



March 3, 2021

Dear Awards Committee,

I would like to nominate Dr. Patricia Turner for the Linda Dégh Lifetime Achievement Award. While Dr. Turner has written extensively on a variety of topics, including quilting and Black images in culture, her excellent work on rumor and legend more than qualifies her for this award. Dr. Turner's book, *I Heard It Through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture* (1994) is an important work in our field and something that I personally still use in the classroom and in my research. In addition to demonstrating how misperceptions and stereotypes about African-American culture can turn into beliefs about that culture, she also demonstrates how trust and hesitancy among African-Americans is often justified because of how poorly they have been treated in the past. I have used her work in nearly all of my research with contemporary legend and conspiracy theory because it clearly demonstrates that sometimes these beliefs are justified and it shows that the deficiency model of public health (which indicates that if only people had more education, they would trust public health information) is incorrect. The idea that belief in conspiracy theories and contemporary legends is strongly influenced by personal and historical experience was ahead of its time and continues to be relevant today.

I also use Dr. Turner's chapters on historical rumors in *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* to demonstrate to my students that these legends have existed for a long time and versions of them continue to exist to this day. Many of them (including BIPOC students) are surprised to learn that these ideas are not new and that they continue to influence current thought about African-Americans. This is an effective way to begin our conversations about race and contemporary legends and I've encouraged my colleagues to use this method when teaching, especially while teaching students who may be resistant to discussing these narratives.

Dr. Turner's book *Rumors on the Color Line: Rumor and Race in America* (with Gary Alan Fine, 2001) is also an excellent contribution to our work as contemporary legend scholars. Anand Prahlad called it an "indispensable addition" (2003, 411-412) and I agree. Also indispensable is her article "Respecting the Smears: Anti-Obama Folklore Anticipates Fake News" which was included in JAF's special issue on fake news. I have also heard that she has recently completed a book on Obama legends, titled *Trash Talk: Anti-Obama Lore and Race in the Twenty-First Century*, which will be excellent if her past presentations at ISCLR on the topic are any indication.

I could easily speak to Dr. Turner's expertise and excellent research for pages, but I'll stop here as the instructions indicate that I should. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew J. Little".