



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: *Dr. Warren Clarke*

“My time as a young person was not easy, and there have been moments in my life where I did not see the value in education, nor did I understand my potential. Instead, I believed the opinions of those who perceived me as a failure.”

It’s a good thing Warren did not listen to the high school teacher that told him he would not be successful and that university was not for him. Just the opposite, in fact. Dr. Warren Clarke is currently an assistant professor at the University of Manitoba in the anthropology department, having recently completed his Doctor of Sociology degree with a specialization in political economy at Carleton University.

Warren grew up in central Toronto, residing in a single-parent household in an underserved community. He faced countless barriers from educators who thought he was undeserving of an education because of where he lived and the colour of his skin.

Warren joined the Trails Youth Initiatives program when it was founded in 1992. During Warren’s time with Trails, he learned the importance of setting personal goals and believing in himself to reach those goals. Mentored by Trails Founders Jim ‘Hurst’ Hayhurst Sr. and Jim Hayhurst Jr., Warren began his journey that focused on philanthropy and paying it forward to marginalized community members in Canada.

“Seek a mentor, if you don’t already have one. My advocacy work was encouraged by my close relationship with my mentor, Hurst. His approach and willingness to work with many marginalized community members of Toronto inspired me and encouraged me to see my potential.”

Warren is also the founder of The Afro-Caribbean Mentorship Program (ACMP) at Carleton University, a program which he established in 2018 to support the success of Afro-Caribbean Black and other racialized undergraduate and graduate students on campus. He is paying forward the support he received at Trails to foster academic success and encourage students to become confident and empowered citizens after they graduate.

Warren’s dissertation, supervised by Dr. Jacqueline Kennelly, focuses on how first- and second-generation young Canadian African and Caribbean Black (ACB) men experience youth employment training programs in Ontario and Quebec. Theoretically, Warren focuses on how Canadian social norms—emerging from Canada’s existence as a settler-colonial nation-state and its long history of racial discrimination—continue to affect the social development of young ACB men. The study sets out to understand the social experiences of ACB male youth and their use of employment training programs while considering the intersubjective ideologies from other people (youth workers, employers, etc.) and how they impact young Black men. Warren’s important research allows for an understanding of how better to support young ACB men and their socio-economic development while challenging the misconceptions of Black masculinity.

Warren dedicates his academic and professional career to empowering and educating Black Canadians to overcome social, political and economic barriers in Canada. Trails inspired Warren’s work and research, creating a ripple effect that is being felt across the country. He builds and sustains strong ties to many Canadian communities, specifically youth-centred organizations. Visit www.warrenclarke.ca to learn more.