

# Congratulations to Dr. Brittany Pearl Battle, the 2021 SWS Feminist Activism Award Winner!

The SWS Feminist Activism Award, established in 1995, is presented annually to an SWS member who has notably and consistently used sociology to improve conditions for women in society. The award honors outstanding feminist advocacy efforts that embody the goal of service to women and that have identifiably improved women's lives. This year's Feminist Activism Award Subcommittee included Karine Lepillez (Subcommittee Chair), Amy Blackstone, LaToya Council, Ophra Leyser-Whalen, and Cierra Sorin. The Subcommittee selected Brittany Pearl Battle as the SWS 2021 Feminist Activism Award Winner.



Brittany Pearl Battle is an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at Wake Forest University and a passionate scholar-activist. Her research interests include social and family policy, courts, social justice, carceral logics, and culture and cognition. She teaches courses on social justice in the social sciences, criminology, and courts & criminal procedure, and is currently designing a course on abolition and reimagining justice. Brittany's scholarship has been funded by the Ford Foundation, American Sociological Association, and Sociologists for Women in Society, and she recently won the American Society of Criminology's Division on Critical Criminology and Social Justice Praxis Award.

She is currently working on a book manuscript (under contract with NYU Press), *"They're Stealing My Opportunity to*

*Be a Father: The Child Support System and State Intervention in the Family*, which examines the experiences of parents involved in the child support system using courtroom observations and interviews. The project illuminates the ways that the child support system functions as a neoliberal construct at the intersection of the welfare and criminal justice systems. Brittany is currently collaborating on a research project examining evictions in North Carolina, in a partnership with a local grassroots organization focused on housing justice. She is also working on an interview project with activists examining the pathways to abolition. Her activism as a founding member of

Triad Abolition Project in North Carolina included organizing a 49-day occupation during the summer of 2020 to demand policy changes in response to the murder of John Neville in the local jail. The organization also hosts direct protest actions, civic engagement actions, and community political education sessions.

Brittany is also a founding Board of Directors member of the Ocean City Juneteenth Organization, which honors Black elders and ancestors in her hometown, and began a donation drive to the local Coalition Against Rape and Abuse in the name of a Black woman community member murdered in an act of domestic violence. She has been recognized with a New Jersey Legislature Senate and General Assembly Citation for her work with the Ocean City Juneteenth Organization, as well as the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Award from the City of Ocean City, New Jersey. Brittany regularly appears in local news media and engages in public scholarship on podcasts and community panels, and through her blog on her experiences as a Black woman on the tenure track.

Her work stands out for its timeliness, intensity, and the clear results and impact they have had in a short time on the lives of colleagues, students, and members of her community. In the wake of George Floyd's murder, Brittany founded the Triad Abolition Project, mobilizing the organization for Occupy Winston Salem. Brittany worked with other organizers to put forth a set of demands to local government; they held educational events, community dinners, vigils, marches, and other actions that resulted in policy change at the county level. The county committed to notifying the public when an inmate dies in police custody and banned the use of "hogtie" restraints, among other changes. Brittany's activism is also visible in her mentoring, particularly of first-generation, Black, and POC students. Noting her dedication and intersectional feminist work on issues of racial justice in her community and the demonstration of her exceptional commitment to intersectional feminist activism within her community, SWS is awarding Brittany Pearl Battle the SWS 2021 Feminist Activism Award.

Brittany's nomination was submitted by Amanda M. Gengler, Andrea Gómez Cervantes, Victoria Reyes, Antonia Randolph, Bruce Jackson, Zawadi Rucks Ahidiana, and LaTonya J. Trotter. In her nomination package, it stated: *"In the classroom, Dr. Battle also utilizes her scholar-activist framework to teach sociology and empower her students to work towards social change. In only her second year at Wake Forest, Dr. Battle has already created and taught four different classes, all utilizing a Black feminist framework to understand sociology. This is perhaps most visible in her Social Justice class, where she teaches students to question knowledge and power production in the pursuit of "justice." Nonetheless, her most transformational acts of scholar-activism reveal themselves in the Teach-ins she organized during the Occupy Winston Salem work described earlier. Whether it was gathering on the sidewalk pavement in front of the local detention center, or sitting in a circle at a park, Dr. Battle broke the walls of the ivory tower bringing academia into the streets. With weekly, sometimes daily teach-ins, Dr. Battle brought together scholars, community organizations, and community members to talk about structural and local issues, on topics ranging from abolition to housing; the criminalization of Black youth, to immigration detention, and much more."*

We hope you will join us in congratulating Brittany and that you will make plans to join us for the 2021 Winter SWS Awards Reception to be held on Saturday, January 30, 2021. Please register

[here](#) for the 2021 SWS Winter Meeting where you will have the opportunity to attend the Awards Ceremony.