

STUDY GUIDE: Bonnie Berry LaMon

This study guide is to support virtual and in-person classes for students and teachers inspired by the movie *Respect* about the life of Aretha Franklin.

Overview

Attorney LaMon expresses pride in being an African American woman whose education enables her to help people. She dedicated herself to study, persevered through challenges, and demonstrated resiliency throughout her career. She describes her goal as using her skills and knowledge to protect the intellectual property of creative people and make sure they're not abused or taken advantage of. Her master class addresses issues of choosing representation, prioritizing competing values and the role of college in her career.

Learning Objectives

- Students will develop tools and/or guidance for prioritizing competing values through the discourse of formal debate.
- Students will examine lasting impacts that college perceptions had on life-long opportunities by interviewing mentors, teachers, and/or influential adults.
- Students will envision a career that combines their unrelated interests through artistic expression.
- Students will explore opportunities and/or challenges associated with being represented by an African American entertainment lawyer through individual reflection, small group dialogue, and whole-class discussion.

Essential Questions for Reflection Critical Thinking

- What guidance or tools can help high school students decide when to prioritize friends and when to prioritize schoolwork?
- How might perceptions about students at Ivy League schools – or other categories of higher education – have a lasting impact on one's life-long opportunities?
- How might a person's unrelated interests work together to create a fulfilling career? Consider examples that combine some of your interests that don't seem to go together.
- Imagine you are an R&B or rap musician who needs legal representation. Why might Bonnie Berry LaMon be a good choice to represent you?

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Suggested Student Activities

- Modeling their position and presentations after legal arguments by lawyers like Attorney Bonnie Berry LaMon, students will hold a formal debate in which they argue for/against prioritizing friends or schoolwork in high school. Students will research their side of the argument and make their presentations following the rules of formal debate. This project may be completed in two consecutive classes or it may be stretched out as part of a broader assignment.
- Students will interview key adults in their lives to learn more about lasting impacts that perceptions of colleges had on the adults' life-long opportunities. Students will present their findings in a subsequent class.
- Students will create a drawing, sculpture, diorama, poem, or other work of art that illustrates how they envision all their varied interests contributing to their future success.
- Students will participate in a think-pair-share activity that explores how the idea of community and connections might inform an artist's choice of an attorney. After a few minutes of reflection and/or journaling students will share their reflections with a classmate then participate in a full-class discussion on the topic.

Resources and Materials

For more information about Bonnie Berry LaMon's law firm, see: <http://b2lentertainmentlaw.com/>

Key Terms

Ivy League School
honors program
presumption
cross-over artist

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