

3-1-2019

2019: Ione Damasco

Heather Ashley
University of Dayton

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Recommended Citation

Ashley, Heather, "2019: Ione Damasco" (2019). *Women of UD*. 19.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/women_of_ud/19

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During Women's History Month, the University of Dayton Women's Center coordinates, as an experiential learning opportunity for students, an annual exhibit highlighting the contributions women have made at the University of Dayton.

Theme for 2019: Trailblazers

2019: Ione Damasco

Written by Heather Ashley '21

Ione Damasco, simply put, is a trailblazer for those written out of the story. As the daughter of immigrants, she saw the sacrifice and struggle her parents went through to help her while making a life for themselves. She has also, through her many experiences in various other jobs, met many others from different walks of life and recognized how their identities intersect.

Ione earned her undergraduate degree in English from the Ohio State University, a decision she made because she recognized the way literature spoke to issues of identity, understanding of ourselves and intersectionality. She knew that, because of these experiences, she has always wanted to find a career that allowed her to work with people different from herself. This is why she later chose to attend Kent State University and earn her Master's in Library and Information Science so she could pursue a career in libraries.

For Ione, libraries are places that hold the ability to connect people from different backgrounds and life experiences. She says, "There's something about reading a great book, where you can really get into another character and you start to see perspectives or experience things from a lens different from your own." However, despite that being the goal for libraries, sometimes stories are left out, experiences aren't told, and identities are not represented. Ione's passion for social justice led her to want to improve that.

It was because of her love of social justice that she was welcomed at the University of Dayton in 2005 as a librarian. Her responsibilities cover a wide range of activities: cataloging materials in a wide variety of formats, acting as the metadata specialist for various digitization projects, serving as the subject selector for Visual Arts, the Women's and Gender Studies



Program, Ethnic Studies, and Library Science, as well as serving on the Women's and Gender Studies Program committee.

Ione is also the chair of the Diversity and Inclusion team at Roesch Library. Through her work, she has been able to make connections across campus with partners to develop and implement programming that fosters a more inclusive campus environment. This team works to create programs where dialogue on difficult topics can occur in collaboration with other groups on campus around the issue of equity and inclusion. The team also works to help the people who work in the library develop their own understanding and skills around issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. As a faculty member, her research focuses on these same issues within the profession of librarianship itself.