

## JENNIFER C. THOMAS

### Biography

Jennifer C. Thomas is Director of the Annenberg Honors Program in the Cathy Hughes School of Communications and an associate professor in the Department of Media, Journalism and Film at her alma mater, Howard University. She earned a Master of Arts Degree in Journalism from Columbia University. A Scripps-Howard Foundation AEJMC Teacher of the Year, she encourages her collegiate journalists to see the humanity behind the headlines, to interrogate systems of power with rigor and fairness, and to tell stories that might otherwise go untold.

As a Fulbright Scholar in the Fulbright Specialist Program, she traveled to the Eastern Cape of South Africa and examined the region as a birthplace of journalism on the continent that was globally connected to African American intellectuals at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from the 19th century. A published author, her peer-reviewed research and creative works include the dissection of current practices and pedagogies in journalism, the transition from professional to professor, and the complex facets of women, media, and images.

She travels internationally on issues of media freedom as a participant in the U.S. Department of State's U.S. Speaker Program. She served as the special guest of the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania, Africa, during its 2024 Media Freedom Week festivities UNESCO and the United Nations, met with dissident Russian journalists and Belarusian journalists in exile during her visit to Lithuania, and served as the special guest throughout South Africa and in Lagos, Nigeria, as the country's keynote speaker for World Press Freedom Day.

Jennifer served as a television news industry professional for more than 25 years, notably becoming the first Black executive producer in domestic news at CNN where she also served as the 9am producer during the September 11th Terror Attacks. She spearheaded covered during numerous national events, including Hurricane Katrina anniversary, the Oklahoma City Bombing anniversary, and the Olympic games, and received Emmy, Peabody and National Association of Black Journalists award recognition. After leaving CNN she created MediaReady Consulting, LLC, a boutique firm which managed large-scale event coordination, community outreach, web and social marketing development, corporate consulting and crisis management.

At Howard, she has reported from the U.S. Mexico border with the U.S. Border Patrol, produced live election specials for PBS's WHUT TV, supervised on-location coverage of National Conventions, and presidential elections. She has taught numerous journalism courses, notably *NewsVision*, the broadcast journalism capstone, which serves as a launchpad to careers in the media industry. For five consecutive years the class has won the high honor of Best Newscast ("Student Emmy") Student Production Award by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Her former students include Emmy, Hearst, and National Association of Black Journalists award winners.

She is advisor to the Howard University Association of Black Journalists and is a member of the Howard Initiative on Public Opinion, an interdisciplinary team of scholars which conducts national polls on issues relevant to African American and Latinx communities. She has been involved in numerous organizations including the Society of Professional Journalists, Toastmasters International, National Association of Black Journalists, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and The Links, Incorporated. In her spare time, she finds harmony in travel and music, a rhythm shaped by her time as a previous performer at the Atlanta Jazz Festival.

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