

**NEPOC AND THE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR COLLECTIVE OF BLACK WOMEN
LAW PROFESSORS**

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I entered law teaching in 1985. The first few years were lonely. When the NECC was created it became the centerpiece of my identity in our profession throughout the 1990s. The smart and courageous women of color in the group helped me clarify my relationship to writing and to the powers and institutions impacting my work. I had the pleasure of hosting the group twice, once in my Washington D.C. condominium, in about 1990, and another time in my house in Chevy Chase, in about 1997. I wrote my first piece of voice scholarship as part of the project that was eventually published in the Berkeley Women's Law Journal. That essay, entitled "On Being a Role Model" tackled head-on the argument of my late friend, Derrick Bell, that black women law students need black women role models. It became my most reprinted essay; and a shorter version was published in a peer reviewed philosophy journal.

I have had a very multifaceted successful-by-any-measure career as a law professor, feminist philosopher, public intellectual, and university administrator. When my life was threatened by breast cancer a few years ago I was sad, but not at all concerned about whether I had achieved enough professionally to die content. I didn't die and indeed survived to enjoy some of my proudest teaching and professional awards and administrative service, still guided by career lessons learned through the Collective. The Collective taught me to be less reserved, to not be afraid to refer explicitly to my own experiences and background in my academic writing, and to value my special capacity to be a mentor to other women of color. Thank you for recognizing our group. I am glad it is no longer possible for all of the women of color in law teaching to gather in anyone's living room! Success!!!

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