

## African American Woman, Midshipman 1st Class Sydney Barber, Makes US Naval Academy History

by Stacy M. Brown | NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent



Midshipman 1st Class Sydney Barber

Midshipman 1st Class Sydney Barber, a mechanical engineering major from Illinois, has been named brigade commander for the spring semester at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Barber, a track star with a stated desire to work as a Marine Corps ground officer, becomes the first Black woman to lead the Naval Academy's student body.

The brigade commander heads the Academy's day-to-day activities and trains the class of approximately 4,500 midshipmen. Barber becomes the 16th woman to serve in that role.

"Earning the title of brigade commander speaks volumes, but the title itself is not nearly as significant as the opportunity it brings to lead a team in doing something I believe will be truly special," Barber said in a news release. "I am humbled to play a small role in this momentous season of American history."

As a walk-on sprinter and hurdler of the Navy Women's Varsity

Track and Field team, Barber has lettered all three years of competing and is an Academy record holder for the outdoor 4x400m relay, according to her biography.

She is the co-president of the Navy Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club, secretary for the National Society of Black Engineers, and a USNA Gospel Choir and Midshipman Black Studies Club member.

Barber served as the 13th company's executive officer and currently serves as the Brigade's 1st regiment executive officer.

She also initiated a STEM outreach program that leverages mentoring, literature, and service lessons to serve middle school-aged girls of color.

Barber led a team to organize the inaugural U.S. Naval Academy Black Female Network Breakfast to bridge the generational gap between current black midshipmen and alumni.

Barber is recently credited with mobilizing a team of more than 180 midshipmen, faculty, and alumni to develop

the Midshipman Diversity Team to promote greater diversity, inclusivity, and equity within the Brigade.

"Sydney stands out amongst her peers, for not only her exemplary record but for her clear vision of how she intends to make the world a better place and her accompanying bias for action," said Lt. Commander Darby Yeager, a member of the U.S. Navy Academy's Truman Scholarship Selection Committee.

"We were incredibly proud to have Sydney represent the Naval Academy in her Truman Scholarship interview this year," Yeager added.

Janie Mines, who became the first Black woman to graduate from the Naval Academy in 1980, expressed her excitement for Barber on Twitter.

"This bought me to tears. This young woman, Midshipman Sydney Barber, will be the first Black Female Brigade Commander at the U.S. Naval Academy. 40 years later. Thank you, Sydney! Love you!" Mines tweeted.

## Speculation Swirls that Trump Will Resign, Clearing Way for Pardon by VP Pence



If Trump can't pardon himself, he would likely have to preemptively resign from office so that Vice President Mike Pence could assume the presidency and pardon him," the magazine reported, echoing the editorial by Brent Budowsky in The Hill.

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According to multiple news reports, with the walls of defeat from the 2020 election closing in, lame-duck President Donald Trump may be seeking a way to avoid prosecution after he is no longer in office while still claiming victory in the election.

Numerous outlets are reporting that Trump is preparing for life after the White House, planning a major media platform that could net him billions of dollars because of his robust following.

He's also examining a host of presidential pardons, including for his family members and himself.

One former Democrat aide even floated this wild prediction on Nov. 14:

In an editorial for The Hill, Brent Budowsky, who served as an aide to former Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas) and former Rep. Bill Alexander (D-Ark.), said "Trump will resign the presidency, and [Vice President] Mike Pence will pardon him."

"A presidential pardon by Pence would not offer protection from cases originating in states, but those cases will be far more manageable if they are not sunk into a morass of federal cases that only a federal pardon can protect him from," Budowsky added. "While I suspect we will learn that he is not nearly as wealthy as he claims, Trump can reap extravagant financial rewards from the mother of all business deals which he could conclude shortly after he leaves

this year, garnering the support of 91 percent of Black women.

Coles told the outlet he voted for Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins because Coles couldn't connect with Democrats or Republicans.

"We've been giving our vote to them loyally for 55, 60 years, and we have got nothing in return," Coles remarked. And as for the Republican Party, I don't feel as

office."

CNN reported that current and former Trump administration officials say there's been minimal preparation for an expected onslaught of clemencies, as Trump is still pursuing dubious legal challenges to the election.

But his Twitter feed over the past three years offers a working list of where the President might turn to wield his pardon power – primarily toward those targeted by former special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation.

"Perhaps the biggest looming pardon question is whether Trump will consider granting himself a pardon, amid state investigations into his business and finances and the prospect of federal investigators scrutinizing him after he leaves office," CNN's Evan Perez noted.

Vanity Fair, Forbes, The Independent, and other news outlets are also publishing articles related to Trump's possibility of pardoning himself.

Each outlet speculates that the President is sure to pardon Trump organization employees who might come under investigation.

Attorney and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani reportedly is under federal investigation, and former Trump advisor Steve Bannon has already been indicted.

It's believed a pardon will occur for Jared Kushner's father, Charles Kushner, who was prosecuted by former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and pleaded guilty in 2004 to tax evasion, retaliating against a witness and lying to the

if they care about me at all. It's just more blatant."

While Coles expressed a reason for casting his ballot for an alternative candidate who had virtually no chance to win, his declaration didn't explain why so many other Black men voted for Trump.

The 1994 Crime Bill, which was authored by then Senator Biden, and signed by President Bill Clinton, was crafted

Federal Election Commission.

Forbes reported that President-elect Joe Biden wouldn't pardon Trump.

"If Trump can't pardon himself, he would likely have to preemptively resign from office so that Vice President Mike Pence could assume the presidency and pardon him," the magazine reported, echoing the editorial by Brent Budowsky in The Hill.

Any pardon Trump potentially receives would only apply to alleged federal crimes.

New York Attorney General Letitia James and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance have separate state-related fraud and financial crimes cases involving Trump.

A federal pardon would not hinder prosecution in those cases.

Only the governor could offer Trump such protection.

Trump's adversarial and sometimes volatile relationship with New York Democratic Mayor Andrew Cuomo makes such a state-level pardon challenging to imagine.

"The 'Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment,' is vested in the President," the Department of Justice wrote in August 1974, days before President Richard Nixon resigned.

"This raises the question of whether the President can pardon himself. Under the fundamental rule that no one may be a judge in his own case, it would seem that the question should be answered in the negative," Forbes reported.

to address rising crime in the United States. The law contained numerous crime prevention provisions, including the controversial "three strikes" mandatory life sentences for repeat violent offenders.

The law, which also called for funding community policing and prisons, disproportionately punished African American men, and most observers said it caused mass incarceration.

## How Did 12 Percent of Black Men vote for Trump?

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Juan Williams posited that he's a Black man born in a Latin country and grew up in a Spanish-speaking family.

The author and Fox News political analyst then stated a head-scratching fact that many still find difficult to rationalize.

"It stuns me to see that President Trump set a record last week by attracting the highest percentage of the non-white vote of any Republican presidential candidate in the last 60 years," Williams wrote in an editorial for The Hill.

Perhaps most stunning, lamented Williams, "How did 12 percent of Black men vote for Trump?"

Although an overwhelming majority of



Black men, 80%, voted for President-elect Joe Biden, support for the Democratic presidential ticket reached a new low among Black men in 2020, according to the NBC News poll of early and Election Day voters.

In the same poll, 8% of Black male voters were reported to have cast their ballots for alternative candidates.

In Barack Obama's first presidential campaign, of all Blacks casting ballots, 95 percent of Black men and 96 per-

cent of Black women chose him, NBC News reported.

Four years later, Black women's support remained at 96 percent for Obama's 2012 reelection. However, the black male vote decreased to 87 percent.

In 2016, when the nominee was Hillary Clinton, Black men dropped even further to 82 percent, while Black women's support for Clinton remained high at 94 percent. Biden came close to matching that