carpenter, the daughter of Ed and Ann Carpenter. She is, truly, a testament to their wonderful legacies and is a beautiful soul that I am privileged to know. It has been a pleasure spending time with Casey over the years, and she, too, has been selfless in her help of this project. We have organized talks together, she has welcomed my wife and I into her home in New Jersey on multiple occasions, we have rummaged her attic for documents, and she has also provided insight time and time again on the work of her parents in ways that are essential to this story. My portraits of Ed and Ann would not be what they are if it was not for her generous help and friendship. She is their living legacy.

Finally, there is Sandy Campbell, a former Harlem Prep teacher. How do I thank someone whose contributions to this project—and to my life in New York City—are so consequential and go beyond mere words? The love that he has given to me is unmatched and embedded into my heart. I first met and interviewed Sandy with a group of young people at Teachers College. After that, Sandy generously helped connect me with his former students, facilitating interviews and correspondences, and eventually driving me to and from interviews and gatherings all throughout the city. The list of questions I have asked him and favors I have asked *of* him over the last six years are too plentiful to count; so, too, are his thoughtful and honest answers, comments, and feedback about my in-progress work. Over the years, we shared dinners together, museum visits, and many, many, many laughs—and some tears, too. His generosity to help me on this Harlem Prep journey turned into a friendship, and our friendship then grew into a deep bond that can only be explained through mutual love and admiration.

Together, through his many years of selflessness and work in helping me research the Harlem Prep story, Sandy became my closest confidant, and this project would not exist without his contributions, energy, spirit, and love. At the same time, despite his proximity to the story, Sandy also—humbly—gave me the intellectual space to write it as I saw fit. His trust and belief in me means more to me than I will ever be able to express. There are many people who made this dissertation and the telling of this story possible in these pages, but none are as significant or as meaningful or as special as he is. Thank you, dear friend, for everything and more.