Madi Holcomb

ONE

Slug: Black Female Education

An assistant professor at the University of Georgia told an audience Friday that teaching media education to black girls is crucial for breaking the stereotypes media portray.

Dr. Sherell A. McArthur of the College of Education spoke Friday afternoon in the Miller Learning Center on the University of Georgia campus. She works in the education theory and practice department at the university.

McArthur talked about her research study “Beyond Your Perception,” which was done on black girls in the public school system. This research was done on girls from elementary to high school age. It was also used to see how black women stereotypes are portrayed in media.

McArthur asked the audience how many black females they learned about in school. The audience was only able to name six females. She said that the struggle the audience faced in thinking of more than 10 powerful women in history shows there is prejudice in the public school system.

McArthur said the school system fails to support girls of color, especially black. McArthur said the goal of her research study is to “give a frame to what black girls see and a language to what they think about.”

McArthur discussed the emotional assaults that black girls face. She said they make girls not want to wear their hair in braids, afros and afro puffs.

McArthur said that black girls are seven times more likely to be suspended than white girls. She argued that black girls are told by media that who they are naturally is not right and that is why black girls shun their culture and embrace white girl ideals.

She said she wants to give a frame and new language to what black girls see in the media.

McArthur said she wants to use black girl’s voices to create a new platform that would break media stereotypes.

She said the reason she did this research was to “provide a platform for black girl’s voices, breakdown media stereotypes, and to teach the girls they do not have to adopt a white person’s habits.”

McArthur said she plans to continue her research study on black girls in the public school system. She said she hopes this study teaches black girls they do not have to adopt the stereotypes media portray.

Ashley Love is a student at the University of Georgia.

“We tend to polarize the way we think and tether it to politics when it should be centered around humanity," Love said. "This is research done on humans who feel a certain way or have been treated a certain way by everyone else."

'This is a way to bring their narrative and story to the front and make them visible so we can understand them as humans."

McArthur said she plans to continue her research on black girls in schools. She said she “hopes to decenter whiteness and maleness, while providing a platform for black girls' voices.”

This speech is one of the “Friday Speaker Series.” which continue until Nov. 30.