



## EDUCATION

# Journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones Takes Job at Howard University after Tenure Fight

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Nikole Hannah-Jones, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, decided on Tuesday she would not accept a position at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) but, rather, would continue her career by accepting a position at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Howard University is a private, historically black university in the nation's capital.

Hannah-Jones and her supporters fought hard to get a tenured professorship at UNC. Tenure is a life-time appointment for a professor. The university first denied tenure for Hannah-Jones, saying it was concerned about her ideas and her teaching ability. Black students, Black professors and other professionals questioned the university's opinion and its commitment to free speech and **diversity**.

Hannah-Jones developed [The 1619 Project](#) for *The New York Times*. The collection of stories looked at the history of the United States starting with the arrival of enslaved people. It centers on the economic and social effects of the free labor provided by the enslaved people.

The idea of examining history in this way is **controversial** in many states. Some public school teachers in states controlled by Republican leaders are not allowed to teach [about the project](#) in their classes.

Last week, after weeks of criticism and days of protests from students, the university finally [decided to offer](#) Hannah-Jones a life-long position at its journalism school.

On Tuesday, Hannah-Jones said she could not accept work at the university's journalism school, which is named after Walter Hussman.

Hussman is a wealthy Arkansas newspaper publisher who gave \$25 million to UNC. He also campaigned against giving Hannah-Jones tenure.

“I cannot imagine working at ... a school named for a man who **lobbied** against me,” Hannah-Jones wrote.

She added that Hussman “ignored” her years of work and her **credentials** because he believed The 1619 Project was about “the **denigration** of White Americans.”

She also wrote that she could not work at a university whose leadership “permitted this **conduct** and has done nothing to **disavow** it.”

Hannah-Jones is not the only well-known Black writer to receive a position at Howard University on Tuesday. Howard also employed Ta-Nehisi Coates. Coates writes about the struggles of Black people in America. His 2015 book *Between the World and Me* won a National Book Award.

United States Vice-President Kamala Harris attended Howard University in the 1980s. It is one of several historically Black colleges and universities in the U.S. They are schools founded to support the education of Black people at a time when many universities did not accept Black students.

I’m Anna Mateo.

*Tom Foreman, Jr. wrote this story for the Associated Press. Dan Friedell adapted it for Learning English. Susan Shand was the editor.*

*How do you think Hannah-Jones will do working in Washington, D.C.? Tell us in the Comments Section and [visit our Facebook page](#).*

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## Words in This Story

**diversity** – *n.* the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization

**controversial** – *adj.* relating to or causing much discussion, disagreement, or argument : likely to produce controversy

**lobby** – *v.* to try to get something you want by talking to the people who make decisions

**credential** – *n.* a quality, skill, or experience that makes a person suited to do a job

**denigration** – *n.* the act of saying something critical or unfair

**conduct** – *n.* the way that something is managed or directed

**disavow** – *v.* to say you are not responsible for an action or behavior

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