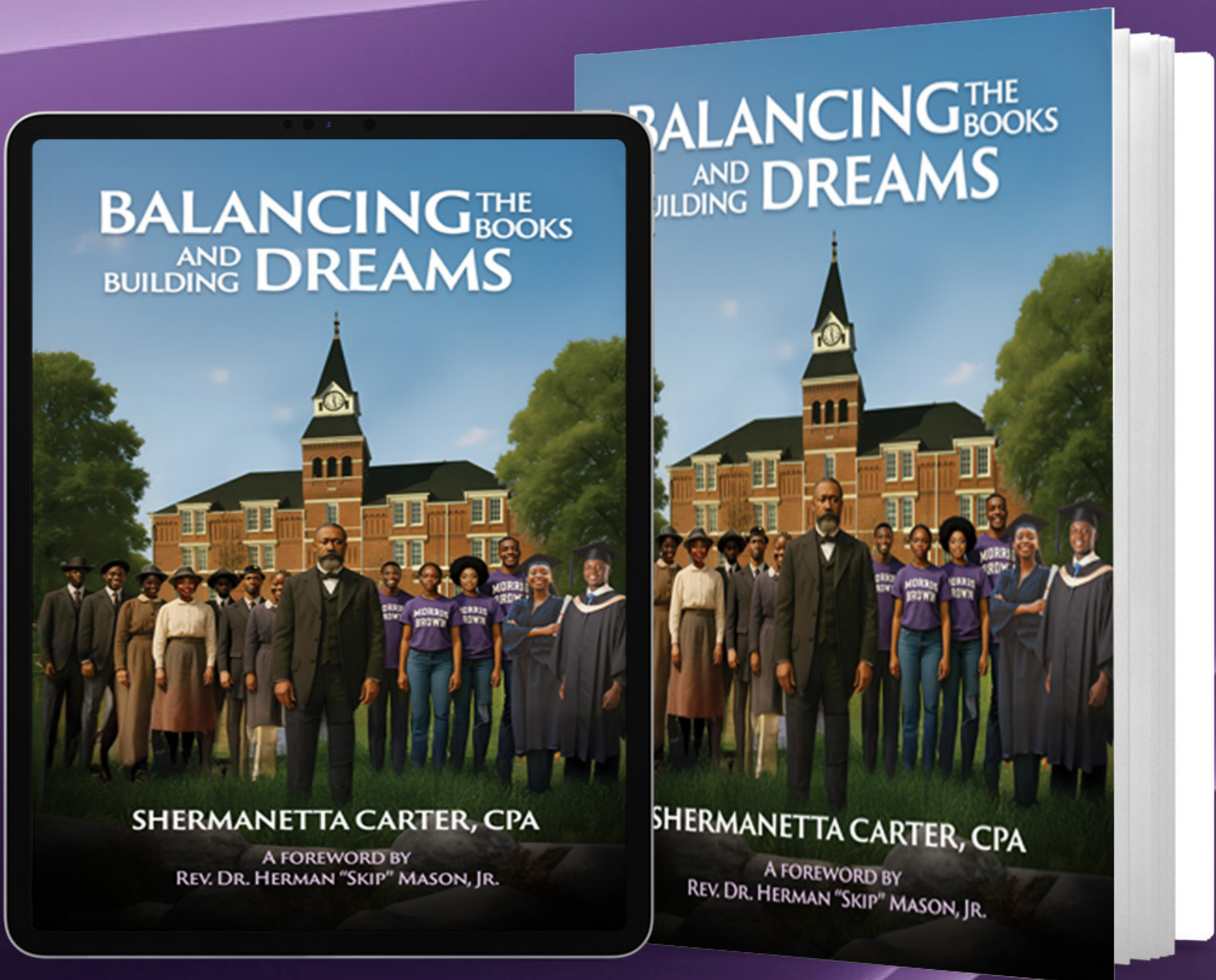


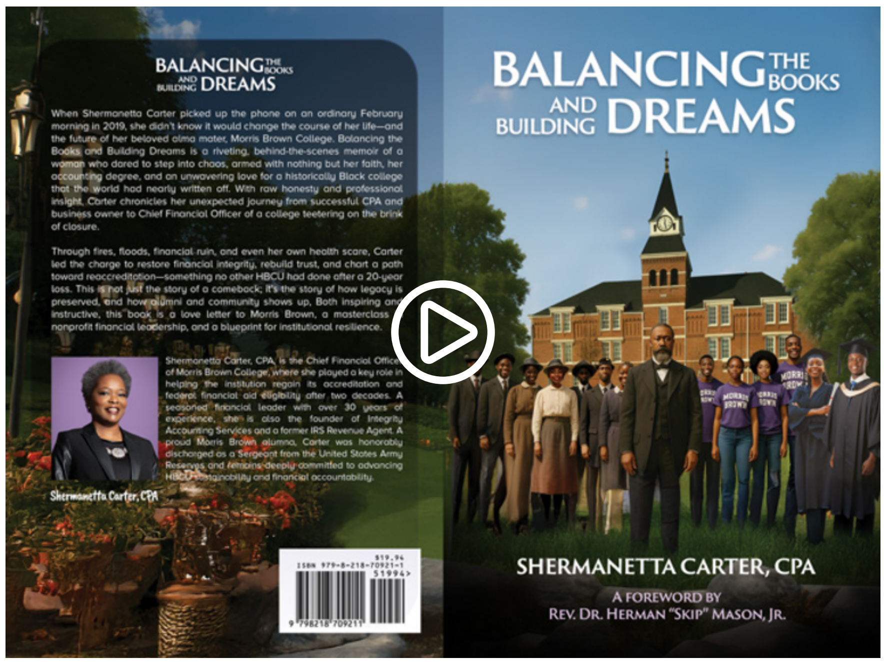
Media Kit

shermanettacarter.com

Shermanetta Carter, CFO of Morris Brown College, Announces Debut Book Balancing The Books And Building Dreams

A powerful chronicle of an HBCU's historic comeback.

(Atlanta, GA) – August 25, 2025) — Shermanetta Carter, Chief Financial Officer of Morris Brown College, is proud to announce the release of her debut book, Balancing the Books and Building Dreams, on October 10, 2025. This timely release pulls back the curtain on one of the most remarkable comeback stories in higher education: the financial restoration and historic reaccreditation of Morris Brown College.



Take a listen to an AI-Powered podcast on Balancing the Books and Building Dreams.

As CFO, Carter played a significant role in the college's return to accreditation after nearly two decades. In this powerful and transparent account, she offers readers a front-row seat to the strategy, sacrifice, and spiritual conviction that fueled the institution's Hardest Reset. Her leadership in developing sound fiscal systems, securing partnerships, and restoring public trust helped transform what many saw as a lost cause into a national model of institutional resilience.

"Every spreadsheet she restructured, every audit she faced down, and every plan she implemented carried the weight of generations and the hope of futures yet to be written," said Rev. Dr. Herman "Skip" Mason.

"This isn't just my story—it's Morris Brown's story. It's a testament to what's possible when financial integrity, purpose, and persistence are aligned," says Carter. "This book is for every HBCU graduate, every woman in leadership, and anyone who's ever been told it's too late."

Balancing the Books and Building Dreams is part memoir and guide. Carter shares how she overcame doubt with discipline, and led with both heart and accountability. Readers will gain valuable insight into the real work involved in saving historical HBCU institutions.
For more information on Balancing Books and Building Dreams, visit https://www.shermanettacarter.com.

About

Shermanetta Carter

Shermanetta Carter, CPA, is the Chief Financial Officer of Morris Brown College and a seasoned financial strategist with over 20 years of experience in nonprofit and higher education finance. As an HBCU alumna and advocate, she has been a leading voice in the movement to restore and sustain Black institutions through transparency, innovation, and purpose-driven leadership.

Morris Brown College

Founded in 1881 by formerly enslaved African Americans, Morris Brown College is a private, historically Black liberal arts institution located in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia. As the first educational institution in Georgia to be owned and operated entirely by African Americans, Morris Brown has a proud legacy of academic excellence, spiritual development, and social justice.

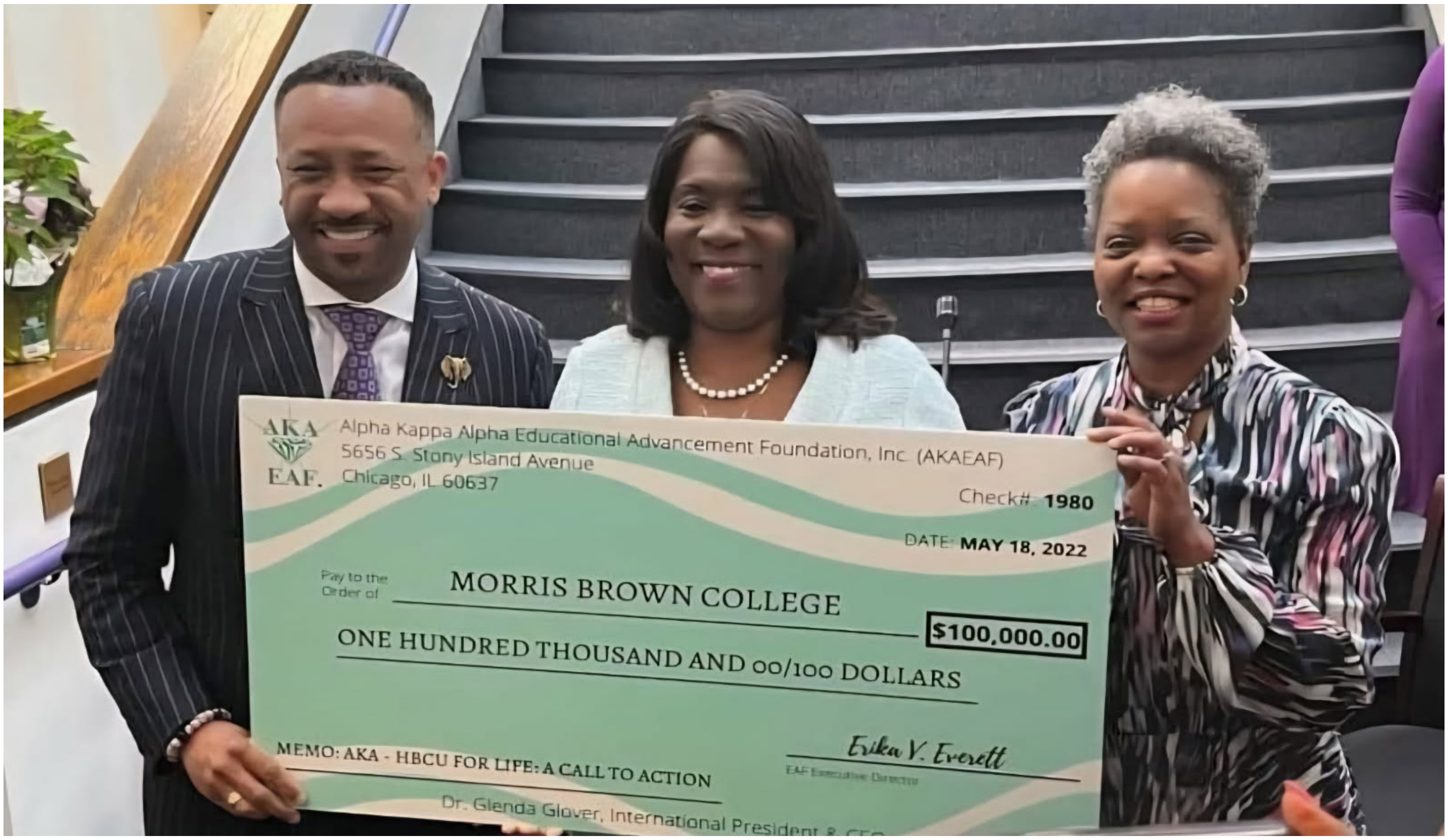
Insights with Shermanetta Carter

1. What inspired you to write Balancing the Books and Building Dreams, and what do you hope readers take away from it?
INSPIRATION: As the CFO at Morris Brown College, I had a front-row seat to what turned out to be the most incredible story of any HBCU in its 187 years since the first one was founded. I wanted to capture the behind-the-scenes work. Most importantly, I wanted to honor the people—the faculty and staff who stayed, the students who believed, the colleagues who collaborated, and the ancestors whose sacrifices laid the foundation. This book is my way of saying, *"We did this. And here's how."*

TAKE-AWAY: Your story matters and deserves to be told. If this book inspires even one reader to be bold enough to document their journey, advocate for their institution, or believe in their own comeback, then I've done my job. It is totally acceptable to celebrate your accomplishments in a bold and thunderous way.

2. What was the most pivotal moment in Morris Brown College's journey back to accreditation, and what role did you play as CFO?
The most pivotal moment in Morris Brown College's journey back to accreditation came on **April 13, 2021**, when the college was granted accreditation candidacy by the **Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS).** This milestone marked the first time in nearly 20 years that Morris Brown had regained formal recognition, setting the stage for full accreditation, which was officially achieved on **April 26, 2022.**

I helped rebuild trust from alumni, the AME Church, and the community in the institution's financial integrity, a critical requirement for accreditation. You played a key role in managing and reporting on fundraising efforts, including record-breaking campaigns during Homecoming and Founder's Day, which signaled renewed confidence in the college's future. Under my financial leadership, Morris Brown became eligible once again to apply for federal financial aid programs and veterans' benefits, a game-changer for student access and enrollment. In essence, I helped restore a legacy. Your work ensured that Morris Brown could once again be a "haven for all hungry souls", especially for first-generation Black students seeking a transformative education that would change the trajectory of their family legacy. This journey taught me that restoration is not just about recovery—it's about resilience. And as we stood on the threshold of full accreditation in April 2022, I knew we had done more than revive a college. We had reignited a movement that gave other HBCUs the model for rebuilding after setbacks.



3. What are some of the biggest financial misconceptions people have about HBCUs and how they operate?

HBCUs Are Poorly Managed Financially. Actually, HBCUs operate with *remarkable efficiency* given their limited resources. Chronic underfunding—especially of land-grant HBCUs —has left institutions with billions in unmet needs. Yet they continue to produce high-performing graduates and maintain accreditation standards, often with smaller staffs and leaner budgets.

HBCUs Don't Offer a Good Return on Investment. HBCUs are fueling the rise of Black excellence in fields like medicine, law, and engineering—yet they're still treated as an afterthought when it comes to funding and political support. Nearly 70% of low-income students who graduate from HBCUs rise to the middle class or beyond by age 30—a powerful ROI by any measure. HBCUs produce 40% of Black engineers, 70% of Black doctors and dentists, and 80% of Black judges.

As CFO of Morris Brown College, I have knocked down these myths by restoring accreditation through sound financial governance, drafting policies that demonstrate institutional resilience, reporting fundraising efforts that show alumni and donor confidence, and rebuilding trust with federal agencies and accrediting bodies.

4. How has your experience as a Black woman and CPA shaped your leadership approach in higher education finance?
Shirley Chisolm once said, **"If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."** Over the years, I gained an understanding of what it means to be underestimated, yet unwavering. That perspective fuels my commitment to equity, transparency, and institutional restoration. As a CPA and a Black woman, I saw the mission through both a sharp eye and a full heart. It wasn't just business—it was personal. We were rebuilding something that mattered, not just for today, but for generations to come.

5. What advice would you give to other professionals working to restore, rebuild, or reimagine legacy institutions?
When I stepped into the work of restoring Morris Brown College's accreditation, I wasn't just wearing my CPA hat. I was carrying the hopes of generations through my alma mater. And here's what I've learned—lessons I offer to anyone working to rebuild, restore, or reimagine a legacy:

Lead with reverence, not nostalgia. Honor the past, yes—but don't be afraid to challenge it. Restoration is not replication. It's transformation.

Build trust before you build systems. Institutions that have weathered storms carry scars. **Listen** to those who stayed. **Engage** those who left. **Transparency, humility, and consistency** will open doors that credentials alone cannot.

Balance precision with compassion. As professionals, we're trained to be exacting. But restoration work is deeply human. Every policy, every budget line, every decision—make it with people in mind.

Celebrate the quiet victories. Restoration is slow. It's layered. It's often invisible. But every step forward—every reconciled account, every renewed partnership, every student who chooses to believe again—is a triumph.

Stay rooted in purpose. Ask yourself: *Why does this institution matter? Who does it serve? What future are we building?* Let those answers guide your strategy, your tone, your every move.

To my fellow HBCU leaders: We are the stewards of institutions born from struggle, brilliance, and unwavering faith. Our campuses are more than buildings—they are sanctuaries of Black excellence, resilience, and possibility. Because when we strengthen our HBCUs, we don't just change campuses—we change futures.

Let's keep building. Let's keep believing. And let's make sure our legacy lives on—not just in history books, but in every student who walks through our doors and dares to dream.

"I didn't learn to just balance the books - I learned to balance life, ambition, and grace under pressure."

- from Balancing the Books and Building Dreams

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