Bio Sketch of Sylvester Johnson
for Publicity

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Sylvester A. Johnson is Associate Vice Provost for Public Interest Technology and Executive Director of the "Tech for Humanity" initiative advancing human-centered approaches to technology at Virginia Tech. He is the founding director of Virginia Tech's Center for Humanities, which is supporting human-centered research and scholarship across disciplines in arts, humanities, and social sciences. Sylvester's research has examined religion, race, and empire in the Atlantic world; religion and sexuality; national security practices; and the impact of intelligent machines and human enhancement on human identity and race. He is a Professor in the Department of Religion and Culture.

Sylvester is the author of *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity* (Palgrave 2004), a study of race and religious hatred that won the American Academy of

Religion's Best First Book award; and *African American Religions, 1500-2000* (Cambridge 2015), an award-winning interpretation of five centuries of democracy, colonialism, and freedom in the Atlantic world. Johnson has also co-edited *The FBI and Religion: Faith and National Security Before and After 9/11* (University of California 2017) and *Religion and US Empire* (NYU Press 2022). He is a founding co-editor of the *Journal of Africana Religions*. Sylvester is writing a book on human identity in an age of intelligent machines and human-machine symbiosis.

He currently leads "Future Humans, Human Futures" at Virginia Tech, a series of research institutes and symposia funded by the Henry Luce foundation that focus on technology, ethics, and religion. He is also directing the creation of a university-wide "Tech for Humanity" undergraduate minor, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to prepare future talent at the intersection of humanities, social justice, and technology.