

Devonn Thomas

Co-Recipient of Karla Scott Award for Excellence in African American Studies

Class of 2020



“Love is or it ain't. 'Thin love ain't love at all.” These words, written by Alpha Kappa Alpha woman, Toni Morrison have been my guiding light throughout these last four years at Saint Louis University.

I have been engaged and policy-driven community organizing for all four years of matriculation at this institution. In this time I have helped to craft and lead a campaign to Close the Workhouse, a pre-trial detention center that disproportionately incarcerates poor, Black people. I have also founded and held the position of Director for a winter shelter on SLU’s campus. Throughout every stage of the shelter, I maintained a model of leadership guided by an abolitionist ethic that honored the fullness of all beings, no matter the shadows of their past.

I have also served as the Multicultural Affairs Senator for the Student Government Association; Vice President of Free to {Be} and Co-Chair of the Inclusion Task Force. Last semester, I was initiated into the Beta Delta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

The aforementioned experiences have taught me the importance of boldness, determination and humility. I hope to spend my life fighting for the freedom of *all* Black people. After all, it is our duty.

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On behalf of the faculty and staff of the African American Studies Program, we salute Ms. Devonn Thomas and her family on the stellar completion of her Bachelor of Arts in African American Studies at Saint Louis University. She has consistently represented our unit and the social justice mission of SLU with dignity, determination, deep curiosity, and a razor-sharp intellect. She is an exemplar of a young scholar on the rise. We look forward to all the great things she is set to accomplish in the coming years.

—Dr. Christopher M. Tinson
Director, African American Studies