

PROJECT “WHAT WILL YOU BE?”

Presented by Kate R. Watson: kate@katewatson.net, +1 650 206-8882

Purpose: To provide Bay Area children and adults with real-world, culturally relevant role models for academic and career success. *To change the face of success.*

Needs Statement: Increasingly, U.S. jobs require higher education.¹ Overall, educational attainment has risen since 1990, but achievement gaps have widened between Asians and Caucasians and their African American, Latino, and Native American peers.² Class is also a factor: While half of people from high-income families achieve a bachelor’s degree by age 25, just one in 10 from low-income families do.³ In a recent study of academically successful African American males, interviewees concluded that their underperforming peers “had not encountered people or culturally relevant experiences that motivated them to be engaged, strive for academic success, and persist through baccalaureate degree attainment.”⁴

Project Scope: “What Will You Be?” is a visual media project that highlights local community members who have attained educational and career success, particularly in business, legal, medical, and STEM professions. Because educational attainment is a multifaceted issue, individuals of diverse backgrounds will be interviewed and photographed for the project.

Expected Outcomes: Initially, resulting photographs and interviews will be posted on project founder Kate Watson’s website (www.katewatson.net). A dedicated project website is under construction. Pending completion of an appropriate body of work and adequate funding, additional outlets for project dissemination will be sought. A sample of finished artwork is below:



To participate in or support this project, please contact Kate at kate@katewatson.net.

¹ Anthony P. Carnevale, Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl, “Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018,” Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2010.

² The Condition of Education. Institute of Education Sciences. <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=27>

³ Martha J. Bailey and Susan M. Dynarski, “Inequality in Postsecondary Attainment,” 2011. In Greg Duncan and Richard Murnane, eds., Whither Opportunity: Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children’s Life Chances, pp. 117-132. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

⁴ Shaun R. Harper, PhD. Black Male Student Success in Higher Education. <http://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/sites/gse.upenn.edu/equity/files/publications/bmss.pdf>