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**Photonics, Diversity and Mentoring – 30 Years of Experiences and Strategies of an African-American Physicist**

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As requested by our Session Chair, I hope to share a career that emphasizes cutting edge research in ultrafast optical phenomena, as well as outreach to women and underrepresented minorities that began over three decades ago at Bell Laboratories. My research career in Optical Physics owes its foundation and perspective to my mid-70s participation in the Bell Labs diversity programs the Summer Research Program for Minorities and Women (SRP) and the Cooperative Research Fellowship Program for Minorities (CRFP). In addition to striving to produce leading edge research, these programs made me a strong proponent of the recruitment and retention of women and underrepresented minorities into the scientific enterprise. Now approaching 15 years in academia, I have had the good fortune to continue the research tradition, where the majority of my graduate students are women and underrepresented minorities. Indeed, these students are out there, hungry for the experience, motivated to give their best effort, and thrive when given supportive and nurturing environments – but you must expend the energy and resources to find them and I guarantee it will be worth it!