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### **Governors State Prepares Student to Defend Chicago Legacy**

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# Governors State Prepares Student to Defend Chicago Legacy



Myiti Sengstacke-Rice, a [Governors State University](#) doctoral student, is passionate about Chicago's Black history. She grew up in a family of innovators who changed Chicago's demographic landscape and the lives of millions of African Americans.

Sengstacke-Rice, CEO of Chicago Defender Charities, is a living link to the Sengstacke family publishing dynasty, which founded the iconic "Chicago Defender," once the nation's leading African American newspaper. The paper's headlines famously touted possibilities for African Americans in Northern cities like Chicago, attracting tens of thousands from the segregated South during the Great Migration.

Bobby Sengstacke, Sengstacke-Rice's father, is a renowned photographer. Her grandfather, John H. Sengstacke is the late publisher of the "Chicago Defender." Her great, great uncle, Robert Sengstacke Abbott, established the "Chicago Defender" in 1905, and later the "Bud Billiken Parade." The parade is an end-of summer staple on Chicago's South Side, to help students get excited about returning to school.

Following traditions inspired by mission, Sengstacke-Rice began her career as a reporter for the Defender, and later became its associate editor. Now, she's exploring ways to continue the newspaper's legacy of education and excellence in the African American community. Through the Defender Charities, Sengstacke-Rice is able to facilitate scholarships (\$30,000 a year) and media internships at the "Bronzeville Life" newspaper that she publishes.

As a student in Governors State's [Interdisciplinary Leadership \(INLD\) program](#) with a concentration in Not for Profit/Social Entrepreneurship (NSPE), Sengstacke-Rice is learning strategies to sustain and expand the Chicago Defender Charities' work, to lift Black families out of poverty.

"We invest in the youth, especially the inner-city youth, to help them see people who look like them working in professional fields so they can know what is possible" she said. "We started this work in 1929, and there is still a need to this day."

The NPSE concentration, housed in the [College of Education](#), is fully online and trains leaders to champion social causes, said Dr. Mary D. Bruce, Concentration Coordinator. "Our students lead in profit and nonprofit sectors and innovate to find solutions to societal issues like hunger, poverty, environmental justice, and more," Bruce said.

Sengstacke-Rice said the program allows her to collaborate with other professionals working to create sustainable models that make a difference in the world.

"What I appreciate about the NPSE program is that it's a true community that helps me cultivate the skills I need to carry on the legacy of the Chicago Defender Charities franchise and the Bud Billiken Parade," she said. "This is a 115-year-old legacy."

As the nation celebrates Black History month, Sengstacke-Rice said she is grateful for Governors State, which she called a supportive place for African American women seeking doctorate degrees. According to a 2018 National Science Foundation survey, an estimated at 3.1 percent (1,730) of the total 55,195 doctoral degrees awarded that year went to Black women.

Sengstacke-Rice said Governors State, like Chicago Defender Charities, is impacting lives through education.

"I appreciate that Governors State sees the need and wants to stand in the gap," she said. "It's a very nurturing and collaborative place that has afforded opportunities for Black women to earn their doctorate degrees, and my program reflects that."