



BlueSKY

MAGAZINE

FALL 2023



Meet the leaders who embody the

Power OF THE OR



BY THE BOOK

Notable releases and reviews

WRITTEN BY ERIKAJOY DANIELS



WHY? Why did I write this, and why should you read this? Because we share a similar desire to see ourselves, our marriages, and our calling grow. The Proverbs 31 woman is diligent in character

and duty as a model wife whose power is tied to her husband's prominence as "Her husband is known in the gates," v 23. Our calling to the ministry of marriage is a beautiful opportunity and responsibility when married to men in prominent positions (The Gates), whether church, business, or community circles. How we handle ourselves illuminating them, while not dimming our light, creates flourishing households that are lighthouses for God's kingdom.





BlueSKY
MAGAZINE

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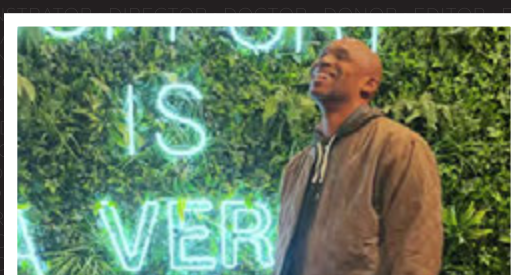
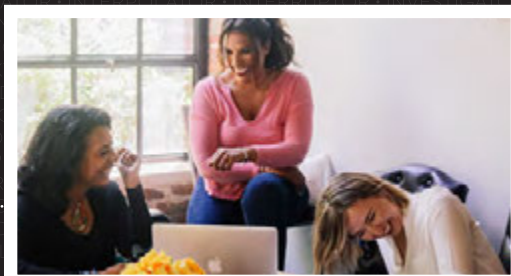
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The leaders moving the needle



BlueSKY Collaborative Partners (BSCP) is a national full-service fundraising consultancy, specializing in brand-focused, strategic leadership and customized solutions in areas that are critical to your success.

Our team is an extraordinary group of thought leaders with unique perspectives, based upon incredibly diverse backgrounds, lived experiences and long tenure with some of the largest and most impactful organizations in the world. The BlueSKY team has extensive relationship networks, and will employ a local, regional and national approach to fundraising, relationship management and strategic engagement.

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Strong action
 requires an
 equally strong
 voice. It isn't
 one or the
 other.



@blueskycollaborative

ORs... WHAT?

Celebrating a little word with BIG impact.

Welcome to our second issue, timed perfectly to coincide with... nothing in particular. A strange way to open, I know, but hear me out. We spend our lives adhering to some form of a schedule, some process that is supposed to be helpful. Sometimes things make perfect sense. Sometimes, we just throw our hands in the air, asking ourselves the all-too-familiar question: WHY?!

As we worked on this issue, I was reminded that schedules and processes, without question, have their place — I can't imagine functioning without them. But *sometimes*, we need the freedom to break those things, the freedom to react instead of pre-plan. It's an idea that will drive the most organized folks crazy. It's also an idea that allows the OR's to flourish.

In this issue, we celebrate the 'ORs' — young leaders who embrace the idea of reacting; of thinking outside the box; of allowing themselves the freedom of working within (or not being tied to) a schedule. CreatORs, innovatORs, advocatORs... the list of ORs is quite encompassing — and humanizing. OR takes an action and gives it a name, a face and a personality.

From Alaina (Chipman Leeks) to Zerita (Buchanan), these future difference-makers face change with positivity, bringing unique voices and creative ideas to issues we face every day. Each of the ORs has, in some way, made a difference in their community, regardless of how far and wide that community stretches.

So we invite you to join us to lift the ORs. Acknowledge them. Make sure they can be seen and heard. Whether it's someone we feature or someone you know personally, let's take a moment and celebrate each other. Do it on YOUR time, YOUR schedule, however you'd like.

Go give action YOUR personality.



Erik M. Klaver
Chief Creative Officer



REINVENTING BALANCE

You can start the fire. Or...

Today, I wanted to throw a curve ball and talk about why sometimes... it's okay to just take up space.

AGAINST THE NORM

The way I see it, every time we enter a room, we have two options. We can show up as the fire starter who brings the warmth, carries the mood and leads the conversation (which is what we're told to do as leaders) Or... we can intentionally and quietly take up space to observe, learn and conserve energy. The very nature of this posture allows others to take the reins and shine.

THE CONDITIONS

Social norms and conventional leadership often signal that 'taking up space' is selfish, unproductive and a waste of time. And as leaders we can feel obligated to strike the match and lead the way wherever we go. But really, there are times when taking a softer and quieter approach is optimal—for your sake, and for the sake of those around you.

Here's an example. Earlier this week, I was invited to attend an event and say a few words. I declined the 'say a few words part' because I just wanted to 'attend and blend.' I was looking forward to simply experiencing the content without the distraction of having to be 'on' for others. It was a choice. And the way I see it, taking advantage of my right to observe and learn as a leader — maximizes my growth potential, minimizes my emotional expenditure and reduces the impact of performance culture on my day-to-day.

THE QUESTIONS

So when should you 'show up and show out' or just slow down and take up space? Well, we make better decisions when we ask better questions. So before you walk into your weekly team meeting or attend an after hours event. Stop and ask...

"Does this room need my voice or my reflection right now?"

"Am I able to pour out my energy and give to others or do I need poured into?"

"Who needs to be served in this moment? How can I support that outcome?"

BOTH BRING VALUE

Listen, I applaud fire starters - I am one most of the time. But I'm equally inspired by those that can lead from behind when necessary.

That said, I see you, friend. Feel free to break from convention and take up all the space you need. ■



Jes Averhart, CEO of **Jes & Co.**, is a coach, consultant, author (*Living Beyond Burnout*) and creator of the Reinvention Road Trip program. Jes helps individuals and fortune 500 companies increase their personal satisfaction and professional impact through proven Reinvention Road Trip methodology.

A photograph of three women in a bright, modern office setting. One woman is sitting on a sofa in the background, smiling. Two other women are seated at a wooden table in the foreground, looking at a laptop. A vase of yellow flowers sits on the table. The scene is lit with natural light from a large window.

it's ok to
just take
up space.

REFLECTIONS

YMCA BOYS AND YOUNG MEN OF COLOR STRATEGY WASHINGTON, DC

BlueSKY is honored to collaborate with the YMCA Boys and Young Men of Color (BYMOC) strategy, that builds on and invests in, pathways to success to help boys and young men of color reach their full potential. The BYMOC Strategy ensures equitable outcomes for boys and young men of color ages 11-17 by removing systemic barriers, providing relevant services and support systems and creating nurturing environments that promote confidence and growth. Boys and Young Men of Color are twice as likely to grow up in poverty, more likely to live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, and are more likely to fall into poverty as adults, regardless of background.

BYMOC recently held their national convening, in Washington, D.C., with a surprise visit from Vice President Kamala Harris.

Kudos to **Michael DeVaul**, National Executive Director, BYMOC, **Nekita Nesmith**, Chief Development Officer, YMCA of Florida's First Coast and the incredible YMCA team, led by **Angie ReeseHawkins**, President/CEO, YMCA of Metropolitan Washington DC and **David Brown**, President/CEO of YMCA of the Capital District YMCA/Chairman of the YMCA African American CEO Network and wonderfully supported by **Suzanne McCormick**, President and CEO - YMCA of the USA. ■



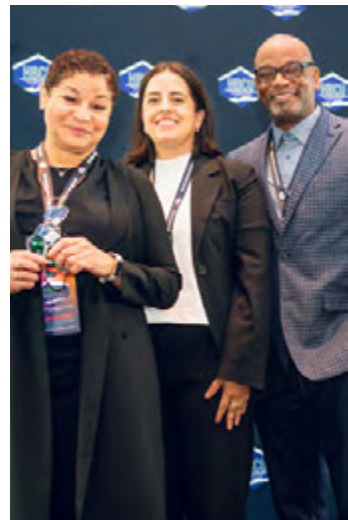


REFLECTIONS

BEET ECTION 2

2023 HBCU PHILANTHROPY SYMPOSIUM AND NATIONAL HBCU WEEK CONFERENCE. WASHINGTON, DC

The BlueSKY team was honored to attend TWO spectacular events with the most prominent
Thought Leaders and Policy Makers in Higher Education! ■





REIMAGINE TALENT

Engaging the w**OR**kforce generation

When I launched Reimagine Talent (formerly College Code) in 2018, after a decade of working on Wall Street, my sole mission was to better support young professionals in preparing for careers and navigating the workplace. By putting students and graduates at the center, I modernized the approach to early career development and added an equity and inclusion lens.

My vision came from vast experience leading early career recruiting & development for one of the most esteemed investment firms in the world. During that life-changing role, I supported a national recruitment program to ensure greater racial, gender, and socio-economic representation. This included designing an early career development (grad) program, forging higher-ed and non-profit partnerships, and embedding diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) strategies.

Through my work, I witnessed what has become today's workplace reality—a values shift and perspective change by young professionals of Generation Z—in how they view work, engage with work, and balance work amid other life demands and interests.

Did you know by 2030, 30 percent of the workforce will be Generation Z? (Pew Research)

Throughout my career, I have seen the transformative power of generational shifts, social justice movements, technological advancements, and changes in values and expectations at work. Reimagine Talent can help you create workplaces that truly resonate with the values of Gen Z, benefiting your

workforce strategies and positioning you to effectively engage with them as both employees and the crucial consumer base of the future.

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, unprecedented access to information, and evolving societal norms, Generation Z stands at the forefront of reshaping our work landscape. As HR leaders, managers, and company executives, it's crucial to recognize the profound impact this generation will have on your workplace culture, career pathways, and overall success.

At Reimagine Talent, we focus on the rising influence of Generation Z and offers strategies to help you better understand, manage, and utilize the skills and talents of the largest, most educated, and culturally diverse generation in our history. We explore:

► **Defining the Gen Z Workforce**

Generation Z, defined by their distinct values, digital fluency, and commitment to inclusivity, is already reshaping modern work environments. This generational cohort seeks more than just jobs; they seek alignment—a convergence of values, work-life balance, inclusivity, and recognition.

► **Understanding the Gen Z Mindset**

However, their journey is not without its challenges. Generation Z struggles with introducing change, overcoming imposter syndrome, balancing work with purpose, and demanding the respect and dignity they rightfully deserve. These challenges do not need to be roadblocks, rather they can be catalysts for change in your organization, inspiring new strategies that nurture both individuals and the collective whole.

► **Supporting Gen Z's Financial Challenges**

To engage and retain Generation Z talent, understanding their financial concerns and reality is crucial. By addressing these issues head-on, you can create an environment where financial well-being and education are woven into their career growth. Look for practical tips to help managers and HR leaders better prepare for these conversations.

► **Creating a Gen Z-Centric Work Experience**

Open communication, mentorship opportunities, and consistent follow-through are key when creating a workplace for Gen Z.

► **Navigating Accessibility and Inclusivity**

The Gen Z workforce is grounded in a commitment to inclusivity. Explore how to create an accessible and inclusive work environment that not only resonates with Gen Z but also fosters collaboration for all generations and workers.

SCAN THE QVR to
download our white
paper on managing and
leading multigenerational
workplaces and teams!



Led by Chelsea C. Williams,
Reimagine Talent Co. is a national talent development firm that delivers high-impact H.R. & Career Development solutions that support employee engagement, development, and retention. Reimagine Talent is proudly WBENC and NMSDC certified.

As Generation Z takes center stage in the workforce, organizations must proactively attract, engage, and retain this emerging cohort. Reimagine Talent stands as a guide for managers and organizations to navigate this journey and create a supportive, inclusive environment for all.

Recruiting Gen Z requires a holistic approach, aligning individual roles with the organizational mission. Sharing the "why" behind their tasks fosters a sense of purpose for younger workers looking for meaning.

Sometimes sharing your 'why' is as simple as explaining 'here's where our business is, here's what we need to do, and here's how you can help.' Take time to connect them to your goals and your organization's overall mission and purpose.

As this generation ushers in a workplace revolution, forward-thinking companies will recognize the importance of harnessing Gen Z's energy and innovation for future growth. Their digital intelligence, hunger for purpose, and demand for transparency can only improve and reshape the workplace and enable businesses to grow and succeed in the decades to come.

Inclusivity, mentorship, and continuous learning are not buzzwords; they are the pillars on which successful organizations are built. By embodying these values, you can create a culture where Gen Z feels valued, heard, and empowered to make meaningful contributions. ■



**create a culture
where Gen Z
feels valued,
heard, and
empowered**

REFLECTIONS

BLUE SKY

MKE FELLOWS — THE FELLOWSHIP OPEN MILWAUKEE, WI

BlueSKY was thrilled to support the 23rd Annual Fellowship Open! This Milwaukee, WI, event, founded by **Attorney John W. Daniels**, attracted hundreds of Business, Community and Education leaders and honored NFL Hall of Famer **Jerome (the Bus) Bettis** and **Richard Poirier**, CEO Church Mutual Insurance. **Dr. D'Wayne Edwards**, President-Pensole Lewis College of Business and Design, also held an amazing Fireside Chat with Grammy Award winning Producer **Chad Roper**, at Radio Milwaukee. ■





REFLECTIONS

BLUE SKY

MOREHOUSE/SPELMAN HOMECOMING ATLANTA, GA

The BlueSKY team was honored to attend 2023 Homecoming Events for Morehouse and Spelman College!





THE DIALOGUE WITH DOCTOR Z.

Talking Health Equity Hot Topics with Today's Health Equity Leaders

This month's dialogue is a visual celebration of advocacy and connection. It was an honor to attend these events and speak with these truly genuine, wonderful, engaging people.



Above: A gathering of Spelman College Alumnae dentists came together to welcome Dr. Helene Gayle, a pediatrician and public health physician with expertise in economic, social, and health issues. She spent 20 years at the Centers for Disease Control, and led the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation programs on HIV/AIDS and other global health issues.

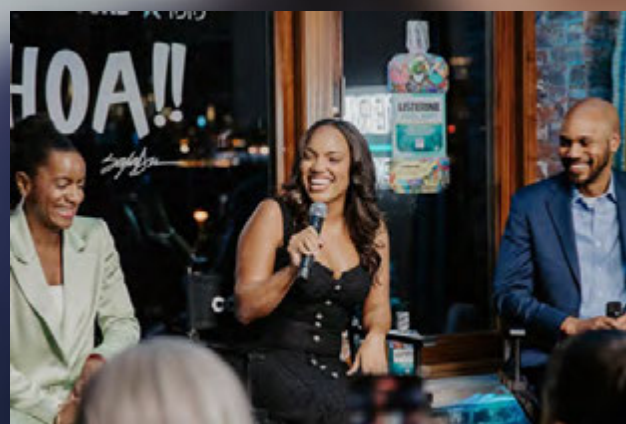
Left, above left: Hosting a fireside chat with Dr. Helene Gayle, the 11th president of Spelman College.

Right: Honored at Atlanta Business Chronicle's "40 Under 40" event, celebrating emerging leaders in Atlanta's business community. Dr. Gayle is dedicated to fostering a more inclusive and equitable healthcare system, nominated by former Atlanta mayor Keisha Lance-Connors for her health equity work with HBCUs as well as the dental school she launched, which has successfully trained more than 100 dental students from Morehouse and Spelman.

Dr. Zerita C. Buchanan is a fourth-generation dentist and a proud HBCU graduate. Dr. Buchanan received her Doctorate of Dental Surgery from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry and her MPH in Health Policy from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Right: With Spelman College Alumna Amber O'donoghue.

Below, below right: Dr. Z recently formalized a groundbreaking national partnership with Listerine aimed at diversifying the dental workforce. In a remarkable show of support, Listerine is generously donating \$150,000 to "Increasing Diversity in Dentistry" a non-profit organization focused on test prep, scholarships, and new practice grants for minority pre-dental students. They've also created a limited-edition Listerine bottle, available for purchase at Target and Walmart stores across the nation.



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Helene Gayle,

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Take

The addition of 'OR' is a reminder of the profound impact that individuals can have, as they transcend the realm of verbs and step into the realm of nouns – becoming agents of change, creators of worlds, and catalysts for inspiration. From administrators to orchestrators, communicators to mentors, we celebrate the next generation of leaders who embody the very essence of the power of the 'OR'.

ADVISOR

[ad-vahy-zer]

An advisor is a knowledgeable and experienced individual who provides guidance, support, and advice to others in a particular field or area of expertise. They offer their expertise to help individuals make informed decisions, solve problems, and achieve their goals. Advisors can be found in various professional settings, such as academic institutions, financial institutions, or career counseling services. They possess a deep understanding of their field and are skilled in providing personalized recommendations and strategies to help their clients or mentees succeed.

ADVOCATOR

[ad-vuh-keyt-or]

An advocator is a person who actively supports and promotes a particular cause, idea, or belief. They are passionate about raising awareness, educating others, and fighting for the rights and well-being of individuals or groups who may be marginalized or disadvantaged. Advocators often engage in various activities such as lobbying, campaigning, fundraising, and organizing events to bring attention to their cause and create positive change in society. They strive to be the voice for those who may not have a platform to speak up for themselves and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable world.

COLLABORATOR

[kuh-lab-uh-rey-ter]

A collaborator is an individual or entity that actively participates and works together with others towards a common goal or objective. They contribute their skills, knowledge, and resources to a collective effort, fostering cooperation, communication, and synergy within a team or group. A collaborator values teamwork, respects diverse perspectives, and strives to build strong relationships to achieve shared outcomes. They play a crucial role in fostering creativity, innovation, and problem-solving by leveraging the strengths and expertise of all team members.

CONNECTOR

[kuh-nek-ter]

A connector is an individual who possesses the innate ability to bring people together and forge meaningful connections. They possess excellent interpersonal skills, making them approachable and relatable to individuals from all walks of life. Connectors have a natural curiosity about others, showing genuine interest in their stories, experiences, and aspirations. They possess a vast network of contacts and effortlessly introduce people to one another, recognizing the potential for collaboration and mutual benefit. Their ability to bridge gaps and create bridges between people and ideas makes them invaluable in both personal and professional settings. Connectors thrive on building relationships, fostering community, and facilitating growth among those they connect.



CONTRIBUTOR

[kuhn-trib-yuh-ter]

A contributor is an individual who actively participates and adds value to a particular project, cause, or organization. They contribute their time, skills, knowledge, or resources to help achieve the goals and objectives of the group they are involved with. Contributors can come from various backgrounds and expertise, and their contributions can take many forms, such as providing ideas, offering financial support, volunteering their time, or sharing their expertise and experience. Their involvement and contributions play a crucial role in the success and growth of the project or organization they are contributing to.

CREATOR

[kree-ey-ter]

A creator is an individual or entity that brings something new into existence. They possess the ability to conceive and envision ideas, concepts, or works, and then use their skills, talents, and resources to transform those ideas into tangible or intangible creations. Creators can be found in various fields such as art, literature, music, technology, and entrepreneurship. They often demonstrate a unique perspective, innovative thinking, and a strong sense of imagination, allowing them to push boundaries and challenge the status quo. Through their creations, creators contribute to the enrichment of society, inspire others, and leave a lasting impact on the world.

DISRUPTOR

[dis-ruhpt-ter]

A disruptor is a person, idea, or technology that challenges and fundamentally changes the traditional way of doing things in a particular industry or field. They introduce innovative and unconventional approaches that often dismantle existing systems, processes, or business models, and create new opportunities or solutions. Disruptors are known for their ability to identify gaps, inefficiencies, or unmet needs within an industry and then leverage their unique perspectives or technologies to create significant and lasting impact. They can inspire and catalyze transformation, driving positive change and reshaping the landscape of their respective industries.

EDUCATOR

[ej-oo-key-ter]

An educator is a professional who facilitates learning and growth in individuals of all ages. They possess a deep understanding of their subject matter and employ various teaching techniques to engage and inspire their students. Educators play a crucial role in shaping the minds and lives of their students, fostering intellectual curiosity, critical thinking skills, and a love for learning. They create a safe and inclusive learning environment, encourage collaboration and creativity, and provide guidance and support to help students reach their full potential. Educators are dedicated, compassionate, and committed to empowering others through education.

INNOVATOR

[in-uh-vey-ter]

An innovator is an individual who possesses the ability to think creatively and develop new ideas or solutions to address existing problems or meet unmet needs. They are driven by a curiosity and a desire to challenge the status quo, constantly seeking ways to improve and advance. Innovators possess a unique blend of imagination, vision, and practicality, allowing them to transform their ideas into tangible innovations. They often possess strong problem-solving skills and the ability to adapt and embrace change. Innovators play a vital role in driving progress and shaping the future by introducing novel concepts, products, or processes that have a positive impact on society.

MENTOR

[men-tor]

A mentor is a wise and experienced guide who selflessly shares their knowledge and expertise with others. They serve as a source of inspiration and support, helping individuals navigate challenges and achieve their goals. A mentor possesses excellent listening and communication skills, creating a safe and trusting environment for open discussions. They offer guidance, encouragement, and constructive feedback, empowering their mentees to develop their skills and reach their full potential. A mentor is not only a teacher, but also a role model, demonstrating integrity, resilience, and a genuine passion for helping others succeed.

Zerita

C. BUCHANAN, DDS, MPH

Dental Dreams, LLC

Zerita is a fourth generation dentist and a proud HBCU graduate. Her commitment to health equity led her to be recognized as a "Healthcare Hero" by her alma mater Spelman College. Her private practice, Dental Dreams, LLC, serves as an innovation hub for HBCU students interested in the STEM sciences. Since 2014, Dr. Buchanan has served as the Assistant Director of Increasing Diversity in Dentistry (IDID), a national pipeline program for minority college students interested in pursuing a career in dentistry. Dr. Buchanan received her DDS from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry in 2014. She is currently a Commonwealth Fund Fellow and pursuing her MPH in Minority Health Policy at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.





Wyatt

LITTLES

Senior Associate Counsel, Minnesota Twins

Wyatt Littles is Senior Associate Counsel at the Minnesota Twins where he works on a variety of commercial contracts and provides counsel on all issues related to club business. Prior to joining the Twins, Wyatt established his practice as a corporate attorney and technology in-house counsel with a unique mix of professional experiences including a Pre-IPO Real Estate startup (WeWork, Inc.) and a leading provider of Electric Vehicles and sustainable energy infrastructure (Tesla).

Before entering sports, entertainment and technology, Wyatt was an associate based in the New York office of Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP. Wyatt received his Juris Doctorate (J.D.) from Columbia Law School and his Bachelor of Arts degree in Africana Studies from Bowdoin College.

Wyatt is passionate about the ways in which minority businesses and entrepreneurs respond to the evolving tech and media landscape. Wyatt serves on the board of the Twin Cities chapter of Black Sports Professionals and volunteers with Reading Partners to advance greater economic equity and inclusion for both small business and students alike.

In his free time, Wyatt enjoys live sporting events, golfing and international travel. Wyatt lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota with his wife, Kristin, and their daughter Carsyn.

Vann

R. NEWKIRK II

Senior Editor, The Atlantic

Vann R. Newkirk II is a senior editor at The Atlantic, where he currently works across the print, digital, and audio sections. Newkirk is the host and co-creator of narrative podcasts Floodlines and Holy Week. For years, Newkirk has covered voting rights, democracy, and environmental justice, with a focus on how race and class shape the country's and the world's fundamental structures, in print and audio. Newkirk is a 2022 Andrew Carnegie fellow, and was a 2020 James Beard Award Finalist, a 2020 11th Hour Fellow at New America, and a 2018 recipient of the American Society of Magazine Editors's ASME Next Award. In 2021, Newkirk received the Peabody Award for Floodlines. Newkirk's reporting inspired the documentary film Lowndes County and the Road to Black Power, on which Newkirk was a consulting producer. In 2023 that film won the Documentary Emmy for Outstanding Research. Newkirk lives in Maryland with his wife, Kerone, and their two children.





Tyler

JORDAN

CEO & Founder, ScoreFX

Tyler Jordan is a rising star in the world of sports media and entertainment, currently serving as the CEO and Founder of ScoreFX, a multimedia platform poised to transform the fan experience in men's and women's international football clubs by increasing fan opportunities and engagement and introducing new narratives that foster global unity through the world's most beloved game.

Prior to ScoreFX, Tyler, a graduate of Washington University in St Louis, used his double major in International Studies and the Business of Entertainment to found HNC, a global marketplace of custom merch for over 25,000 independent music artists.

While at Wash U Tyler excelled in roles at Spotify and the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission (LASEC) building platforms for creatives and independent music artists as well as contributing to the development of events like the 2022 Super Bowl and the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup, respectively.

As "one to watch" in the industry, Tyler's innovative vision, leadership, and track record of successful ventures position him as a dynamic force in shaping the future of sports media and entertainment.

MODERATOR

[mod-uh-rey-ter]

A moderator is responsible for overseeing and regulating discussions and activities within a specific platform or community. They enforce rules and guidelines, remove inappropriate content, warn or ban users who violate guidelines, and resolve conflicts. Moderators create a safe and inclusive space, promote constructive dialogue, and prevent harassment, spam, or abuse. They possess good communication and problem-solving skills, interact with users, address concerns, and make decisions that balance community interests.

MOTIVATOR

[moh-tuh-vey-ter]

A motivator is something that drives and inspires individuals to take action, achieve their goals, and overcome challenges. It can be an internal force, such as a strong desire for success or personal fulfillment, or an external factor, such as recognition, rewards, or the support and encouragement of others. Motivators can vary from person to person, as what may motivate one individual may not have the same effect on another. Ultimately, a motivator serves as a catalyst for individuals to push themselves beyond their limits, stay focused, and persevere in the pursuit of their aspirations.

NARRATOR

[nar-ey-ter]

The narrator is a perceptive and articulate individual, with a keen eye for detail and a knack for capturing the essence of people and places. They possess a rich and evocative writing style, effortlessly drawing readers into their stories and making them feel like they are experiencing the events firsthand. The narrator is also empathetic and sensitive, able to delve into the thoughts and emotions of the characters they encounter, bringing them to life in a way that is both relatable and compelling. With their ability to seamlessly intertwine description, dialogue, and introspection, the narrator creates a vivid and immersive narrative that leaves a lasting impact on the reader.

NAVIGATOR

[nav-i-gey-ter]

A navigator is a skilled individual who specializes in charting and plotting courses for travel, whether it be by land, sea, or air. They possess a deep understanding of maps, charts, and navigation instruments, allowing them to determine the most efficient and safe routes for transportation. Navigators are adept at interpreting weather conditions, currents, and other factors that may impact the journey, and they use this knowledge to make informed decisions for the optimal path. Their expertise and attention to detail are essential for successful and accurate navigation, ensuring that travelers reach their destinations with precision and confidence.





Tony

MITCHELL

**Director of State Government
Affairs, Southern Region,
Gilead Sciences**

Tony Mitchell is the Director of State Government Affairs for Gilead Sciences in the Southern Region. He has a background in law and politics, having worked as a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Intern in the office of Representative Sanford Bishop. Tony is passionate about eliminating health disparities and advocates for a destigmatized healthcare landscape. His responsibilities include lobbying and policy activity in the South, focusing on issues such as drug pricing and reducing access barriers. Tony is also dedicated to mentoring the next generation of leaders, spending time with high school and college students as a member of the Emerging 100 of Atlanta. He was named a Rising Young Alumni by McKendree University, where he earned his B.A. in Political Science. Tony is a member of the LEAD Atlanta class of 2022 and lives in Atlanta's West End neighborhood with his wife and two sons.

CONTINUES...

Thabiti

STEPHENS

**Chief Strategy Officer
and Director of International
Business Development,
Steve Harvey Global**

**CEO and Founder,
The Stephens Group**

Thabiti Stephens is the Chief Strategy Officer and international Business Development Director at Steve Harvey Global. He is responsible for overseeing business development and operations for domestic and international ventures, investments, and day-to-day management. Thabiti has successfully established Steve Harvey Global's international entities, MELT Middle East and MELT Africa, which have generated millions of dollars in profit. He is also the founder and CEO of The Stephens Group, a boutique business management firm that specializes in creating strategic joint ventures and partnerships. Prior to joining Steve Harvey Global, Thabiti was the founder and CEO of Steps by Stephens, a shoe manufacturing company. He received recognition for his company's success from the Obama administration, Huffington Post, and Black Enterprise. Thabiti is passionate about financial literacy and volunteers his time mentoring young boys and teaching entrepreneurship and money management. He holds a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing and a minor in Psychology. The Stephens Group offers a comprehensive range of services, including strategic joint ventures and partnerships, business development, talent partnership and booking, event management, and investing. Through strategic partnerships in the Middle East and Africa, The Stephens Group provides additional opportunities for clients to achieve their business goals.





Stephan

T. REYNOLDS, BS, MS AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Pilot, Cadet-Destination 225°,
Southwest Airlines

Stephan is a pilot and aviation enthusiast who is from Northern California. Stephan attended Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois where he majored in Aviation Administration with a minor in Business Administration and was a recipient of the University's highest honor, the Father Aquinas Award. Stephan recently represented Southwest Airlines at Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) conference and is frequently speaking and recruiting young people of color into STEM and aviation. He is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated and Alpha Eta Rho, the professional aviation fraternity. Stephan currently resides in Arizona where he is a cadet in the Southwest Airlines Destination 225° program, which is a national pipeline into a first officer role. An alumni of Jesuit High School, Stephan lives by the motto, "Men for Others".

CONTINUES...

Shane

ORANGE

Shane Orange is an operations leader with a background in legal practice and non-profit management. He has a successful track record of streamlining and scaling startup processes, including launching independent operations for a fiscally sponsored organization with a \$5M annual budget in under 12 months. As a business consultant, Shane provides strategic consulting for client initiatives related to startup investments, operational efficiency, compliance, and business development.

In his previous role as Director of Operations at Black Ambition, Shane built the founding team and managed day-to-day operations for the organization's first fully operational prize year. He implemented operational processes to support activities such as pitch competitions, networking events, and prize competitions for over 250 ventures. Before Black Ambition, Shane worked as a corporate attorney at King and Spalding, LLP, managing a team of attorneys and advising on legal matters for Fortune 500 companies.

Shane holds a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Texas at Austin School of Law and a B.A. in Political Science from Morehouse College. He has experience performing due diligence in various industries and is involved in volunteer work and advisory roles related to musicology, philosophy, and social justice.





Robert

CHRISTMAS

Technical Specialist For Electrical Systems Engineer, Lucid Motors

Robert Christmas is an accomplished Electrical Engineer with over ten years of experience in the Automotive and Energy sectors. Currently working as a Technical Specialist of Electrical System Integration at Lucid Motors, he has successfully managed large-scale system integrations and achieved stringent quality goals. Robert has played a pivotal role in transforming prototype vehicles into customer-ready models at Lucid Motors. Known for his ability to foster cross-functional collaboration, he has bridged gaps between teams and introduced innovative processes to enhance operational efficiency. Prior to joining Lucid Motors, Robert worked at Ford Motor Company, where he designed and integrated complex electrical systems and supported the global launch of the 2020 Ford Escape. Robert is a native of Chicago, Illinois, and holds a dual-degree Bachelor of Science in General Science and Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Morehouse College and Auburn University.

Quinn KIRKPATRICK

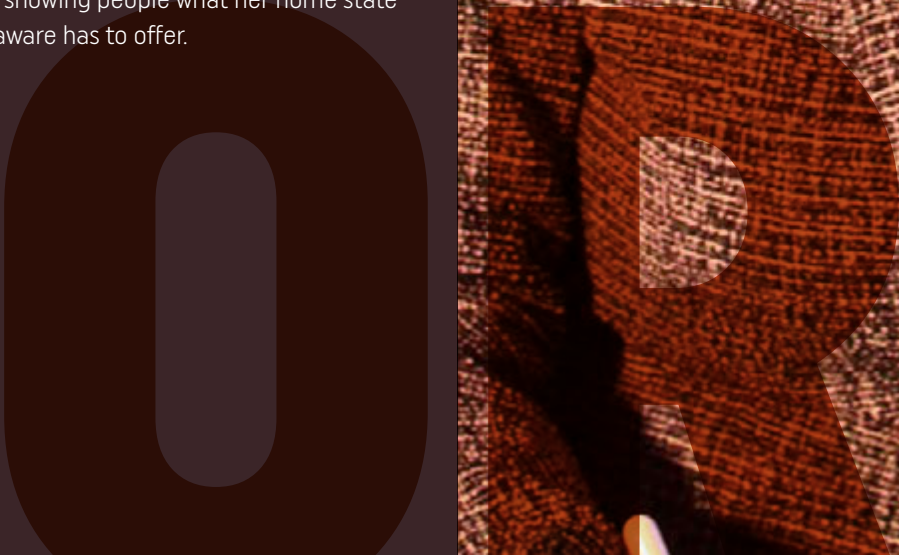
Reporter, Host,
All Things Considered
and Morning Edition,
Delaware Public Media

Quinn Kirkpatrick is a professionally trained photographer, videographer, writer, and audio producer- but she likes to describe herself as a multimedia storyteller. She's passionate about delivering information in easily-digestible and fun ways to help a wider audience stay connected to current events.

Quinn currently works as a reporter and part-time host for All Things Considered and Morning Edition at NPR member station Delaware Public Media. She serves as a general news reporter and covers all topics including politics, environment, education, and health.

Born and raised in Wilmington, Delaware, Quinn attended the University of Delaware and studied Media Communication with minors in Journalism and Sexualities and Gender Studies. She graduated in 2021.

She is an avid traveler, and has briefly lived in both Italy and Denmark, however she most enjoys showing people what her home state of Delaware has to offer.



Omari

CRAWFORD

State Representative for
Georgia's 84th House District

Omari Crawford is an attorney at Harris Lowry Manton LLP and currently serves as the State Representative for Georgia's 84th House District. Omari attended Florida A&M University (FAMU) on a track and field scholarship and was a member of the all-academic conference team for three consecutive years. He received his Bachelor of Science in political science and Master of Public Administration (MPA) from FAMU in 2008 and 2009, respectively. Omari earned his law degree and Master of Business Administration from North Carolina Central University in 2013.

Omari sits on the boards of the Georgia Council for International Visitors and the MTS Sickle Cell Foundation, Inc. He is an active member of the 100 Black Men of DeKalb County, Inc., DeKalb Lawyers Association, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Georgia—serving as the Grand Attorney and serves as a member of the Clark Atlanta University Athletic Director Advisory Council. Omari was a member of the Leadership DeKalb Class of 2021 and a 2022 New Leaders Council fellow.

Omari uses his athletic experiences as a former Georgia High School Association Track and Field Champion to mentor DeKalb County high school student-athletes. He frequently serves as a keynote speaker at DeKalb County pre-commencement programs and other academic ceremonies. In his spare time, Omari enjoys reading, traveling, and participating in races and cycling events around the country.

Niare

GALVEZ

Manager, Event Creation, Wasserman

Niare Galvez is a sports professional who specializes in creative event strategy. Her work revolves around the development of unique intellectual property (IP) events such as festivals, concerts, celebrity games, brand launches, and one-of-a-kind experiences. As her career advances, Niare aspires to support fellow black sports professionals in their journey within the industry. She is determined to instill in others the belief that they are at the core of innovation and creativity, with their excellence shining through in all their endeavors. Niare attributes this to her HBCU, Lincoln University, and Columbia University, which laid the foundation for who she has become today.



OR



Natalie

JONES

**Project Manager, BeltLine
Business Solutions Office,
Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.**

Natalie Jones is a dynamic leader in Atlanta, focusing on economic growth and community development. She currently leads the Business Solutions Office at the Atlanta BeltLine, providing tailored services to businesses within the BeltLine Planning Area. Prior to this, Natalie managed the BeltLine's workforce strategy and the Business Façade pARTnership Grant program, which uplifted businesses in equity target areas through local artists.

Before joining the BeltLine, Natalie worked at the Metro Atlanta Chamber, where she enhanced Atlanta's status as a global business hub. She provided specialized services to foreign-owned companies, integrated mergers and acquisitions into a regional foreign direct investment strategy, and fostered partnerships with Consular Corps and bi-national chambers of commerce.

Outside of her professional achievements, Natalie is actively involved in her community. She serves on the boards of various organizations, including the Atlanta International Arbitration Society, the Atlanta Regional Commission's Millennial Advisory Panel, and the Atlanta BeltLine's AB67. She is also a member of the Junior League of Atlanta and mentors college-aged women.

Natalie holds a degree from Georgia State University and is a graduate of LEAD Atlanta, a leadership development program for young professionals in Metro Atlanta.

Nasrien

E. IBRAHIM, MD, MPH

**Heart Failure and Transplant
Cardiologist, Brigham and
Women's Hospital**

**Assistant Professor of Medicine,
Harvard Medical School**

**Founder and Executive Director,
The Equity in Heart Transplant
Project**

Dr. Ibrahim is an accomplished heart failure and transplant cardiologist, as well as an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. She is recognized for her work as the founder and executive director of The Equity in Heart Transplant Project, Inc., a nonprofit organization that offers financial aid to patients with end-stage heart failure in need of a transplant. Dr. Ibrahim completed her residency and fellowship at the University of Cincinnati, as well as fellowships at the University of Colorado and Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School. She has published in reputable journals, authored a book, and serves as an associate editor for the Journal of the American College of Cardiology: Heart Failure. Dr. Ibrahim actively participates in scientific societies and has held leadership positions in organizations like the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, and the Heart Failure Society of America. Her research focuses on improving adherence to heart failure therapies, addressing healthcare disparities, and increasing access to heart transplantation for historically marginalized patient groups. In 2021, she was invited to join the Health Equity Leaders Roundtable Series organized by the White House Office of Public Engagement. Dr. Ibrahim holds a B.S. in Chemistry, an M.D., and an MPH in Health Policy.





IGATOR • MENTOR • MODERATOR • ORATOR • ORATOR • NAVIGATOR
ISTRATOR • ADVOCATOR • COORDINATOR • COORDINATOR • COORDINATOR
VEYOR • COORDINATOR • COORDINATOR • COORDINATOR • COORDINATOR
CTOR • GENERATOR • GENERATOR • GENERATOR • GENERATOR • GENERATOR
GATOR • ORATOR • ORCHESTRATOR • ORCHESTRATOR • ORCHESTRATOR
OR • AUTHOR • AVIATOR • AVIATOR • AVIATOR • AVIATOR • AVIATOR
EMONSTRATOR • DIRECTOR • DIRECTOR • DIRECTOR • DIRECTOR • DIRECTOR
PELLATOR • INTERPOLATOR • INTERPOLATOR • INTERPOLATOR • INTERPOLATOR
ATOR • TRANSPORTATION • TRANSPORTATION • TRANSPORTATION • TRANSPORTATION
WARRIOR • ADMINISTRATOR • ADMINISTRATOR • ADMINISTRATOR • ADMINISTRATOR
CONTRIBUTOR • CONVEYOR • CONVEYOR • CONVEYOR • CONVEYOR
FACILITATOR • FACTOR • FACTOR • FACTOR • FACTOR
NARRATOR • NAVIGATOR • NAVIGATOR • NAVIGATOR • NAVIGATOR
SSADOR • AUTHENTICATOR • AUTHENTICATOR • AUTHENTICATOR • AUTHENTICATOR



BlueSKY
MAGAZINE

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EDOUARD

**Founder and
Chief Executive Officer,
The Simple Vue Academy**

Nandi Edouard, a native of Cobb County, GA, recently returned to her roots to reimagine the educational landscape in Georgia. One of Nandi's proudest accomplishments of her life was earning her college degree, not only because it improved the trajectory of her life, but also because it was the hardest thing she had to work for up until this point. Nandi is a distinguished educator and social justice advocate, dedicated to enhancing the academic and social-emotional well-being of students. Her impactful career, from teaching and leading at YES Prep Public Schools in Houston, TX to Director of School Culture at Windsor Terrace Middle School in Brooklyn, NY, showcases her commitment to achieving ambitious student goals and fostering a positive environment. Nandi's educational journey is marked by academic excellence, holding a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Spelman College and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University. As the lead school founder and Chief Executive Officer of The Simple Vue Academy, a charter school proposed to open in 2025, she is dedicated to bridging educational gaps and fostering entrepreneurship, paving the way for a brighter future for 6-12th graders in Metro Atlanta.

CONTINUES...

Miles

ZACHARY SIGH

Development Associate, Propel Center

Miles is a gifted marketing professional who resides in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Currently, Miles is lending his marketing, communication and community engagement expertise to the Atlanta-based non-profit, PROPEL Center where he serves as Development Associate. Known for exceptional interpersonal, organizational and analytical skills, Miles leads all project management initiatives for PROPEL's Brand & External Affairs team which includes social media, marketing, and strategic internal and external communications.

Miles lives by Jeremiah 29:11, believing there is a plan for his life which includes offering his time and talents. He carries out a commitment to his community by leading strategic design for Athletes Igniting Action (AIA), as their Chief Strategy Officer. AIA focuses on educating former, current, and future student-athletes to be civic-minded individuals who combat social and racial injustice. Miles is also a member of B.Link, an investment group composed of young black professionals across the country who strive to create financial freedom and eradicate the limited wealth cycle in the black community.

Miles is pursuing a Master's in Business Administration (Marketing concentration) with the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and holds a B.S. in Marketing from Marquette University.

You can catch Miles on the golf course, enjoying a new restaurant or hanging out with family and his only and favorite one-year old nephew, Sloan, in his free time.





Maya

"NNEKA" OBIKWE

Healthcare Innovation and Technology Lead, Deloitte

Nneka is a Healthcare Innovation and Technology Manager at Deloitte where she leads healthcare strategy and technology innovation across the firm. She serves as the Virtual Reality Business Development lead for the Federal Health Sector, an advisor on the Healthcare Innovation Federal Health Mission Play team, as well as a tech SME for the Health Equity Mission Play. Most recently, Nneka became a Deloitte Innovation Resident aligned to the New Business Innovation (NBI)/Emerging Technology Incubation (ETI) Team. In her current role, she serves as the 5G/Edge Computing Go-to-Market lead for the Consumer Industry. Prior to this, Nneka supported both Government and Commercial clients across the healthcare landscape leading large-scale projects across both the Military Health Systems and Veterans Affairs accounts, as well as Life Sciences and Healthcare clients.

Nneka is an award-winning founder of Vanede, an anti-interpersonal violence organization, which designs and implements training workshops on topics relating to sexual and domestic violence against women. She believes that creating safe and inclusive spaces for women is a community responsibility and that resources and support for survivors should be found everywhere that women are.

Maya

ALLEN

Beauty Editor and Expert

Maya Allen is a prominent beauty expert and editor in the magazine industry. She has held positions such as Beauty Director-at-Large for New York Mag's The Cut and Beauty Director of InStyle. In these roles, she was responsible for overseeing beauty coverage, editing writers, conducting interviews with industry figures and celebrities, directing photoshoots, and working with major beauty brands. Maya is passionate about writing in-depth beauty feature stories that empower and inform women from all backgrounds. One of her notable projects at InStyle was writing the magazine's February cover story with actress Angela Bassett. She has also appeared as a beauty expert on national TV segments. After transitioning from full-time magazine roles, Maya now works as an expert, speaker, and consultant in the beauty industry. She has collaborated with brands like Estée Lauder, Sephora, Target, and Nike Jordan Brand. Maya's impact in the beauty industry has earned her recognition, including the 2019 Hearst Magazines Spotlight Awards. She is dedicated to changing the narrative of the beauty industry and amplifying representation through her work. Maya's love for journalism and her desire to see representation in media led her to study journalism at Howard University and gain editorial experience through internships in New York. She sees her work as a form of activism, celebrating beauty in all its diverse forms.





Maranie

**BROWN, MBT,
CSM, CSPO**

**Vice President, Data Platform
& Solutions, BlackRock**

Maranie Brown is the Vice President of Program Management at BlackRock, where she leads the sustainability data program and oversees enterprise data and analytics. Her team aims to create an automated, cloud-native platform that improves the accessibility and utilization of data for asset management. Prior to joining BlackRock, Maranie held positions at T3 and You Are Here, where she excelled as Associate Director and Senior Digital Program Manager. She has been recognized for her contributions to the digital community, receiving accolades such as being named a "Rising Star" and one of the "Top 20 Under 40" by Marietta Daily Journal/Cobb Life Magazine. Maranie is actively involved in various nonprofit boards and organizations, including True Colors Theatre Company, the Association of Junior Leagues International Women of Color Networking Group, and the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta. She also serves as Immediate Past President of the UGA Young Alumni Leadership Council and is a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc. In addition to her professional achievements, Maranie has been honored for her leadership and community service in Cobb County, receiving the "All In" Award and being a finalist for the "Ann Cramer Volunteer of the Year" Award..

LaShawne

PRYOR, Ed.D.

Associate Vice President
for Development,
Delaware State University

LaShawne Pryor, Ed.D., is the Associate Vice President for Development at Delaware State University. With over 20 years of experience in Higher Education, development, and marketing, he is responsible for fostering relationships with alumni, donors, corporations, foundations, and community partners to support the university's mission. Dr. Pryor oversees Annual Giving, major gifts and development, and Grants. He has successfully achieved two multi-million-dollar campaigns and has increased annual giving and participation rates among alumni, faculty, and staff. Dr. Pryor also organizes the annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Philanthropy Symposium and has led efforts to increase attendance and sponsorships.

Outside of his role at the university, Dr. Pryor is involved in various professional and community organizations. He chairs the Funding and Resource Committee for Delaware State University's Safe Space Coalition, serves on the District II Cabinet for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and is a board member for the Central Delaware Habitat for Humanity. He has also served as an Honorary Commander for the Dover Air Force Base. Dr. Pryor completed his Doctoral degree in Higher Educational Leadership at Delaware State University and holds an undergraduate degree from Stillman College and a master's degree from East Stroudsburg University. He is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated.





Kyle

MOLOCK

**Manager, Technology
Consultant, EY**

Kyle is a technology consultant with a focus on Finance Transformation within the Financial Services sector, utilizing the latest cloud-based ERP systems. Kyle serves as a trusted advisor to his clients and has recently executed deliveries aimed to create transparency, timeliness, and accuracy of Financial & Regulatory Reporting data.

Kyle graduated from the Haub School of Business of Saint Joseph's University and received his B.S. in both Business Intelligence & Analytics and Accounting. While in college, he was a member of the men's basketball team and was also initiated into the Delta Sigma Pi professional business fraternity.

CONTINUES...

Kethlyn

WHITE

Business Architect

Kethlyn is an experienced CEO and global business strategist with a track record of accomplishments in building brands, high-performance teams, and organizations. Ms. White has over 15 years of experience in developing, and ultimately scaling, go-to-market models for emerging companies from fashion to telecommunications industries. She currently serves as a strategic advisor to multiple emerging companies and is most notably the lead architect behind Your Friends in New York™, whose work was prominently featured in the New York Times. She also serves as the Executive Director of Amsale Aspire and as a board member of the Children Family and Health Initiative (CFHI).



OR



Kayla

WILLIAMS

Storyteller

A passionate storyteller, creative, and a graduate from the University of Delaware. My experience dates back to recording "dramas" of my dolls on my Ipod touch when I was younger to now telling stories of real people.

Armed with a degree in Media Communication, I strive to blend creativity and technical expertise to bring the captivating stories of others to life.

Looking back I've had a lot of internships and opportunities surrounding media communication. One that stands out the most is Discovering Delaware. As an undergraduate student victim to Covid-19 shutdowns, there was a sense of panic. No, not because the world around me was going up in flames, but because I had two more years with little hands-on experience and needed to find a job, soon. The pandemic baby, Discovering Delaware, started as a senior project that was traditionally not in a video format. Since 2021 it has grown into a passion, a platform sharing stories of community members, businesses.

Kayden

MOLOCK

Associate Manager, Performance & Insights, Wasserman

Kayden is a sports strategy and insights professional specializing in consumer market research, measurement, and strategy across a breadth of brands and properties working within sports and entertainment. His work focuses primarily on audience intelligence analyses, brand health studies, and partner impact/strategy projects.

Prior to joining Wasserman, Kayden spent time working in strategic consulting across a variety of sectors such as retail, manufacturing, and technology services. His project work included large-scale HR change management, international financial transformation, and consumer retail strategy.

Kayden is a proud graduate of Morehouse College, where he was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate and earned his B.A. in Political Science. He then received his M.S. in Sports Management from Columbia University with a Sports Analytics concentration.





Katarina

MORGAN, DDS, MPH

**David A. Winston
Health Policy Fellow**

**House Energy and
Commerce Committee**

Subcommittee on Health

Katarina (Katja) Morgan is a 2023-24 David A. Winston Health Policy Fellow and the first dentist selected for the program. She is currently completing her ten-month placement with the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health, where she focuses primarily on Medicaid, Medicare and oral health issues. Previously, Katja attended Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health as a Presidential Scholar, where she graduated this May with her Master of Public Health in Health Policy. Prior to Harvard, Katarina received her Bachelor of Science in Biology and Spanish from the University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as her Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of California, San Francisco School of Dentistry. Dr. Morgan is a passionate advocate for universal health care, including comprehensive oral health services. Her policy and research interests include medical-dental integration and gender-affirming healthcare.

Juanita

VELEZ

Senior Manager, Office of Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Delta Air Lines

Adjunct Professor, DEI in Venture Capital, Emory University, Goizueta Business School

Founder, HYPE (*Hispanic Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs*)

Born in Colombia, but raised in the A, she has trail-blazed her way through Atlanta's UPS and Delta Air Lines corporations as a global social media expert. At Delta, she was responsible for building international social media presence that expanded across 10 countries and 11 languages. In 2020, she transitioned to lead domestic cultural moments and DEI content on social media and launch the "Amplifying Black and Brown Employee Voices Series " to share the Delta platforms for its employees of colors. In 2016, she founded HYPE, Hispanic Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs as part of an equity solution to a gap she experienced heavily during her corporate climb. Juanita has propelled exponential opportunities for the next generation of multicultural Atlanta. In 2018, Juanita received her instructor certification in Mindfulness Meditation from the University of Miguel Cervantes in Spain. She is owner of Sol Meditate, a meditation pop-up that focuses on bringing the practice of mindfulness meditation to communities of color in an effort to remove the stigma the practice currently holds. Her true passion is serving others by connecting and amplifying diverse journeys. Her neuropsychology degree paired with her corporate experience as a marketer and her community activism has led Juanita as Senior Manager of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Operations at Delta Air Lines and Professor at Emory University's MBA Venture Capital and Minority Entrepreneurship course.





Jibraan

LEE

Jibraan Lee is a dedicated non-profit manager and media enthusiast who is passionate about education and community development. He has spent over a decade working in San Francisco Community Schools, advocating for systems change and building partnerships. In 2018, Jibraan became the Beacon Program Director at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School, where he oversees a diverse team of YMCA staff and fosters community partnerships. Under his leadership, the teams deliver impactful programs in areas such as Behavioral Health and Wellness, Expanded Learning, and School Transitions. Jibraan's innovative approach and strategic vision have greatly contributed to the success of these programs, benefiting both students and the broader community. He is also a creative media enthusiast and uses his skills to create engaging content that raises awareness of important community issues. Through storytelling, Jibraan fosters understanding and empathy among stakeholders. His unwavering dedication to growing leaders and empowering the community continues to inspire others. Jibraan's work exemplifies his commitment to creating a brighter future for students and families in San Francisco.

CONTINUES...

Jamaji

C. NWANAJI-ENWEREM, MD, PHD, MPP

**Emergency Medicine Chief
Resident Physician, Emory
University School of Medicine**

**Adjunct Assistant Professor of
Environmental Health, Emory
Rollins School of Public Health**

Executive Director, ELND

Jamaji C. Nwanaji-Enwerem, MD, PhD, MPP, is a Nigerian-American physician scientist making significant contributions in the fields of medicine, public health, and environmental advocacy. He is currently an Emergency Medicine Chief Resident Physician, an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Environmental Health at Emory Rollins School of Public Health, and Executive Director of the environmental improvement organization ELND. Dr. Nwanaji-Enwerem has a multidisciplinary background, with a BS in Biology from Morehouse College, a PhD in the Biological Sciences in Public Health program from Harvard University, a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School, and an MD from Harvard Medical School. His work includes conducting research on the effects of exposures on human health, providing medical care in busy emergency departments, and advocating for equitable environmental policies. He has mentored local college students in Atlanta, supported grassroots environmental leaders in Africa, participated in White House roundtables on equity and clinical innovation, and served as a technical advisor for the World Health Organization on occupational diseases. Overall, Dr. Nwanaji-Enwerem's service-driven leadership and dedication to holistic well-being make him a prominent figure in the national and global arena.





Haydee

FRANCO

**Color and Material Design Lead
Development Director,
Education & Programs
Pensole Lewis**

Haydee has led projects both in the product creation industry and design education with an emphasis on sustainable innovation. Most recently, as part of PLC's core team, paving the way for impactful education opportunities for diverse students as the Color Material Creative Manager and Sustainability Principle, focusing on both circular and color and material design under Ms. Suzette Henry's MLab Collective. Additionally, she has initiated and grown the development department at PLC with the support of BlueSky. Her commitment to connecting the community through business strategies, environmental impacts, and fundamentals of design education is the thread weaving her roles together.

She has participated in color and material design education workshops for Microsoft, GM, and others and has contributed to museum fashion design exhibition publications.

Eftitan

YASIN AKAM, MD, MPH

**Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
Hospitalist, Boston Medical Center**

**Assistant Professor in Medicine,
Boston University
School of Medicine**

**Physician, Rhode Island - 01
Disaster Medical Assistance Team,
National Disaster Medical System**

Dr. Eftitan (Efi) Akam is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Boston University and an internal medicine and pediatrics hospitalist at Boston Medical Center. Her professional interests are at the intersection of health equity, climate change, and environmental justice. Dr. Akam focuses on understanding and mitigating the health impacts of climate change and natural disasters in historically marginalized communities. She serves as an emergency responder on the Rhode Island - 01 Disaster Medical Assistance Team, and is a member of a pilot Clean Power Prescription Program at Boston Medical Center. In addition to the above, Dr. Akam is passionate about outreach and advocacy. She is the co-founder of Melanated and Dedicated (MaD) Scientist, an outreach program to foster STEM identities in historically under-represented children.

Dr. Akam received her BA from Harvard College, her MD from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, and her MPH from Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She completed her Med-Peds residency at the Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School where she served as Chief Resident. In 2023, Dr. Akam completed the Commonwealth Fund Fellowship in Minority Health Policy at Harvard University.





Drew

CHURCH

Founder, Solid Marketing

Drew Church is the founder of Solid Marketing, a company he established in 2016 after finding limited opportunities in the sports agency field. His focus is on working with companies that want to engage with African Americans, fashion, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), sports, and cultural relevance. Drew has worked with notable companies such as Mastercard, Tissot, NBA, Nike, Boys and Girls Club of America, APGA, BET Networks, Broccoli City Festival, Fox Sports, and Red Bull, among others.

Originally from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Drew spent his first two years of college as a scholarship athlete playing basketball in the historic CIAA conference for Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia. He later graduated from North Carolina Central University and is an active member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. Currently, Drew resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

Donovan

CLARK

Donovan Clark is a second-year Economics student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has a strong finance background, having worked with CLIMB USA for three years, an organization that provides financial literacy and investment services to underprivileged communities. Donovan has experience conducting presentations on financial topics and has spoken to various audiences, including students of all ages and older individuals. He covers topics such as Sustainable Investing, Basic Economics, and Basic Banking.

Donovan also holds positions within CLIMB USA, currently serving as the Secretary for CLIMB's CASH Investment Club and previously as the Vice President of CLIMB's Youth Financial Literacy Group. He is actively involved in UWM's Society for Advanced Economic Studies, serving as the President.

Outside of his academic and professional pursuits, Donovan is a multi-instrumentalist, performing locally and working on music projects as a producer and instrumentalist. His goal is to continue expanding his knowledge and skills to better serve his community while pursuing his degree.





Diarra

MOLOCK

**Pathways Program,
Federal Communication
Commission Office of
International Affairs, Global
Strategies and Negotiations
Division**

Diarra is a second-year student at Georgetown University, pursuing a master's degree in Asian Studies with a focus on US/China and Cross-Strait Relations. She previously earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Goucher College, with a minor in Africana Studies. After graduating, Diarra taught English in Changsha, China, to middle and high school students, and later in Busan, South Korea, to elementary students. She was awarded the prestigious Boren Scholarship, which supports language skills development and cultural immersion in underrepresented regions, such as Asia, Eurasia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

In June 2023, Diarra returned from Taiwan and completed a summer internship with Pacific Forum, a non-profit foreign policy research institute in Hawaii. During her internship, she focused on countering the People's Republic of China's disinformation campaign aimed at manipulating Taiwan. Diarra's career aspirations lie in international relations within the Federal Government, particularly as a Foreign Service Officer or in other international policy/intelligence roles across various federal agencies. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, watching Korean dramas, reading, visiting amusement parks, and indulging in Maryland blue crabs, a specialty of her home state.

DeVonte

JOHNSON

Dr. DeVonte Johnson is a dentist, entrepreneur, and activist from Atlanta, Georgia. He graduated from Tufts University and holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Tennessee State University and a Master of Biomedical Sciences from Duke University. Dr. Johnson has been involved in global oral health programs to support underserved communities. He initiated the first global service learning program to Uganda while at Tufts University, focusing on oral health awareness and intervention. In partnership with the International Paramedical Institute-Maya, he established free clinics throughout the year to address the lack of dental professionals in Uganda.

Aside from his work in dentistry, Dr. Johnson also owns an event space called Garage on Huff in Greater Atlanta. The 700+ square foot creative space has gained attention from major brands like Nike and Lululemon. Located in Midtown Atlanta, the area has transformed from primarily industrial to a vibrant neighborhood with urban lofts, art galleries, live music venues, retail stores, restaurants, and office spaces. Dr. Johnson aims to continue expanding his brand to serve communities in need, both locally and globally.





Devin

ANGLIN

**National Coordinator,
Boys and Young Men of Color,
YMCA USA**

Devin Anglin, an experienced educator and youth practitioner, is dedicated to promoting cultural competence and engaging with marginalized youth. Currently serving as the National Coordinator of Boys and Young Men of Color, he collaborates with YMCAs nationwide to develop best practices for engaging young boys and advancing equity. Devin has also founded two social ventures: Sankofa Leadership Associates, which offers culturally restorative professional workshops, and Roc Freedom Riders, which promotes equity and social justice in Black communities. Additionally, Devin established Bridged Visions Media, a multimedia company focused on amplifying the stories of Black creators and developing original content. He is passionate about using Hip-Hop as a pedagogical tool to connect with youth of color, and has implemented this approach in various organizations. Devin's long-term goal is to establish a media company that rivals industry giants. He is committed to disrupting systems, advocating for equity, and promoting positive youth development on a national scale.

Darrien

BEAL

Darrien L. Beal is a proud husband and father to two beautiful daughters. As an educator teaching middle school history, he enjoys the opportunity to open up a new world to students by emphasizing the importance of their collective and individual pasts, helping them gain an understanding of who they are and who they will be. Additionally, Darrien uses lessons learned from the past to help build the foundation for a successful future.

Along with a passion for education, Darrien also has a strong love for dance. As a professional tap dancer, he's traveled and performed around the country and around the world. He continues to dance and choreograph for several dance companies.

Darrien obtained his bachelor's and Master's degree from Hampton University and begins his journey for his doctorate this spring, looking forward to a career as an administrator in Education.



OR



Danielle

BUCHANAN

**Clinical Translational
Research Coordinator IV
Specializing in Huntington's
Disease Trials, Vanderbilt
University Medical Center**

Danielle is a Clinical Research Coordinator with a strong focus on advancing the understanding and treatment of Huntington's disease. Currently working at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, she leads and manages clinical trials aimed at improving the quality of life for patients and their families. With over a decade of research experience, Danielle effectively conducts clinical trials and has successfully coordinated and executed 13 trials focused on Huntington's disease at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, as well as 9 trials focused on Multiple Myeloma at Emory University. Her work has contributed to the development of potential therapies for these diseases. Danielle is also a published author, with two manuscripts in renowned scientific journals. Her areas of expertise include Huntington's disease research, clinical trial management, patient recruitment and informed consent, data collection and analysis, regulatory compliance and ethics, and collaboration with neurologists and pharmaceutical sponsors. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Eckerd College and has completed a Postbaccalaureate Pre Med Program at Elms College.

Christopher

L. SHROPSHIRE, Ed.D.

**Program Officer,
Rainwater Charitable Foundation**

Known as an innovative thinker with an ability to collaboratively design and implement systems to address complex issues, Chris serves as a Program Officer on the Family Economic Security Team with the Rainwater Charitable Foundation in Fort Worth, Texas. Chris works to create education and workforce pathways with supports for both adults and students to increase family economic mobility and security. In this work, Chris co-coordinated an effort to connect more than 8,000 students to wifi to bridge connectivity gaps during COVID. Chris co-launched a one of a kind partnership between Texas Wesleyan University and Fort Worth Independent School District to radically improve student outcomes at 6 campuses. This effort has resulted in sustained student growth and improved achievement with the campuses outperforming peers locally and across the state.

Chris holds a bachelor's degree in political science from The University of Michigan, an MBA from Northwood University, and a Doctor of Education degree with a focus in Higher Education Administration from the University of Alabama. Chris' research is focused on HBCUs and Black College Student Success as well as the impact of HBCUs on economic mobility for black students. Chris serves as a Research Fellow with the University of Alabama Education Policy Center, on the Board of Visitors with the TCU College of Education, advises and serves on several advisory and governance boards related to education and workforce. Chris is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. Most importantly, Chris is married to his best friend and love of his life Ana and has two beautiful daughters, Cataleya, and Zinnia. Chris is based in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.





Chris

GILMORE

**Partner and Chair, Private
Equity and Venture Capital,
Townsend & Lockett, LLC**

Chris Gilmore is a Partner and Chair of the Private Equity and Venture Capital practice at Townsend & Lockett, LLC in Atlanta. He has extensive experience in corporate and financial transactions, including debt and equity financings, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate governance. Chris aims to help his clients' businesses grow efficiently and effectively.

In addition to his role at Townsend & Lockett, Chris is the Managing Director and General Counsel for New Legacy Ventures, LLC, a real estate investment fund, and the CEO of Gilmore Investments, LLC. He is also actively involved in his community, serving on the boards of Quest Communities and the nsoro Foundation. Chris has previously held positions on the City of Atlanta's Governing Board of the Office of the Inspector General and Citizen Trust Bank's Next Generation Advisory Board. He is a past President of the Emerging 100 of Atlanta and an active member of the 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc. and the Gate City Bar Association.

Chris is from Atlanta and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Minor in Accounting from North Carolina State University. He also has a Juris Doctorate from Vanderbilt University Law School.

Chelsea

C. WILLIAMS

Founder & CEO, Reimagine Talent Co

Trailblazing social entrepreneur Chelsea C. Williams is the Founder & CEO of Reimagine Talent Co., a national talent development firm that delivers high-impact H.R. & Career Development solutions that support employee engagement, development, and retention.

As a Forbes Next 1000 Entrepreneur of the Year, Tory Burch Fellowship Alumni, and JP Morgan Chase Entrepreneurial Woman of Impact, Chelsea passionately leads a national team committed to building more connected, empowered workplaces. Reimagine Talent's unique focus on the multi-generational workplace, from entry-level to people managers and leaders, provides a tailored talent development approach that fuels synergy.

Chelsea has also earned an international reputation as a compelling, highly effective public speaker, engaging audiences worldwide on topics ranging from inclusively managing & leading teams to engaging emerging Generation Z. She is a frequent speaker at industry conferences & summits, business roundtables, and team offsites.

Before launching Reimagine Talent, Chelsea spent a decade on Wall Street managing & leading human capital across the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

Chelsea obtained her B.A. in Economics from Spelman College on a full scholarship. She is based in Raleigh, North Carolina.





Charis

CHAMBERS, MD FACOG

Dr. Charis Chambers is an accomplished OBGYN specializing in Pediatric & Adolescent Gynecology. She completed her medical education at the University of Alabama and her residency at Greenville Memorial Hospital. Dr. Chambers then pursued fellowship training at Baylor College of Medicine. In 2019, she launched her own platform called The Period Doctor to provide medically accurate reproductive health information and representation of minority physicians on social media. The platform has gained significant recognition, with millions of views per month and over 200,000 followers. Dr. Chambers has been featured on national television and in various digital and print publications as a medical expert. In September 2022, she decided to leave hospital-employed medicine and move to Atlanta, GA, with the goal of opening her own practice. She aims to continue advocating for reproductive justice, further her education, and pursue authorship in the field. Dr. Chambers attributes her tenacity and resilience to the teachings of her late mother, who taught her the importance of speaking up, not worrying about trivial matters, and loving without apology.

Chanel

TYLER

Head of Creator Partnerships & Sales, Planet Howl

Chanel Tyler is a dynamic leader in the Tech and Beauty industries, known for her advocacy centered around community and inclusivity. She recently became the Head of Creator Partnerships & Sales at Planet Howl, a social commerce marketplace, where she focuses on mobilizing the creator economy through affiliate marketing strategies. Prior to this, she worked at YouTube as the Lead for the Beauty, Fashion, and Lifestyle verticals, overseeing partnerships and strategies that impacted Beauty Creators and Diverse Creator Communities. Chanel also played a key role in organizing YouTube's first-ever virtual Beauty event, Beauty Festival. Before YouTube, she worked at Estée Lauder Companies as the Director of Local and Cultural Relevancy for the North America region, driving cultural relevance across thirty prestige brands. Chanel is also an advocate for representation, diversity, equity, and opportunity, using social media and other platforms to promote these values. She has curated a highly engaged community of beauty lovers, focusing on skincare and skin health. Chanel's contributions to the Beauty and Tech industry have been recognized by various media outlets, including The Cut, People Magazine, Coveteur, Good Morning America, and BET Networks.





Brittany

WATSON, MD, MPH, BSN

**Associate Medical Director
Division of Health Benefits,
(NC Medicaid), NC Department
of Health and Human Services**

Dr. Brittany Watson is a dedicated family physician with a strong commitment to improving healthcare access and quality. Raised in rural South Carolina, she experienced health inequities that fueled her passion for making a difference. Dr. Watson holds a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Clemson University and a medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina. She completed her residency in family medicine at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, NC, where she served as a chief resident.

As a former National Health Service Corps scholar, Dr. Watson contributed her expertise at a Federally Qualified Health Center in Rock Hill, SC. She also completed a fellowship in Minority Health Policy at Harvard University, earning a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in health policy. Currently, she serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist.

Dr. Watson's mission as a physician-educator is to empower learners with the skills needed to excel in healthcare settings and provide exceptional care to diverse communities. She is actively involved in raising awareness about kidney disease, transplant options, and organ donation in minoritized communities. Additionally, she is passionate about addressing healthcare disparities and developing innovative strategies to achieve equity.

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Brandon

FORD

Broker, Integrity Marketing Group

Brandon Ford is a highly ambitious and driven professional Broker with Integrity Marketing Group, the largest privately held provider of Life, Health and Wealth management in the US. He is entrusted to represent several of Forbes top financial services firms such as National Life Group, American National, AIG, Fidelity & Guarantee and many more.

His success can be attributed to the thoroughness of his teams complimentary Financial Literacy education; which is shared with every client in an effort to give back to the community. His firm is lauded as one of the most diverse financial services firms in the country, and has received accolades from Kevin Hart, Kobe Bryant and Magic Johnson to name a few.

Areas of expertise include indexing strategies, executive compensation plans, retirement planning, debt solutions and financial life strategies for helping families create generational wealth. Currently he is licensed in over 15 states while serving families across the country coast to coast.

Brandon lives by the philosophy "Prosper where you're planted and God will give you the upgrade". This foundation has propelled him to have an impact on expansion of financial literacy within our communities, religious organizations and businesses.

In addition, Brandon holds a Bachelor of Science in Sports Administration and Business Administration. This background has been pivotal in support of financial literacy and financial strategic decision making for professional athletes.





Ben

MCSWAIN

**Manager, Fixed Income
Portfolio Analysis Group,
Capital Group**

Ben McSwain is an experienced investment management professional with over a decade of experience at leading financial services institutions. He currently leads the US Core Fixed Income Portfolio Analysis Group at Capital Group, a \$2.3 trillion asset management firm based in Los Angeles, CA. His expertise includes fixed income, portfolio management, operations, and supporting institutional investor's pursuit of growth, income, and capital preservation. He works closely with global leadership and investment teams to implement strategies that drive portfolio performance and mitigate risk. McSwain's wall street career began at J.P. Morgan followed by Pacific Investment Management Company (PIMCO), where he assumed various roles in the investment process.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, McSwain is a strong advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion. He has served as Chairperson for JPMorgan's Black Organization for Leadership Development (BOLD) and has been involved with several organizations that support access and mentorship for underrepresented students.

McSwain holds a Bachelors of Business Administration from Howard University. He currently resides in Los Angeles, CA with his family.

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Amber

MEDLEY

**Interim Chief
Development Officer,
INROADS, INC**

Amber Medley is an international philanthropy expert with more than 25 years experience in establishing and growing nonprofit development operations. She currently serves as the Interim Chief Development Officer for INROADS, INC, the nation's leading nonprofit creating career pathways for America's underserved populations. Amber has experience in strategic planning, organizational development, and transformational partnerships with corporate America that ensure financial sustainability for INROADS, INC. Prior to her time at INROADS, INC, she served as Executive Director of the Team Type 1 Foundation and Director of Outreach for Team Novo Nordisk. Amber has additional experience in wealth management and financial planning. She received her degree in Business Administration from the University of North Georgia and spends her free time advocating at the federal level for equal access to healthcare.



OR



IGATOR • MENTOR • MODERATOR • OPERATOR • ORATOR • NAVIGATOR •
ISTRATOR • ADVOCATOR •
NVEYOR • COORDINATOR •
CTOR • GENERATOR • IM
GATOR • ORATOR • ORCHE
OR • AUTHOR • AVIATOR •
DEMONSTRATOR • DIRECT
PELLATOR • INTERPOLAT
ICE • PROP • TRANS
R • ADMINISTRATOR
VEYOR •
CTOR •
AVIGATOR •
NTICATOR •



BlueSKY
MAGAZINE

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Alexandra

COPPADGE WRIGHT

**Chief of Communications
and Customer Service,
Philadelphia School District**

Alexandra Coppadge Wright is an experienced communications executive with a diverse background in government, corporate, and education sectors. Currently serving as the Chief of Communications and Customer Service for the School District of Philadelphia, she oversees strategic internal and external communications and is leading a district-wide customer service initiative. Prior to her role in the school district, Coppadge Wright served as Executive Director of Marketing and Communications at Mastery Schools (Philadelphia) and as Director of Communications for the City of Wilmington, DE

Coppadge Wright also has experience in governmental/external affairs and corporate giving communications, having worked for PECO, an Exelon company. In this role, she developed and implemented communications strategies to advance the company's vision and business objectives, including media relations efforts and serving as a company spokesperson.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Communications with a minor in Journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she was a track and field athlete and team captain.

CONTINUES...

Alaina

CHIPMAN LEEKS

**Founder & Executive Director,
Atlanta Unbound Academy**

Dr. Alaina Chipman Leeks is the founder of Atlanta Unbound Academy, a K-8 school in Atlanta that draws inspiration from HBCUs. She is passionate about urban education and has received national recognition for her work. She plans to use funds from the Yass Prize to create a state-of-the-art facility for the school. Additionally, she has partnered with Morehouse School of Medicine to introduce middle school students to diverse fields in science.

Dr. Alaina Chipman Leeks is also dedicated to sharing her journey to parenthood, having had twins via a surrogate. She aims to empower individuals to navigate the complexities of surrogacy and fertility, particularly in communities where these topics are stigmatized. She also coaches and supports emerging leaders in education.

Looking ahead, Dr. Alaina Chipman Leeks aims to scale Atlanta Unbound Academy and continue providing outstanding education. She holds degrees from Spelman College, New York University, and Vanderbilt University's Peabody School of Education and Human Development.



FACTS & FORECASTS

An in-depth look at the communities we serve.

ACCORDING TO VARIOUS REPORTS, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT AROUND 50-60% OF TODAY'S LEADERS ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 50.

This percentage can vary depending on the industry and region being considered. Moreover, the definition of a "leader" can also differ, ranging from top executives to entrepreneurs and community leaders.

89%

of young leaders actively participate in social and environmental initiatives, aiming to create a positive impact on their communities.

of young leaders believe that flexible work arrangements and a healthy work-life balance are key to fostering productivity and employee satisfaction.

82%

75%

of young leaders prioritize diversity and inclusion in their organizations, recognizing the value of different perspectives and experiences.

of young leaders believe that technological innovation is crucial for addressing global challenges and driving sustainable development.

68%

MOVING FORWARD

Take steps toward being a G.R.E.A.T. Leader

Leadership is not merely about holding a title or occupying a position of authority; it is a dynamic process that requires a diverse set of skills, qualities, and attributes. Great leaders understand that their role goes beyond directing tasks and making decisions.

They inspire and empower others to reach their full potential, creating an efficient and effective environment. In today's post, we will explore G.R.E.A.T. as an acronym, which encompasses five essential elements of modern leadership: Growth, Relationship, Energy, Awareness, and Trust.

Growth: Great leaders recognize that personal and professional growth is a lifelong journey. They strive to continuously improve themselves and encourage growth in others. By embracing an open mindset, leaders inspire their team members to expand their comfort zones, embrace challenges, and learn from failures. A leader's commitment to growth sets the stage for innovation, adaptability, and resilience, fostering an environment where everyone can thrive.

Relationship: Leadership is fundamentally rooted in relationships. Effective leaders invest time and effort in developing strong connections with their team members. They actively listen, provide support, and show genuine empathy. By fostering a culture of collaboration and inclusivity, leaders promote open communication, creativity, and trust within the team. Strong relationships create a sense of belonging and inspire individuals to show up at their best.

Energy: Leaders are responsible for setting the tone and energy within their teams. Great leaders radiate enthusiasm and passion, inspiring others to do the same. They create a collaborative work environment where people feel motivated and engaged. By leading by example and demonstrating a principle-based approach, leaders instill a sense of purpose and drive in their team members. Energy is contagious, and great leaders harness it to achieve remarkable results.

Awareness: Self-awareness and situational awareness are crucial for effective leadership. Great leaders understand themselves, their strengths, and their stretches. They continually seek feedback and reflect on their actions and decisions. By being aware of their emotions and reactions, leaders can manage their responses effectively and make sound judgments. Furthermore, leaders cultivate situational awareness, enabling them to adapt to changing circumstances, anticipate challenges, and make informed decisions.

Trust: Trust is the bedrock of any successful relationship, and leadership is no exception. Great leaders generate trust by being reliable, transparent, and consistent. They empower their team members and delegate authority, demonstrating their confidence in others' abilities. Trust enables open communication, collaboration, and risk-taking. When trust is present, team members feel safe to express their ideas, take calculated risks, and learn from their mistakes.

Incorporating G.R.E.A.T. principles into leadership practices can transform a good leader into an exceptional one. By embracing growth, fostering relationships, igniting energy, tapping into awareness, and generating trust, leaders create an environment where individuals can flourish, and teams can achieve extraordinary outcomes. The journey of leadership is not without its challenges, but by embodying these qualities, leaders can engage, enhance, and elevate their teams to new heights. Remember, leadership is not about one person; it is about unleashing the collective potential and achieving greatness together. So, let us embark on the G.R.E.A.T. journey and make a positive impact on the world through our leadership.

Until next time, keep steppin'.... ■

Jayson Wells, or Coach Jayson, is a retired professional basketball player, successful author and speaker who has inspired and influenced over 50,000 individuals from Fortune 500 Companies, non-profit organizations, universities and athletic teams worldwide. He is also host of the Shoes Have Souls Podcast and can be found hanging out at JaysonsPlayground.com. Look for his next book, "Winners Win: The Game Plan to Becoming a G.R.E.A.T. Leader" coming spring '24.

SUPPORT
IS
EVER

The journey of
leadership is
not without its
challenges.



Advancement of Blacks in Sports (ABIS)

presents our **3RD ANNUAL CHAMPIONS & LEGENDS WEEKEND**, May 31 – June 2, 2024, at the MGM National Harbor Hotel & Casino in Washington, D.C. The Champions & Legends Weekend supports our pillars for change: Education, Representation, Accountability, and Mental Wellness for Black Athletes, Coaches and Administrators in Sports.

The Trailblazers honored at this year's event include:

- **Ray Lewis** (NFL Hall of Fame)
- **Carmelo Anthony** (NBA)
- **Beverly Kearney** (Collegiate Coach)
- **Wendall Scott** (Racing pioneer)
- **Lonnie Ali** (widow of Muhammad Ali)
- **D'Wayne Edwards** (designer, academic leader)
- **Benjamin Crump** (Civil Rights Attorney)
- **Paxton Baker** (Chairman, Washington Nationals Founding Partners Group)

ABIS

ADVANCEMENT OF BLACKS IN SPORTS

The Game Beyond the Lines



Our Voice

ABIS, a 501(c) 3 organization, was founded in response to the racial injustices that had begun to impact our society and effect sports. We amplify voices of the sports community and gather the resources needed to support these pillars for change: education, representation, support, accountability.

ABIS will be the source for advocacy of information and teaching; an advocate for underrepresented communities within the sports world — including minorities in coaching, female administrators, and fair wages; and elevate mental wellness for athletes.

Our Focus

EDUCATION

We're taking an active role in educating athletes, coaches, and administrators on the history of racial inequality in sports, as well as providing training on how to promote diversity and inclusion within the sports industry.

GENDER EQUITY

In just 2 years, ABIS has created a pathway to ensure true representation for minority and women athletes, coaches, athletic directors, and administrators — a foundation promoting equal opportunities to excel, recognition for achievements and REAL representation at all levels of the sports industry, from athletes to administrators.

WELLNESS

There is an increase in the amount of stress and expectation on athletes, coaches, and administrators. ABIS is equipped to address the technical and physical components of this crisis by developing a mental wellness sports conference focused on awareness, reducing the stigma, and helping implement proactive solutions for the generations to come.

The Event

ABIS Champions & Legends Weekend supports our three pillars for change: education, gender equity, and mental wellness for black athletes, coaches and administrators in sports.

Trailblazers in athletics and entertainment join ABIS honoring blacks in sports at our Awards Gala, an entertaining, educational, and inspirational weekend recognizing coaches, players, and historical figures in professional and collegiate sports. Our ABIS Champions & Legends Weekend will kick-off with an exclusive reception and continues with professional development workshops, resources and interactive engagement.

Our signature black-tie awards gala features live entertainment, special guests and honorees and will be attended by founding ABIS members, media, professional and student athletes, community leaders and influencers, all supporting this worthy cause. The weekend concludes with a Gospel Jazz Brunch.



ABIS Founder
Gary Charles



THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

We wanted to take a moment to express
our heartfelt appreciation for all the
support you have shown BlueSKY
Collaborative over the past year. Your
unwavering dedication and encouragement
have played a significant role in our success
and growth. Whether you have been a
client, a partner, or a friend of BlueSKY
Collaborative, your support has been
invaluable to us. Your belief in our mission
and commitment to making a positive
impact in the world has been truly inspiring.
From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you
for your trust and confidence. We are filled
with gratitude for the relationships we have
built and the milestones we have achieved.
None of this would have been possible
without your support.

Julie and Karl

