



RICE ALUMNI

LIFE AFTER RICE: HOW TO SUCCEED IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

Sponsored by the Association of Rice Alumni and presented in partnership with the Graduate Student Association and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies



KAREN BOOK '11

Karen Book is a senior data analyst for the Planning and Analysis team at Boston Public Schools. Her work supports the long-term and short-term strategic planning around student enrollment and programmatic design for the 125 schools and 54,000 students in Boston. Prior to entering the public sector, Karen received her PhD in sociology from UNC-Chapel Hill, where her academic research focused on socioeconomic inequality and health disparities over the life course. At Rice, Karen also studied sociology, was an active member of Hanszen College and won two conference titles as a part of the Rice Owls Swimming team. Karen currently resides in the Jamaica Plain

neighborhood of Boston with her husband and adopted greyhound.



SHAWN SIMMONS M.S. '00

Shawn Emerson Simmons is the environmental and permitting manager for ExxonMobil Chemical's Gulf Coast Growth Venture, managing regulatory issues in Africa, Asia Pacific, Australia and Europe. She has a bachelor's in petroleum engineering from the University of Oklahoma, a master's in environmental engineering from Rice University and a Ph.D. in environmental toxicology from Texas Southern University. Simmons is actively involved with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Educational Advancement Foundation, Care Council of Greater Houston, Bayou Land Conservancy and United Way. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the Society of Women Engineers, the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Petroleum Engineers. She has

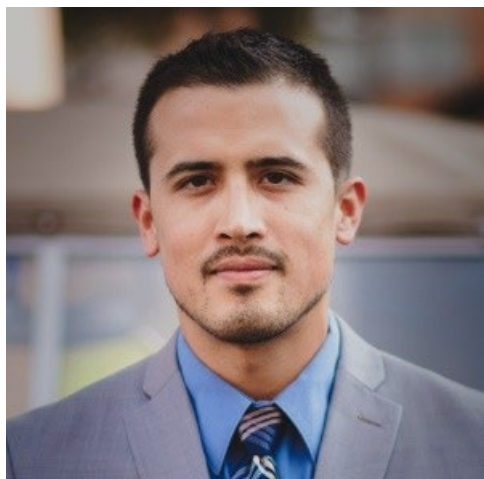
received the YMCA Young African-American Achiever Award and was featured as "30 Leaders of the Future" in Ebony magazine. In 2020, she began a two-year term as global vice president of the Black Employees Success Team at Exxon. She and her husband, Philip, have been married for 25 years and have 2 children, Jonathan and Jacquelyn.



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CARLOS SOLANO M.S. '14, MBA '14

Carlos has saved clients millions of dollars in operational costs and created new consulting services around sustainability. He has experience managing teams and advising organizations on ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) strategy and implementation. He has worked for public (e.g. US Army, City of Houston, Rice University) and private, global organizations (e.g. Shell, TPG Capital) across a range of issues – from technical GHG Inventories and resource-efficiency projects to commercial and stakeholder engagement initiatives to conduct materiality analyses with productivity KPIs. After helping companies report to investors as well as contributing to academic research on Integrated Reporting, and interviewing practitioners in the

Impact/ESG Investing space, he is keen on strengthening the integration of ESG among the investing public and wealth managers.



KRISTJAN STONE M.S. '08, Ph.D. '10

Kristjan Stone earned his M.S. and Ph.D. in Physics from Rice University in 2008 and 2010, respectively. To survive graduate school at Rice, he got involved with student government in the physics department, which led to eventually being the President of the GSA. Since graduating, Dr. Stone completed a postdoctoral research fellowship at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab working on record-breaking far-infrared quantum capacitance detectors. While there, he was able to utilize the leadership skill set he developed at Rice as chair of the Caltech Postdoc Association. He then finally joined the real world in 2013 as a Technologist in the Cryogenic Instrument and Technology Development Group at JPL and has recently joined the Systems Integration and

Testing Group. He has applied all of the skills he learned in graduate school, both the core research skills and the people skills, to projects he has worked on at JPL, from the James Webb Space Telescope to early phase R&D on Lunar Seismometers and more. When not confined to his apartment, Kristjan enjoys snowboarding, performance driving, mountain biking, traveling and leading volunteer organizations.