

# Department of Medicine Inclusion Council Celebrates Black History Month Honoring Black Doctors



## Gail Wyatt, PhD

### Clinical Psychologist

*Board-certified sex therapist, researcher, and academic*

The Department of Medicine Inclusion Council honors and celebrates the accomplishments of Gail Wyatt, PhD, (born 1944). Dr. Wyatt may be best known as the first person of color to become a licensed psychologist in California, the first Black woman to be named to full professor at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, and the first person of color to receive training as a sexologist. Dr. Wyatt has been selected as a senior research fellow by the COBB Institute for the National Medical Association.



At the age of 16, Gail E. Wyatt, PhD, enrolled at Fisk University. While there, she had an encounter with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. that showed her she was on the right track in her quest to become a psychologist.

On May 3, 1964, Rev. King visited Fisk University following a sit-in at Morrison's Cafeteria – where demonstrators had been urging support of a public accommodations bill. "After he finished, he said if anyone wanted to come down and shake his hand, they could," she says. "I went down and stood in line and when it got to my turn, he spent a little time with me, asking my name and what I wanted to be." She told him she wanted to be a clinical psychologist and at that time, intended to work with children. Rev. King asked her to, "tell our story, our story as Black people," she says. "He said to me, 'I want you to reach back and help other people.'"

Dr. Wyatt directs the Sexual Health program, the Phodiso Training Project in South Africa, the HIV/AIDS Translational Training Program, the Center for Culture, Trauma and Mental Health Disparities, and is an Associate Director of the UCLA AIDS Institute. She has been internationally recognized for her work in Jamaica, Africa, India and most recently, South Africa, where she conducts a longitudinal study of the aftermath of rape among South African women.



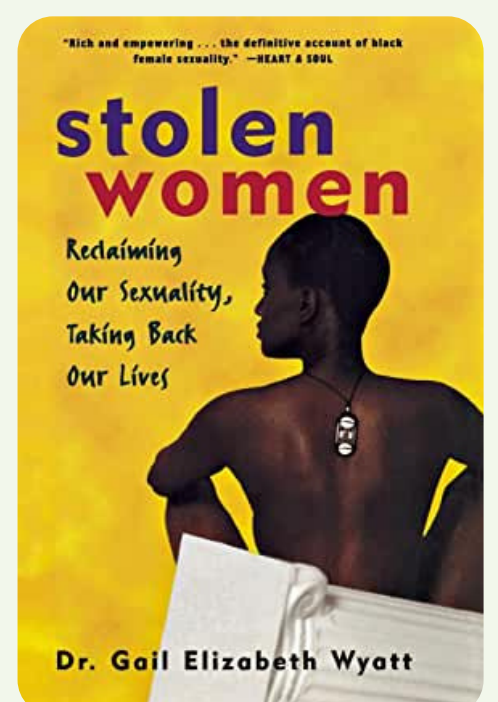
African-American HIV/AIDS Summit 2004.

Dr. Wyatt and her team were first to be funded by NIMH to develop an intervention for HIV positive women with histories of sexual violence, entitled "Healing Our Women". She was the initiator of a multi-disciplinary team that developed and tested the first culturally congruent intervention for HIV sero-discordant African American couples in four cities with NIMH. This is the first intervention developed and tested for self identified heterosexual male and female couples, which represents the most common mode of HIV transmission in the world.

Dr. Wyatt has provided Congressional testimony ten times on issues related to women's health and overall health policy and authored 6 books.

Her best selling book, "Stolen Women: Reclaiming our Sexuality, Taking back our Lives" provides the historical roots of violence and racism that continue to present challenges for African Americans today. In "No More Clueless sex", written with Dr, Lewis Wyatt, they both provide clinical information to assist men and women in understanding their bodies and sexuality.

In 2017, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Psychological Association for her work on the effects of trauma on mental health. In 2019 she was made an Honorary Professor at the University of Capetown, South Africa for research and mentoring.



Dr. Wyatt was also a mentor to Geri Donenberg, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Psychology in the Department of Medicine at UIC.