

Business Summit on Mental Health

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Dean Ramona Denby-Brinson, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work

Ramona Denby-Brinson, Ph.D., has served as Dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work since August 2021, where she also holds the title of Distinguished Professor. Her academic career spans more than three decades and includes prominent leadership roles at The Ohio State University (Associate Dean of Academic Affairs) and Arizona State University (Associate Dean of Research). She also served for nearly 20 years at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she held various academic, research, and administrative positions and co-founded The Lincy Institute. Her career began at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she was a researcher at the first-ever National Institutes of Health-funded social work research center focused on children's mental health services.



Dr. Denby-Brinson is widely recognized as a leading national expert in culturally responsive child welfare services and a preeminent scholar in kinship care. She has authored or edited nine influential books, including *Child and Family-Serving Systems: A Compendium of Policy and Practice*, *Kinship Care: Increasing Child Well-Being through Practice, Policy, and Research*, and *African American Children and Families in Child Welfare: Cultural Adaptation of Services*.

To date, she has been awarded over \$50 million in competitive grant funding, including major federal awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the National Institute of Mental Health, and The Duke Endowment. Her research centers on the mental health and well-being of African American children and families, and she is co-author of *Mental Health Care in the African American Community: A Life Course Perspective*. She has led significant mental health workforce development initiatives across multiple states.

Dr. Denby-Brinson's scholarly contributions and community-engaged research have earned her numerous accolades, including the Champion for Children Award from the Child Welfare League of America and the prestigious 2014 Harry Reid Silver State Research Award. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.

Throughout her career, Dr. Denby-Brinson has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to community empowerment, advancing research that not only fosters intellectual discovery but also strengthens the capacity of nonprofit and community organizations to address pressing mental health and child welfare challenges. She is currently the immediate Past-president of the Society for Social Work and Research and has previously held roles as Treasurer of the same organization and President of the Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

A licensed social worker, Dr. Denby-Brinson began her professional journey serving children and families in diverse social service settings, including medical social work, substance use counseling, family therapy, and public guardianship.