



Say Their Names

The Black Student Union makes strides with protests and marches

Students gathered around Young Commons on September 1, 2020, to stand in solidarity in the fight against racism in an event organized by the Black Student Union (BSU). Co-directors of special events for BSU, **Mahogany Madden-Roberts** and **Christina Carr '23**, organized the moving event and tribute.

“The vigil had hundreds of students in attendance and allowed for students to speak out on issues of race, and inclusivity at Elon and in the world,” Carr said. “It was my first time at Elon where I felt surrounded by people who looked like me and also felt the same things as me. Seniors who came up to speak stated that this was their first time having an event such as this since their time at Elon and really appreciated it. I believe that it allowed for many conversations and students took a lot from it. I felt very impactful for bringing something this important to the campus.”

Several students stepped to the microphone to call out the names of Black men, women and children who have died as a result of police brutality. Students also shared their personal stories and the impact of racism at Elon on their everyday lives.

The president of BSU, **Queen Assata Stephens '22**, said: “When people think of Black Lives Matter, they often think only of police brutality, but the Black Lives Matter movement goes far beyond that. It called for systematic change. It demands that you all pay attention to us when we are in pain ... Just because we say ‘Black lives matter’ does not mean that other lives don’t, but all lives can’t matter until you treat us like Black lives do.”

Hunter McIntosh '23 also spoke, reminding everyone that their voice matters and charged others to “never get tired of telling your stories.” McIntosh explained that white members of the community need

to show empathy, which he explained to be “showing up, showing you care, showing you will be here for us as we struggle.” Several other students spoke up as well, telling the Elon community to fight for change and have uncomfortable conversations so that change can occur.

The BSU hosts numerous other activities and events to fulfill its mission statement: “Helping make Elon a place where everyone truly does belong. Above all, we are a support system. The Black Student Union exists to lift up and aid the success of every Black student at Elon.” The BSU holds town hall meetings to discuss matters such as the importance of community at Elon or the conversations they’ve had with **President Book** about racism. Recently, the BSU has held events such as Black Culture trivia and MLK trivia nights, food drives, discussions on being Black in workspaces, and movie nights. The Black Student Union is a community that focuses on unifying marginalized populations on campus, educating the campus community, and celebrating being Black.

Added Carr, “I am looking forward to creating a much stronger community for Black students on campus. I want Black students at Elon to feel like they belong. I am looking forward to making connections and creating fun events for students.”

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Captions 1) Signs dedicated to individuals killed by police brutality were spread out across Young Commons during a BSU Black Solidarity event. 2) **Queen Assata Stephens '22**, President of the Black Student Union, speaks on Young Commons. 3) Students sit and clap in solidarity during the protest (All photos by Elon University).

