

Gloria Hobbs

Born and educated in New York City — she earned her undergraduate degree from Hunter College and master's from Columbia University in order to teach on the collegiate level — Gloria Hobbs moved to Texas in 1946 to teach young men and women in the historically Black institutions of the South.

With the assistance of two fellowships, in 1962 Hobbs became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from the Department of Foreign Languages at the recently desegregated University of Texas. During this time, she encountered several experiences with racism and was actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement, including the housing of the Freedom Riders. In 1966, she took a leave of absence from her academic responsibilities to help create and direct the first Texas Women's Job Corps Center, which provided thousands of underprivileged young women from all over the country with the skills needed to be gainfully employed and good citizens.

As a linguist and scholar, Hobbs authored numerous articles on topics ranging from French and Spanish literature to the African diaspora, and traveled to francophone and other countries where the languages she taught were spoken. She established scholarships at several institutions and received numerous awards and honors, including having her name on a school in Obuasi, Ghana, the Hobbs Business College. She also was a consultant to the Office of Women in Higher Education of the American Council on Education, an interviewer of doctoral candidates for the Ford Foundation awards, and a judge for the Fulbright-Hays Selection Committee for students to study abroad.

In 1969, she returned to New York as professor of modern languages and associate dean of the City University's Bronx Community College. She was voted into the Hunter College Alumni Hall of Fame and retired in 1983 as dean and professor emeritus.

In 1972, Hobbs became the first African American elected to the [Ithaca College Board of Trustees](#). She has since had a long and deep relationship with the college, including establishing the Gloria Hobbs Scholarship for deserving minority students. She was named an honorary trustee and recognized with the college's [Meritorious Service Award](#) in 1987. She is a charter member of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial, the Leadership Council of the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Legacy Society of Doctors Without Borders, and a Life Member of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. She helped to create and served as president of the Community Bridge Home in Queens, NY.

She once went around the world on a freighter, and at the age of 93 Hobbs still travels extensively. She works with various college groups, plays duplicate bridge nationally, volunteers in the neighborhood where she grew up, mentors the young and the old, and remains a strong advocate for marginalized youth in higher education and the workplace.