

Biography

Gabrielle White (She/Her/Hers) is a junior with a double major in African American & Diaspora Studies and culture, advocacy, and leadership on the pre-law track. Born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee, Gabrielle has developed a deep passion for exploring social advocacy, the Black American experience, and the criminal justice system—specifically in the American South. With aspirations to become a juvenile public defense attorney, Gabrielle seeks to defend the humanity and rehabilitative potential of youth within a system that attempts to diminish their humanity.

Artist Statement

Gabrielle's work, "An Open Letter to My Grandfather Whose Death Gave Me a Broken Chair," explores her multi-faceted relationship with her now-deceased grandfather and how it has impacted her navigation of higher education. Although Gabrielle often understood her grandfather—and his legacy—through rose-tinted glasses, his untimely death helped her to recontextualize his legacy, their relationship, and the disadvantages of tough love in the modern context. Although her perspective of grandfather was destined to change, Gabrielle struggles with holding her wholly positive experiences in tandem with the emotional distance he often maintained with the rest of her family. Despite the resentment she may carry for her previous naivete, Gabrielle simultaneously recognizes her grandfather for the academic influence he had on her, specifically by encouraging her interest in African American history and social resistance. Left with questions unanswered, mixed emotions, and the weight of being the eldest granddaughter, Gabrielle utilizes this open letter to address how she will continue to reckon with her grandfather's legacy in its entirety as she navigates Vanderbilt and higher education spaces.