

JAMES McCUNE SMITH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

25-26 June 2025

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Day 1 – Wednesday 25 June 2025, James McCune Smith Lecture Theatre

09.30	Registration
10.15	Conference opens
10.30	Welcome address – Dr Farai Chipato
10.45	<p>Guest Speaker: Irenosen Okojie MBE</p> <p>Irenosen Okojie is a Nigerian-British author known for her boundary-pushing work that challenges conventions of form, language and ideas. Her debut novel, <i>Butterfly Fish</i>, and short story collections, <i>Speak Gigantular</i> and <i>Nudibranch</i>, have won and been nominated for multiple awards. In 2020, she won the prestigious AKO Caine Prize for her short story <i>Grace Jones</i>. Her journalism has been featured in <i>The New York Times</i>, <i>The Observer</i>, <i>The Guardian</i>, and <i>The Huffington Post</i>. Okojie is also the founder and director of <i>Black to the Future</i> festival. Her latest novel, <i>Curandera</i>, is published by Dialogue Books.</p>
11.15	JMS Scholar Presentations – Hanna Haile, Jovita Adegun, Adam Heron, Jacob Simms, Luis Zambrano Hernandez
11.40	Break
12.00	<p>Guest Speaker – Professor Christopher Jackson</p> <p>Professor Christopher Jackson is Director of Sustainable Geoscience at the engineering consultancy WSP and a Visiting Professor of Basin Analysis at Imperial College London. His research focuses on sedimentary basin analysis and the structure of the Earth's subsurface. Beyond academia, Professor Jackson is a passionate science communicator, regularly delivering geoscience lectures to public audiences and school groups. He has also featured in several Earth science-focused television programmes and podcasts.</p>
12.30	JMS Scholar Presentations - Liz Chege, Ikenna Njoku, Natasha Boyce, Oyinkansola Peleyeju
12.50	Lunch/Exhibition
13.50	<p>Guest Speaker: Dr Sigourney Bonner</p> <p>Dr Sigourney Bonner is a postdoctoral associate at the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute at the University of Cambridge. She recently completed her PhD, developing novel models and therapeutics for a rare paediatric brain tumour. Sigourney is a co-founder and the CEO of Black in Cancer, an organisation that aims to empower and encourage future Black Cancer leaders whilst reducing cancer disparities through education and advocacy. She was also named as a Forbes 30 under 30 honouree in 2021 for her work.</p>
14.20	JMS Scholar Presentations – Aaron Pocock, Adebusola Ramsey, Faisa Omar, Alya Harding
14.45	Break
15.20	JMS Scholar Presentations – Idris Akormadu, Shaun Eganda Jones, Anesu Matanda Mambingo, Adele Oliver
15.40	Panel Event – Hosted by Dr Farai Chipato
17:00	Drinks reception and canapes at Glasgow University Union Listen to the Sounds of the JMS Conference

Day 2 – Thursday 26 June 2025, James McCune Smith Lecture Theatre

09.00	Registration
09.30	<p>Welcome Address – Clementine Burnley Clementine is a poet and writer based in Edinburgh. Alongside her writing, she's a trainee psychotherapist, trauma-informed mediator and group facilitator. Her work has been published in Ink Sweat and Tears, Gutter magazine, Magma, and Poetry Review. Her poem 'How to Eat Frogs' was selected by Hugh McMillan for the Best Scottish Poems, curated by the Scottish Poetry Library.</p>
09.50	<p>Future Making in Black Academia – Veronica Gordon, Paulette Williams – Hosted by Dr Peggy Brunache How might the stories we tell engage with the political realities of education? With an increasingly acute anti-intellectualism atmosphere taking hold, how can we protect Black communities within higher education and research; as well as drive systemic change across how their work is shared? Join us for an inspiring session on advancing the Black experience in higher education and research dedicated to supporting Black scholars. This session will focus on fostering collaborative scholarship from childhood through to higher education, and explore successful approaches that are making a difference.</p>
10.50	Break
11.10	<p>Making Good Trouble – Briana Pegado FRSA Join us for an interactive workshop exploring the power of storytelling in driving positive disruption, shaping your career profile, and enhancing wellbeing practices. Led by Briana Pegado - an experienced company builder, governance expert and high-impact social entrepreneur - this session draws on nearly a decade of experience as a Founder and Creative Director. Pegado is also the author of "Make Good Trouble: A Practical Guide to the Energetics of Disruption".</p>
12.10	Lunch/Exhibition – Across the Archive of Us
13.10	<p>Creative Approaches to Community Vitality - Dr Chisomo Kalinga, Dr Mavis Machirori – Hosted by Professor Jason Gill Inspired by James McCune Smith's contributions to health practice and his efforts to challenge racial misconceptions, this session brings together scholars exploring best practices in community-engaged health research. Through an illustrated talk and interactive discussions, we will examine healthcare education, wellbeing narratives, self-perception, and empowerment within Black communities. How might the stories we tell engage with the political realities of healthcare?</p>
14.10	<p>Finding our Bearings in the Future of Sudan – Zaki El-Salahi, Umloda Ibrahim Inspired by the Sudanese artistic and cultural renaissance spawned within Sudan's December Revolution (2018-2020), JMS Scholars Umloda and Zaki started a collaborative journey in 2025 to raise awareness and urgent funds for the millions of people in Sudan facing a Counter-Revolutionary War; a war which seeks to crush mass popular re-imaginings of the future Sudan. Through a dialogical series of short films and live lyricism, Zaki and Umloda have curated a joint offering that brings their fundraising and consciousness raising initiative to conference.</p>
15.20	Break
15.45	A musical performance in the UofG Chapel – Adam Heron, Cristina Dimitrova
16.15	Closing remarks – Dr Dwayne Spiteri
16.30	Drinks and food (return to the JMS building)