

Geneva Smitherman is University Distinguished Professor Emerita of English and a pioneering scholar-activist in Black Studies and Sociolinguistics. Smitherman received her bachelor's and master's degrees with concentrations in English and Latin from Wayne State University (1960; 1962) and her Ph.D. in English from the University of Michigan (1969). She began her academic career as a nineteen-year-old high school teacher of English and Latin in the Detroit Public Schools (DPS). She was a member of the first faculty in "Afro-American Studies" at Harvard University, and she helped create Black Studies programs at Wayne State and Michigan State. She was affectionately known by her students as "Dr. G," an accomplished academic who always remained "their girl." She has received several awards for her Sociolinguistics research which challenges myths about African American Language and advocates language rights of all marginalized communities. She came to MSU as a professor of English in 1989. In 1990, Smitherman founded "My Brother's Keeper," a male mentoring program in partnership with DPS's Malcolm X Academy. She has authored and edited or co-edited 15 books and monographs and more than 125 articles, essays, and published opinion pieces. Her latest book is *Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language and Race in the U.S.* (with Dr. H. S. Alim), which presents insights about President Obama and the relationship between language and race in contemporary society. Smitherman retired from MSU in 2012.