

## Dr. La Francis Rodgers-Rose: Celebrating 50 Years of Sharing with My Mentor

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For over 50 years I have known Dr. La Francis Rodgers-Rose. As a transfer student from North Carolina Central University to Montclair State University, I enrolled in a class entitled “Black Family” with Professor Rodgers-Rose. I was anxious to meet my new Professor, so I went to her office frequently! But, unsuccessfully, she was never there! Finally, the maintenance man informed me of her busy schedule and added that I looked a lot like her. When we finally met, it was love at first sight! She became the big sister that I never had. Coincidentally, we lived in the same town, Plainfield, New Jersey.

***To be in the presence of and under the guidance of Dr. Rodgers-Rose’s was life changing. Her teaching inspired me. It reinforced the importance of not only being of African descent, but also understanding the foundation our Ancestors laid before us.***

Dr. Rodgers-Rose was the force behind me getting my master’s degree from Texas Southern University. She encouraged me to apply for a scholarship, and being accepted was one of the happiest days of my life! She even attended my graduation in Houston, Texas.

In terms of her many contributions, Dr. Rodgers-Rose’s rites of passage mentorship program for the youth, specifically, young girls, was a tour de force! It helped so many to become the young, respectful and meaningful women that they are, today.

When Dr. Rodgers-Rose revealed to me that she was launching the International Black Women’s Congress (IBWC), I was ever so excited and proud. Her deep knowledge of our heritage never ceased to amaze me. Dr. Rodgers-Rose was like a walking book of knowledge that kept me in awe. Not only did IBWC raise the Afro-centric consciousness of Blackness, particularly for women, but it bridged the gap of sisterhood between Afro-Americans and Africans. Because of Dr. Rodgers-Rose’s ability and hard work ethic, IBWC Annual Conferences showcased so many famous Black icons such as Shirley Chisholm, Dorothy Height, Maxine Walters, Susan Taylor, and so many more.

Also, I had the pleasure of accompanying Dr. Rodgers-Rose to Senegal and Gambia with her students from Drew University for a three-week winter break. The experience was very rewarding. We spent time with a member of Alex Haley’s family (author of *Roots*). We visited a University and collaborated with the students.

Dr. Rodgers-Rose has always made me feel like I could do anything I set my mind to. I’ve always recognized her as my big sister. We traveled many places and have seen many faces.

Even today, you will often find Dr. La Francis Rodgers-Rose in her intellectual pose: reading, writing, or creating.



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