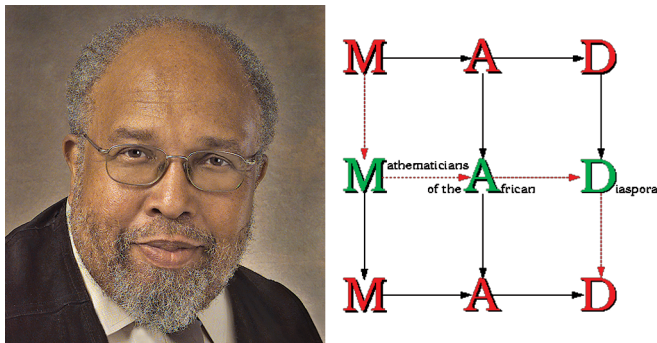# Updated "MAD Pages" Website Unveiled October 9, 2020

Edray Herber Goins

Figure 1. Scott Williams and the Original MAD Pages.

In 1997, Scott Williams (SUNY Buffalo) founded the website "Mathematicians of the African Diaspora" [2], which has since become widely known as the MAD Pages. According to a 2019 blog [1] written by Scott Williams for the American Mathematical Society, "As a child I was struck by the emphasis, within the general American culture, upon achievements in the Sports/Entertainment Industry as indications of success. Within the African American subculture, those indications are even stronger—just consider the winners of the NAACP Image Awards among other celebrations. On the rare occasion a scientist has won an award, there has been a limitation to the medical field. In addition, where it concerns successes in mathematics and the sciences, I discovered much incorrect or misconstrued information available in texts and especially on the web."

Williams built the site over the course of 11 years, creating over 1,000 pages by himself as a personal labor of

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Figure 2. Donald King, Asamoah Nkwanta, and John Weaver.

love. The site features more than 700 Black mathematicians, computer scientists, and physicists as a way to showcase the intellectual prowess of those from the African Diaspora. Williams provided profiles of these individuals, detailing their education, their journey within mathematics thus far, and their accomplishments. He also created numerous pages discussing Black history within the mathematical sciences, and presented data on the demographics of Black people in the mathematical sciences at the time. Since its creation, the MAD Pages have received more than 20 million visitors, and provided immeasurable inspiration and validation to many Black mathematicians and students.

Scott Williams retired in 2008. After an initial town hall meeting about the future of the MAD Pages, which took place at a Conference for African American Researchers in the Mathematical Sciences (CAARMS), an informal group of mathematicians decided to work together to preserve Williams' work. In 2015, the National Association of Mathematicians (NAM) formed an ad hoc committee to update the MAD Pages, consisting of NAM President Edray Goins (Pomona College), Committee Co-Chairs Don King (Northeastern University) and Asamoah Nkwanta (Morgan State University), and web developer John Weaver (Varsity Software). The MAD Pages Update Project was funded in part by Temple University, the Educational Advancement Foundation (especially Albert
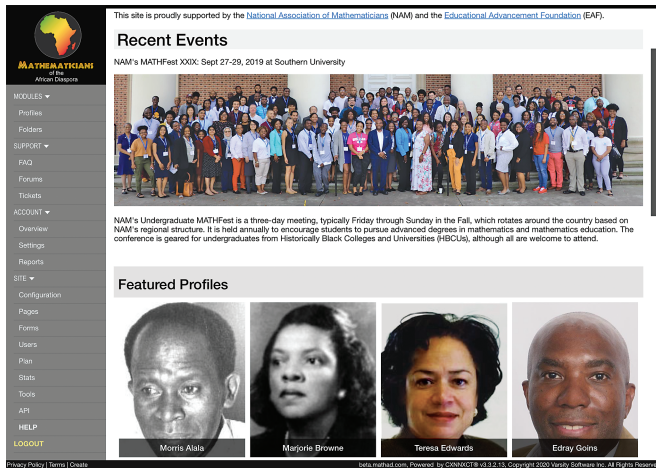
Figure 3. Updated MAD Pages.

Lewis and Harry Lucas), the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI), the National Science Foundation (DMS-1560394), Northeastern University, Pomona College, and Washington and Lee University. We employed nearly four dozen undergraduate students from across the country to assist with this project; they greatly contributed to the database's depth and accuracy.

The updated MAD Pages [3] were unveiled to the public on October 9, 2020. "This unveiling date intentionally coincides with the death of Benjamin Banneker, arguably the first African American mathematician," states committee member Edray Goins. "His collected works were lost in a mysterious fire which occurred on the day of his funeral. The MAD Pages is dedicated to the quest of preserving the memory of African American mathematicians, lest they be lost forever." The new pages consist of a database containing biographical information of more than 700 mathematical scientists from the African Diaspora. The old site was a loose collection of profiles and pages with many stories; the navigation system felt dated and lacked any search capabilities. The new site uses a robust database: it is searchable by gender, degree-granting institution, and year of completion. This site also employs a wiki model, allowing users to create their own profiles and update any incorrect information immediately. The new site can be found at `https://www.mathad.com`.

References
[1] Erica Walker, Scott Williams, and Robin Wilson, *An existence proof: The Mathematicians of the African Diaspora website*, inclusion/exclusion AMS Blog, January 31, 2019. `https://blogs.ams.org/inclusionexclusion/2019/01/31/mathematicians-of-the-african-diaspora/`

[2] Scott Williams, *Mathematicians of the African Diaspora (MAD) Pages*, legacy, last accessed October 2020. `http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/index.html`
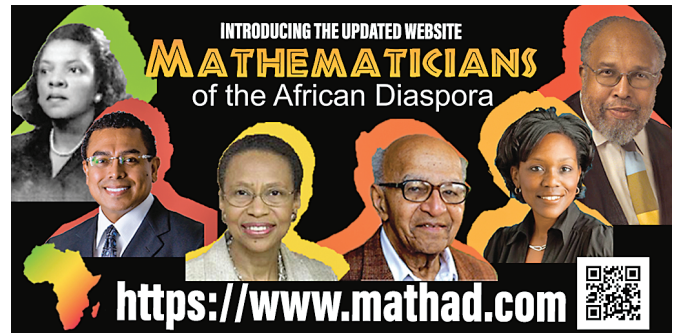

Figure 4.

[3] Edray Goins, Donald King, Asamoah Nkwanta, and John Weaver, *Mathematicians of the African Diaspora (MAD) Pages*, updated, last accessed October 2020. `https://www.mathad.com`

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Credits
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Figure 2 (center) is courtesy of Asamoah Nkwanta.
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