

# WOMEN LEAD<sup>®</sup>

*SISTERS RISING  
TOGETHER  
EDITION*

COCO GAUFF  
U.S. SPORTS  
NEXT GLOBAL SUPERSTAR

REGINA BELLE  
HER AMAZING  
JOURNEY

WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION'S  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
JANEEN UZZELL  
HAVE YOUR SISTER'S BACK

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS...UNITING LEADERS

[WWW.NATIONALWOMENOFCOLOR.COM](http://WWW.NATIONALWOMENOFCOLOR.COM)

CELEBRATING...

10 YEARS

WOMEN  
OF *Color*  
EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE



Women of Color  
EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE INC.

SEPTEMBER 2020

# WOMEN LEAD®

Executive Director | Sisters Rising Together: The Value of The Sisterhood

*Sisterhood, the relationship between sisters, or an association, society or community of women linked by a common interest, religion or trade.*

The social, economic, political and emotional support the sisterhood provides to each and every one of us is an unmatched, sometimes unspoken, cloak of security. Support in the form of professional mentorship and career sponsorship. Support in the form of listening, sharing and caring and support in the form of guiding, uniting and advocating for one another.

When I think of the word sisterhood, I think of the value of our sisterhood. The value of the sisterhood within The Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. (WOCEI) is derived from the passion and the drive of sisters of like minds, to empower and enhance the lives of one another, domestically and globally.

As an organization our mission is to expand and enhance leadership in women of color. We achieve this through our monthly professional development programs, our networking events, our health and technology targeted initiatives, and everything we do in between, to positively impact our

community. We understand the true value in the sisterhood, our sisterhood.

Empowerment through our sisterhood is only possible when we come together, building relationships based on our value as a collective, determined to make the changes the world needs to see. We are activists for one another; we strive to positively affect one another socially, economically, politically and emotionally, regardless of class, religion or ethnicity.

The sisterhood of WOCEI is sustained and supported with the guidance and expertise of our board members, the innovation of our committee members, the passion of our Professional Leadership Program, past and present mentees, the unwavering loyalty and commitment to our mission from our members across the United States, the dedication of our sponsors and community partners and the fortitude of our Founders. As the Executive Director of the Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. I see our sisterhood at work every day. Our collective has and continues to

leave a mark on the community.

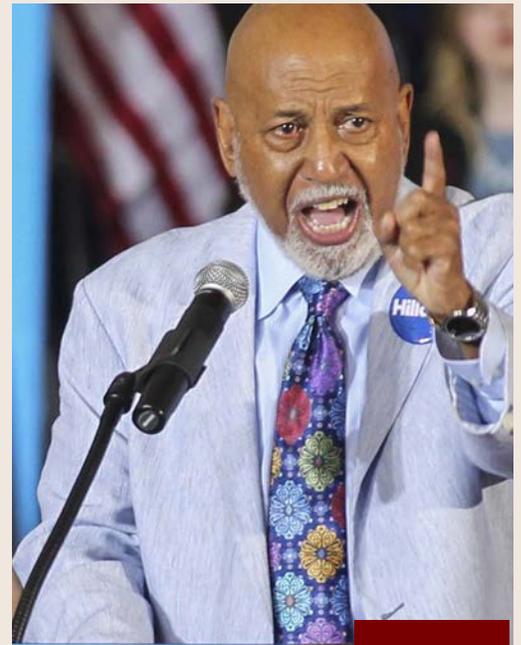
I thank you all for your guidance and support. Let's continue to work together and show the world the power of our sisterhood. This issue of Women Lead Magazine reveals to us the diversity in perspectives and complexity of sisterhoods around the nation, and the value they provide, which bonds us across cultural, economic, social, religious lines; uniting us in, womanhood.

Sisterly,  
**Jibrielle K. Polite**  
 Executive Director  
 Women of Color  
 Empowerment Institute, Inc.





**14**



**GER  
HER**

**20**



**38**



**42**



**51**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>03</b> A Word From Our Executive Director	<b>20</b> Women Lead Interviews Alcee Hastings Jr.
<b>06</b> About The Institute	<b>24</b> Regina Belle, Her Amazing Journey
<b>08</b> Girlfriends, More Than a Hit Show	<b>30</b> A Tale of Two News Women
<b>09</b> What to Expect From Mentors	<b>33</b> Conference Agenda
<b>10</b> Turning The Tides of Impostor Syndrome Together	<b>38</b> Girlfriends Rising Together
<b>14</b> DO have your Sister's Back	<b>40</b> Being Our Best Selves
<b>17</b> WOCEI Academy - Atlanta Opening	<b>42</b> Glance Back to Ghana



**25**

# CONTENTS

- 45** WOCEI Travel: Destination Jamaica
- 46** Our Supporters
- 48** Attorney, Entrepreneur and Advocate
- 50** WOCEI Events & Activities
- 52** CoCo Gauff: Our Next Global Superstar
- 55** Our Conference Committee
- 58** Conference Speakers
- 61** Advisory Board



**Editorial Director**

Jibrielle Polite

**Deputy Editor & Editor at Large**

Kathy Eggleston

**Managing Editor**

Candice Cobb, Esq.

**Writers At Large**

Doug Lyons

Burnadette Norris-Weeks, Esq.

**Creative Director**

Michelle Austin Pamies, Esq.

**Magazine Layout & Design**

Carolyn Moda

**Assisting Graphic Designer**

Alexis Cohen

**Contributing Photographers**

Ivan Wills

Julian Cousins

Mitchell Layton

Lydia Kearney Carlis, Ph.D

## **WOMEN LEAD<sup>®</sup>**

401 North Avenue of the Arts  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33311

Ph: (954) 768-9770 or (954) 900-3494  
[www.southfloridawomenofcolor.com](http://www.southfloridawomenofcolor.com)  
All rights reserved.



## Women of Color EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE INC.

### About The Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc.

The Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. ("Institute") is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to enhance and expand leadership by women of color. The specific goals and objectives of the Institute are:

- To build awareness of health care disparities, disease and social ills that disproportionately impact women of color.
- Support and encourage women leaders to run and win public office.
- Develop capacities for social change that will empower women to transform communities.
- Develop programming that will increase and promote heritage awareness.
- Through open discussions and community outreach, combat stereotypes, double standards and bias against women.
- Provide training opportunities for business and government.
- Provide mentoring programs for women that encourage career success and growth.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for conference materials associated with Women of Color Empowerment Conference.
- Focus on uniting women of color with multicultural differences.

The Institute holds quarterly leadership events called "Advocates for Change" where selected speakers discuss how to bring about successful and productive social change in areas such as economic development, living healthy lifestyles, heritage awareness and technology advancements. The Institute holds "Next Level" professionally facilitated forums designed to assist attendees with professional development and strategic planning. Through corporate grant funding, the Institute holds professional etiquette seminars where attendance is free of charge and open to the public. The Institute is a membership organization and hosts monthly dinners and professional development meetings. The Institute publishes a magazine called "Women Lead" highlighting Women of Color leaders from around the country and their fascinating and motivational stories. The Institute administers a leadership mentorship program linking young professionals with established community leaders. One requirement of this program is for mentees to produce a public service event focused on a health-related initiative. The public service projects have all been impactful and have brought together hundreds of people from the tri-county areas of Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties and beyond.

The largest yearly activity of the Institute is the Women of Color Empowerment Conference. This destination leadership conference is held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and is focused on educating and motivating dynamic leaders of color. The conference sells out each year and draws leaders from all over the United States.

The Institute has successfully collaborated with a number of state and local partners, including but not limited to: universities, bar associations, urban leagues, corporations, sororities, fraternities and Links Chapters, to name a few. The Institute's programming has received national recognition and multiple awards. The national advisory board consists of well-respected professionals and community leaders throughout the country. The Institute seeks to ensure that every dollar goes towards the Institute's mission of enhancing and expanding leadership for Women of Color with a goal that the high-level training provided will positively impact the nation.



At **Florida Power & Light Company**  
we are **working together with the communities**  
**we serve** to make Florida an even better place  
to raise a family and do business.

#FPLCares

CHANGING THE CURRENT.



## GOLDEN BROOKS: GIRLFRIENDS **IS MORE THAN A** **HIT SHOW**



By: Doug Lyons

If anyone knows the concept of 'Girlfriends,' it's Golden Brooks. For eight years, she co-starred in the popular sitcom, which featured the friendship of four professional African American women. As an actress, Ms. Brooks has moved on to other projects, but if you think the idea of true sisterhood ended for her with the last performance of 'Girlfriends,' you'd be mistaken.

"I care about my true friends," Ms. Brooks said. "There's the business side of me, and there's the side where if you can call on one friend, you're a rich woman. I'm fortunate. I have my close friends who I know will support me, and you need that."

One day at school, Ms. Brooks' daughter, Dakota had an accident. She had a bad fall and, according to Ms. Brooks, felt pretty much alone and isolated. Fortunately, three of her friends heard about the accident and rallied around Dakota. One of them made a necklace that read 'We Love You, Dakota.'

Born in Fresno, Calif., Golden Ameda Brooks was named after her maternal grandmother. Her family eventually moved to the San Francisco area where she grew up and ultimately fell in love with acting. In junior high school, she did what she called "my first real play – Westside Story." She played Maria, the teenage girl from Puerto Rico and the play's leading female character. "I killed it," Ms. Brooks recalled. "It was the first play I did in front of a big audience."

Ms. Brooks graduated from the University of California Berkeley where she majored in Media Representation of Minorities with a minor in The-

ater. She went on to earn her master's degree from Sarah Lawrence College. A self-described "theater-brat," Ms. Brooks was active in the Rodney Theater Company early in her career before winning brief television roles on *The Adventures of Pete & Pete*, *Promised Land* and *The Jamie Foxx Show*. From 1998 to 2000, she starred in a recurring role alongside Pam Grier in the Showtime series, *Linc's*. Then, came the script to play Maya Wilkes, a sharp-tongued secretary in the UPN sitcom, "Girlfriends."

*Girlfriends* lasted eight years and for her performance, Ms. Brooks received the BET Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series as well as two nominations for the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series. Although the show ended its run in 2008, Ms. Brooks continued to excel in several roles, including "Hart of Dixie," the TV One reality series, "Hollywood Divas" and the Starz comedy series "Blunt Talk." She began taking on more dramatic roles in "The Darkest Minds," "Yellowstone" and most recently as the mother of the lead character in the TNT series "I Am the Night" for which she won critical acclaim.

Still the *Girlfriends* experience runs deep.

"There never will be another "Girlfriends," she said. "There will never be another "The Cosby Show" or "Good Times," "A Different World" or "Living Single," but hats off to those shows. They connected the dots, and I think the dots are still connecting. We haven't seen where we as a race can go."



# WHAT TO EXPECT FROM MENTORS

By: **Michelle Austin Pamies, Esq.**

We talk a lot of mentorship. We have structured mentorship programs. We build informal mentoring relationships. The question is what do we want from mentors. What do we expect? Mentorship is not well-defined and it varies based on the individuals involved in the relationship. At a minimum though, mentorship should provide mentees with someone they can talk to freely about issues which affect their careers, with the hope of getting some wise counsel.

Mentors should be willing and able to share their knowledge and experience. However, mentors cannot successfully provide guidance if the mentee is not honest about the issues he or she is facing. In other words, in order to seek guidance, the mentee must share real concerns with full disclosure. It is also true that a good mentor may recognize some unspoken truths and address those truths with the mentee, even if unpleasant. Two of the most difficult topics are personal appearance and demeanor. But, they must be addressed when necessary. Why?

The most competent person will sometimes be ignored for possible advancement because he or she does not have the requisite "corporate image." What is that? It is simply that the person is deemed not to look the part. A lot of code terms are used, such as the person is not "executive material," or would not "represent the company well," etc. These terms, if used about you, can really harm your professional path. Accordingly, in a mentoring relationship, a mentor should make sure to encourage the mentee to dress

well for work; in other words, dress for the job you want, not just the job you have. If you are in middle-management and aspire to the C-Suite, dress as if you were already there. It includes clothing, hairstyle, and all other aspects of your personal appearance.

A professional demeanor also matters. Demeanor includes whether or not you are viewed as pleasant. If you are not viewed as pleasant, you can be passed up for growth opportunities. Do you say hello to colleagues in the hallway or the elevator? Do you smile? Do you share pleasantries with folks at work? Do you try to get to know the people you work with? And, most importantly, do you let them get to know you while not revealing aspects of your life, if any, that would make you lose the respect of your colleagues? If respect is lost, your ability to later supervise your current colleagues becomes problematic. A mentor should share with a mentee what it is like to be thought of as friendly while still being taken seriously. These are skills a mentor can share for having lived a little longer and seen a lot more. These are tips that can help a mentee succeed and rise in the professional world.

Although there is much more advice a mentor can provide, addressing the unpleasant topics of personal appearance and demeanor are a start, and other matters can be addressed as they arise so long as the mentee is truthful and the mentor is willing and able to share.

# TURNING THE TIDES **OF** IMPOSTOR SYNDROME TOGETHER

---

By: Lisa Orbe-Austin

Women of color are particularly vulnerable to struggling with Impostor Syndrome. One of the hallmarks of this syndrome is the constant and nagging sense that you are a fraud, that what you have is due to luck, circumstance or social skills alone. This leads to overworking and overproducing in an effort to demonstrate one's competence. When as women of color leaders, we constantly experience having to work twice as hard for the recognition that those from privileged groups just have to show up for, Impostor Syndrome is easy to identify with.

The concept of Impostor Syndrome was hypothesized in 1978 by psychologists, Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes. It usually contains the following dimensions: a fear of failure, attributing success to luck or overwork, denial of ability, discounting praise, and having the characteristics of Superwoman. It's not a psychological disorder, but a constellation of behaviors and thoughts that create this phenomenon, usually seen in high achieving people. Impostor syndrome makes it very difficult to appreciate one's own talents and accomplishments and perceive them as one's own.

When it is societally expected of women of color to be less than (i.e., not as capable as our peers, requiring additional support), developing Impostor Syndrome can be more common. While

having Impostor Syndrome can lead to an image of being a hardworking superstar, it often coincides with burnout and overworking, as well as struggling to take risks, accept praise, trust our worth and believe in our capacity to succeed.

So, what can we do as a sisterhood to impact this phenomenon culturally and to put an end to characteristic Impostor Syndrome in women of color?

We can mentor. We can support other women of color and encourage them to accept their accomplishments, and to know that accepting these stellar aspects of yourself will not inevitably lead to some slip-up that makes you a fraud. We can teach our mentees through example about how not to overwork to prove our worth, how to accept praise, and to have confidence in our ability to succeed. We can cushion their fall when they inevitably make a mistake, and teach them how to learn from it, rather than see it as proof of being deficient.

We can watch our thoughts and the thoughts of others. We can move away from all-or-nothing thinking and seeing mistakes as catastrophic. We can validate each other when we have experiences of being perceived as less than, but we can agree that we are not less than and that this is a method of oppression that we cannot participate in. We can be forgiving of ourselves and

others and more focused on our learning and abundance, not hierarchy or who is better or worse.

We can observe and adjust our behaviors that illustrate that we feel less than. We can stop valuing overworking as a virtue and see it as trapping and reinforcing of our insecurities, which also leads to less balance in our lives. We can choose not to work for people and organizations that include us conditionally, where we constantly feel like we have to prove ourselves over and over again.

We can form a sisterhood against Impostor Syndrome. We can understand how Impostor Syndrome shows up for women of color and insist that we combat it within ourselves and offer to others support to fight their experiences of Impostor Syndrome. We can notice when we see others overfunctioning to prove that they are worthy, when we know that they already are. We can make sure that we never manage others in ways that reinforce Impostor Syndrome by creating uncertain evaluation processes, cultures that overwork, and unhealthy competition and insecurity.

Impostor Syndrome is possible to overcome, but it's critical that we can identify the behaviors and thoughts that feed unhealthy behaviors. We don't want to support or create cultures meant to keep people insecure and unstable in their perception of their accomplishments and leadership abilities. We, together, can create an intolerance for Impostor Syndrome and the ways in which it oppresses women of color and prevents them from fully embracing themselves and their talents. When we question our skills, it creates



greater instability about the direction of our careers, and allows opportunities to constantly be left to the whims of others and their evaluations. The perpetuation of work cultures and situations that support Impostor Syndrome, especially for women of color, also supports structural inequities. However, as a sisterhood, we can work to eradicate it in ourselves and others, and create opportunities for us all to believe in ourselves, our futures, and value all that we have done, will do, and are capable of doing.



# TAKE ON THINKING INDEPENDENTLY TOGETHER TODAY

In the past, we tended to shape our lives through stereotypes, applying limits on what society said was achievable – or appropriate -- for someone our age. This new era renders those old norms obsolete, and I say – good riddance. Let's push back, start fresh, and throw away those outdated boundaries.

That's where AARP comes in. We can help you navigate this changing world and make the most of today and tomorrow. Our new rallying cry is "Take on Today," and we're committed – we're "all in" – to evolving to meet the new realities of aging.

So go take on today and every day, Florida.

Learn how at [aarp.org/fl](https://aarp.org/fl)

**AARP**<sup>®</sup> Real Possibilities  
Florida

# The winning team. Combine Home & Auto.

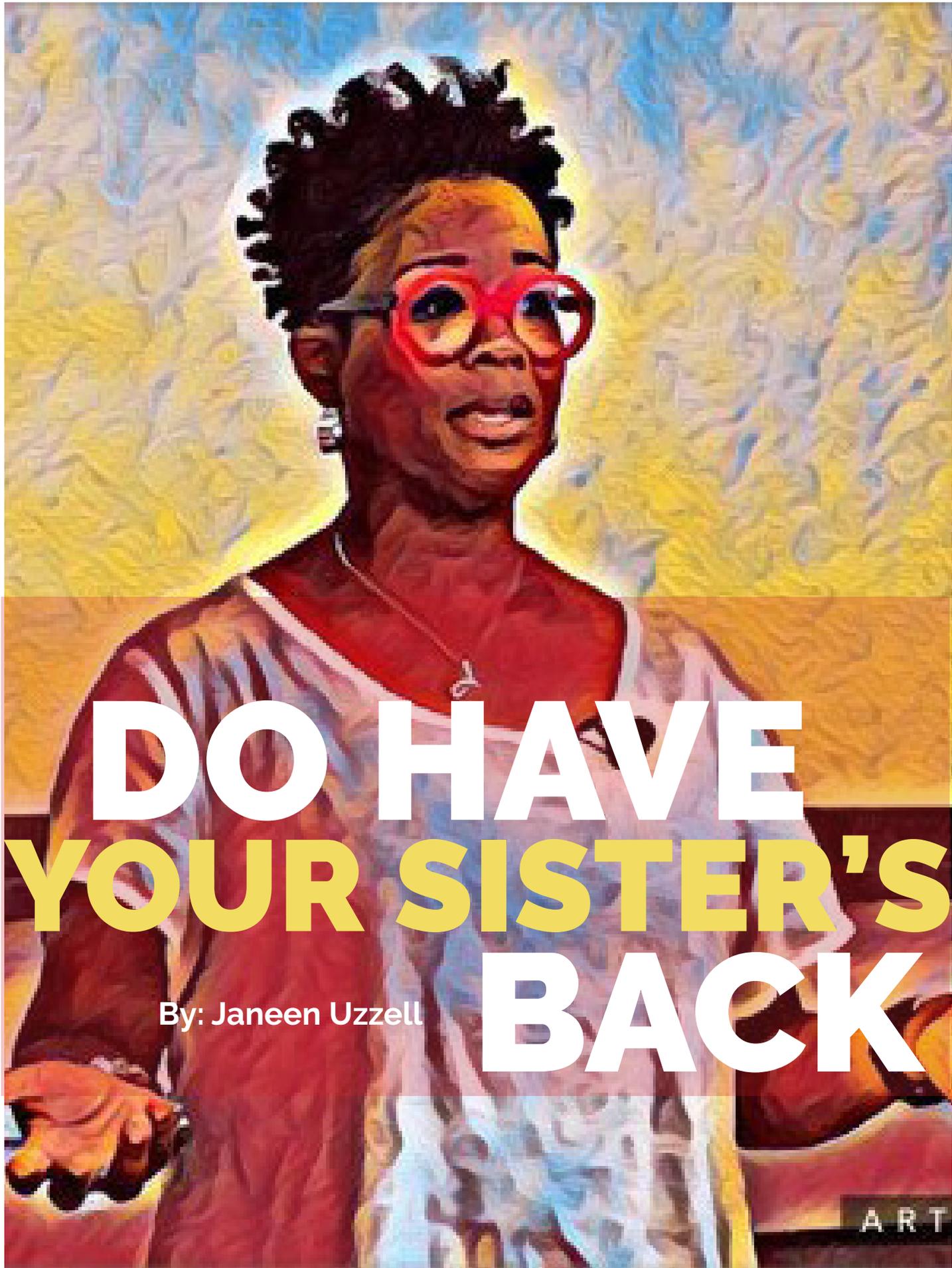


When home and auto work as a team, you score time and money. It's just another way I'm *here to help life go right.*<sup>™</sup> Call me today.

**Tina Teague Ins Agcy Inc**

Tina Teague, President  
1331 N. Palm Ave.  
Pembroke Pines, FL 33026  
Bus: 954-432-3341 Fax: 954-432-8812





**DO HAVE  
YOUR SISTER'S  
BACK**

By: Janeen Uzzell

ART

Over the years, we've seen a flurry of articles about women having each other's backs. We've been told over and over again, in magazines, on social media and in countless corporate workshops that we need to support each other as women.

And yet, nothing has changed.

There's still a constant misrepresentation of women of color in leadership positions. The world continues to be stunned by our magic instead of it being the norm. And when we walk into rooms full of women just like us, instead of feeling empowered and encouraged, we often feel threatened, sized up and judged, sometimes more harshly than boardrooms full of white men.

We all know how valuable it is to have someone who has our back - someone who is truly, unflinchingly supportive. After all, most of us have grown up with the opposite experience.

Since childhood I've known what it feels like to walk into a room where no one looks like me, where no one can relate to my hair, my name, my family traditions. My very being meant always having to ensure others felt comfortable with my presence, and justifying how I gained entry into the coveted space that I took up. I've known and am still all too familiar with feeling as if I'm a trespasser or unvetted visitor in environments that have already required a premium price to be paid for entry. The stripes on my back, my educational degrees and life experiences, should serve as access granted, and yet are continuously trumped by privilege and the bias of others. Even now, no matter what door I open, when I walk into the room I am usually the FOD; the first, the only and the different, to paraphrase Shonda Rhimes.

Why do we as women persist in making things so difficult for each other? If I open up a copy of Esquire, GQ or Men's Health, I don't see articles teaching men how to have each other's backs. It's not a lesson they need to be taught; it's an unwritten social norm in their fraternal order.

Why is the practice of being an ally so rare for women but so expected for men?

It's time for us to be honest with ourselves, and to face the hard truth. If we're not willing to be

there for each other, reading one more article isn't going to change anything. This needs to be what we strive for, a practice that is always with us, a part of the fabric of sisterhood, and the single thread that binds us within our families, communities, organizations and the world.

(Tech nerd alert) Yoda said it best in *The Empire Strikes Back*: "Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try."

But wait - don't stop reading! Let me add some definitive explanation here. What does it mean to "do"?

It means the time to start is now.

We must unlearn the competitive, negative practices that stem from pride and insecurity. We must choose to act and do something different.

We must stop waiting - until we get promoted, until we hire the Diversity and Inclusion leader who will magically fix our problems, until we get a more supportive manager. We need to stop saying, "I'll do this as soon as ..." and start today.

Showing up for each other can be an act as small as keeping one another informed, sharing a compliment or word of encouragement, providing constructive criticism and also leveraging our position in leadership to open doors of opportunity and promotion. These things may be uncomfortable initially, but must be the standard of how we will help other women.

I remember when I hired a member of my support staff several years ago. We worked in a more formal office and it was important to retain modest apparel - ok, let's keep it real - she had some tattoos that needed to be covered in that specific environment. We went out for lunch and I nervously approached the subject, asking her if I could purchase a jacket that she could keep in the office for "just in case" emergencies, an item that would always be available to her if needed. I didn't want her to feel offended, judged, or controlled, but I knew that the alternative would be not helping her while others would likely condemn and gossip. This act didn't cost me much financially, and it built up my boldness muscle, taught me a lesson in having one's back, and also had a positive outcome. That's what doing



we close the door behind us instead of holding it open for each other. Many times, organizations will even pit women against each other to uncover their flaws - and we'll go along with it.

I was a pawn in this game once when I worked for a female leader that truthfully, I didn't really get along with. This affected my "do" ability, and I'm not proud of how I didn't support her in ways that I could have. It taught me a valuable lesson. As I progressed in my career, I saw more and more how women were being used to uncover each other's negative attributes in an effort to prevent their rise into leadership positions. Now, I refuse to participate in this schoolyard girl fight to fuel other people's agendas and ultimately move us all out of decision making, game changing leadership roles.

I've lived and worked around the world, and I know that there is enough space for all of us in the room. We need a revolution of our values and we must be intentional about doing better. We need

is - even when you're unsure.

Now for the page turner and an uncomfortable group reading on "do not." We've all seen examples of what it looks like when women do not support one another. When we're stacking bricks in the walls that separate us via the competitive "battle of the designer handbags," or criticizing and ostracizing each other from professional groups. Rehearsing these practices only resurfaces the mean girl personas that we claim to want to protect our very daughters, nieces and other young girls from. As we advance in an organization and gain exclusive access to the "club,"

to face up to our own acts of exclusiveness and commit to making real change for other women. As women of color, we have an obligation to stick our foot in the door - yes, whether that foot is wearing a designer stiletto shoe, birkenstock or sneaker - and make way for others to get in there with us. Together, we can make real change. And in doing so, we can put an end to the need for articles about having each other's back, because our "do" factor will tell its own story.

# WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE, INC. OPENS THE ATLANTA CHAPTER





**United As One**  
Making A Difference



ups connections

business  
connections

community  
connections



[www.ups.com](http://www.ups.com)

# FULL SERVICE AGENCY

ON AIR. ONLINE. ON LOCATION.

WE DO DESIGN, ADVERTISING, MARKETING, TELEVISION, BILLBOARD, RADIO & DIGITAL

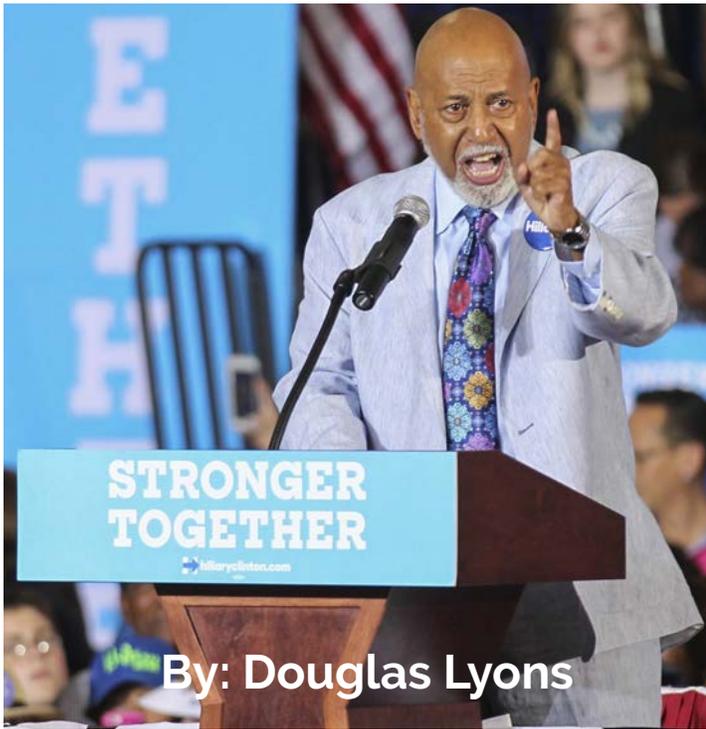


**The Wiggins Agency**

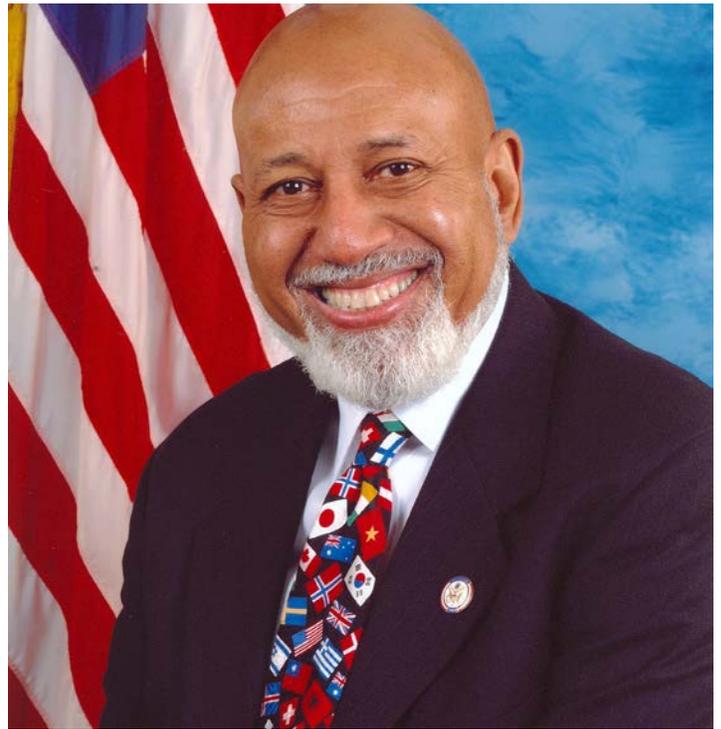
**WE GET RESULTS.**

[THEWIGGINSAGENCY.COM](http://THEWIGGINSAGENCY.COM)

954-368-2644



By: Douglas Lyons



# WOMEN LEAD

## INTERVIEWS ALCEE HASTINGS JR.

*Editor's Note: Alcee Hastings Jr. represents the Florida's 20th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives. A 14-term incumbent, Hastings is a board member of Women of Color Empowerment Institute and is one of the "few good men" who consistently supports the organization. He was unable to attend this year's conference due to his work at the Congressional Black Caucus Weekend, but he sat down with Douglas Lyons of Women Lead magazine for this interview, which has been edited for space.*

**WL: What particular message do you have for our conference participants?**

AH: It would be to be mindful of national and local politics and to participate at a level for which some of them have not. Organize your block, organize your neighborhood, make sure that everyone is registered to vote and be mindful of the people in charge of delivering the necessities of life for their respective communities. The Women of Color conference is an empowering conference and my belief is, although their thrust is not directed specifically at politics, it is

directed to economic development and other issues that women are confronted with. If I could take 500 women and have them grow their numbers to 5,000 in terms of getting to people in this next election ... Let me just put this bluntly. If Donald Trump is re-elected, their lives are going to be miserable. It's just that simple. Now, do you want to have a miserable life, or would you prefer to do everything you could to avoid it? I've been involved with this organization now for seven years, I've seen it grow and I've seen the excitement. They will need to carry that excitement from the three-day conference to the rest of this year and next to be assured that they are going to be directly involved in insisting that their political leadership is accountable to them.

**WL: How important is the role of Women of Color in the 2020 elections?**

AH: The role is critical. You mentioned Alabama and what black women did there in 2018, but I think what is taking place in Georgia under Stacey Abrams who has insisted she will do everything she can to organize people to deal

with voter suppression. I see no reason why the Women of Color Empowerment Institute can't take the lead in Florida, working with those who are already involved, like Andrew Gillum and the leaders of the restoration of felony rights. I would also love to see them run for office. This is going to be a very critical year.

**WL: What advice would you give women of color who want to run for office?**

AH: I'd first say learn the issues. Just don't run because you want to run. Learn how laws are made and participate in the community in a meaningful way. Join a variety of organizations so you'll have a network of people to turn to and to make sure you're grounded. I'd say, 'Sista, run, but know what you're running for and know how to do it.' Also, learn how to raise money. You're going to have to buy ads and do those things that the mother's milk of politics requires.

**WL: In 2018, we saw a diverse group of women elected to Congress. How are they doing?**

AH: Excellent. I have never imagined that I would see as many African Americans as we now have in the Congress. There are 52 of us, and the women that are there are all extremely bright. Quite frankly, I marvel as I sit and listen to them during the hearings and their presentations before the Rules Committee, at how fast they are learning the process. When I was first elected, you were pretty much relegated to having to be there a year before you opened your mouth. Well, they opened their mouths the very first day, and there are several of them that are issue-oriented – Georgia's Lucy McBath on gun control and Illinois' Lauren Underwood on health care. We haven't elected any African-American dummies. These people are smart and extremely capable legislators. They're learning the legislative process. They're not there to be placeholders.

**WL: How does this era of Donald Trump compare to the trying times of Jim Crow segregation?**

AH: In terms of forward movement, we have made improvements. But at the same time, we have stark divisions between age groups – the Millennials vs. the Baby Boomers and those of us from the Silent Generation. That's my group. One of the things I marvel at as I listen to Millennials

is the fact that they were not denied anything didn't have to struggle for anything and therefore take for granted the opportunities that are available to them. They get pissed off when they can't make the advancements that took us years of struggle to even get to the point where we could get pissed off about not moving further. I also don't appreciate their lack of appreciation for the pioneers that went before them. They may go to the Black History Month activities, but I don't see them in the community doing the kinds of organizing that we did when we were denied the right to vote, when we were denied the right to eat in the restaurants, when we were segregated in our schools. I'll use lawyers as an example. Tom Reddick, Raleigh Rawls, George Allen, Zebedee Wright, Henry Latimer and I were the first African American lawyers [in the Fort Lauderdale area]. Every one of us did pro-bono work. We filed the first desegregation cases and were involved trying to ensure people's rights. I don't see that many African American lawyers in the community helping the community. The schools are just about as segregated as they were when I filed the original school desegregation case. From a material standpoint, some of us are better off, but from the standpoint of inadequate housing, inadequate jobs and inadequate educational opportunities too many of us are left behind, and you know something, they are likely to be left behind in perpetuity.

**WL: You were recently diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. We'd be remiss if we didn't ask about your health. How are you doing?**

AH: I'm doing good. The doctors say the tumor is quiet, and my position is as long as it stays quiet and I can be noisy, then I'm going to do okay. I was moved from the intravenous chemotherapy to taking oral chemotherapy, and I'm tolerating it extremely well. I feel good. My energy level is increasing and I'm able to do my job, which is key to it all. I feel good and I'm going to run [for re-election]. However, if I'm not closer to the tumor staying quiet and being in remission, I would not subject the community to electing someone who could not do the job. I'm not that kind of person. This community has been very good to me. I wouldn't stand in the way of someone being better prepared physically.



# Stronger. Better. Brighter.

At Macy's, diversity and inclusion is more than just an initiative—it's the core of who we are. We embrace and celebrate our differences and recognize that they make us stronger together.

That's why we are proud to support events like the Women of Color Conference.





**GENES NO ONE SHOULD INHERIT.  
CAMPAIGN FOR NEWBORN SCREENING.**

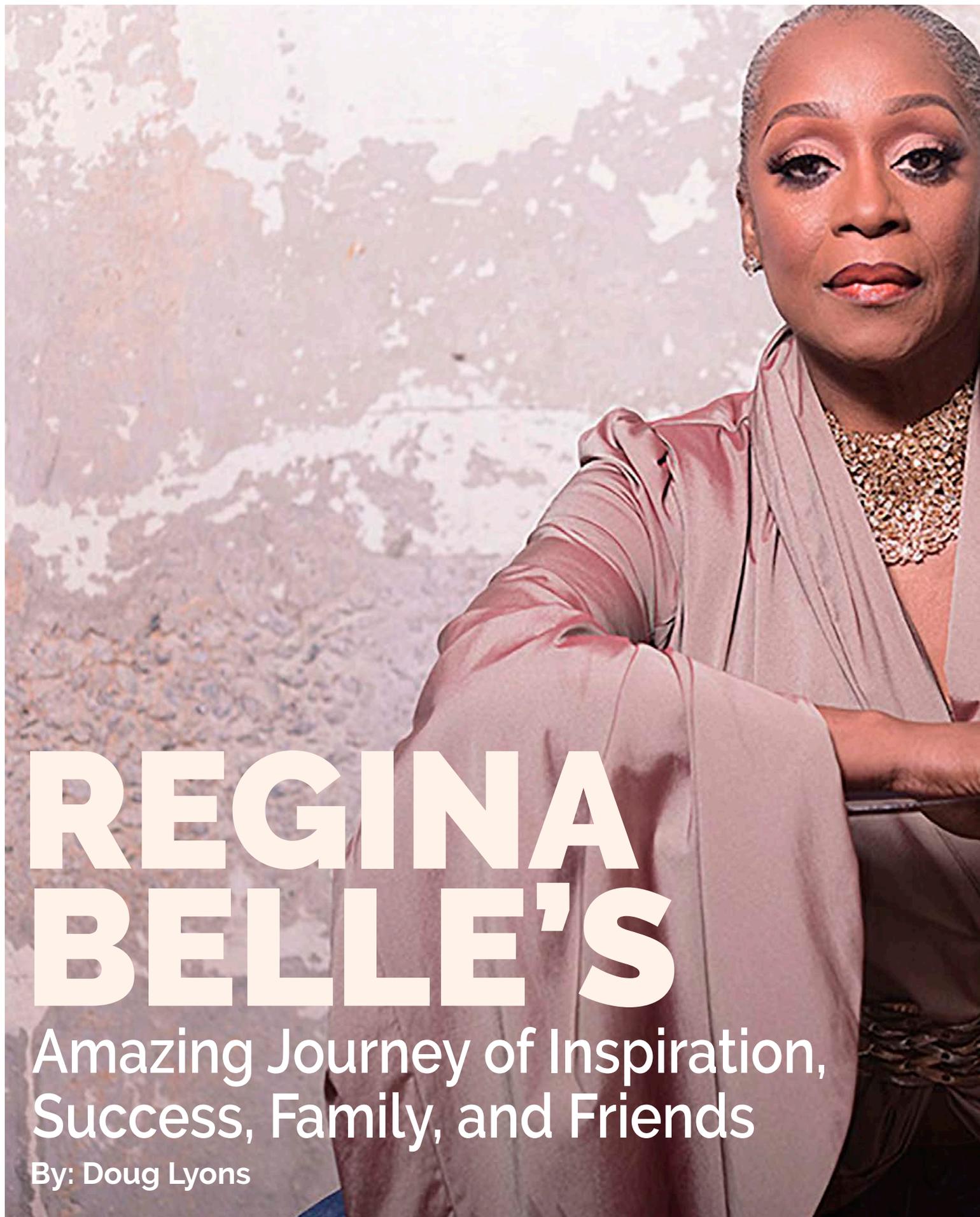
There are more than 2 million people in the US diagnosed with Sickle Cell Trait and more than 100,000 people with Sickle Cell Disease. By recognizing and treating this inherited blood disorder at an early age, we can increase the life expectancy in children by a staggering 98%\*. At The Foundation for Sickle Cell Disease Research we provide medical services and research to patients and families living with Sickle Cell Disease daily. If you or a loved one suffer from Sickle Cell Disease contact us at **954 397 3251** or email **info@fscdr.org**.

**HELP US BUILD OUR INNOVATIVE, STATE-OF-THE-ART RESEARCH & TREATMENT FACILITY.  
DONATE TODAY AT [FSCDR.ORG](http://FSCDR.ORG)**

THE FOUNDATION FOR  
**SICKLE CELL  
DISEASE  
RESEARCH**

**CHANGE  
THE CONVERSATION.**

**RESHAPE  
THE FUTURE.**



# REGINA BELLE'S

Amazing Journey of Inspiration,  
Success, Family, and Friends

By: Doug Lyons



Ask Regina Belle for advice or a bit of inspiration, and she'll probably say something like this: "I'd like the women to leave with the understanding of who and whose we are. We are God's individually and uniquely made vessels who pack a way more powerful punch when we stand unified to help and serve each other."

You'd almost expect that from a one-time sultry songstress turned ordained minister who back in the day once sat at the feet of Nancy Wilson and Freda Payne, soaking up every tidbit about the music industry before working her way up from a back-

ground singer with the Manhattans to a breakout star, with hits like Baby Come to Me, Make It Like It Was and This Is Love.

There is, however, far more to the inspiration than cranking hit records and winning multiple Grammy Awards and an Academy Award she shared with Peabo Bryson for the song "A Whole New World" in the Disney animated film Aladdin. There were trials and tribulations in what to many appeared to be a charmed life. The most devastating occurring in 2008 shortly after the release of her first gospel album, Love Forever Shines. "I battled two brain surgeries within six months of each other, and this illness threatened my life," Ms. Belle said.

Born in Englewood, N.J., Ms. Belle grew up in a home where, as she told EBONY magazine, "something that was involuntary": singing. Her parents sang in the church choir, as did many of her relatives. As a youngster, Regina enjoyed singing gospel and popular R&B hits as early as age three. Her appreciation for music continued through Dwight Morrow High School and the Manhattan School of Music for Preparatory College, where she studied classical voice training.

Upon completing high school, Ms. Belle decided to attend Rutgers University, where she studied Africana Studies and Music. As fate would have it, she got her big break during her senior year in college when a radio disc jockey gave her name to the manager of the Manhattans, which led to a recording contract and a tour with the group. She would return to Rutgers almost 30 years and 10 albums later to finish school and receive her degree.

Ms. Belle is currently married to John Battle III, a former NBA player who is now Senior Pastor of the New Shield Faith Worship Center in Atlanta, Ga., and Spread the Word Ministries in College Park, Ga. Ms. Belle, an ordained minister, serves as First Servant and Minister of Music at the two churches. The couple has raised five children and now has three grandchildren.

For the most part, life has been very good to Ms. Belle. While the discovery of the brain tumor that resulted in two surgeries and 10 months of rehabilitation may have tested her faith, the power of the support she received from family and friends pulled her through. "The positivity and support of my family, husband, parents, kids, and especially my niece, Asia, who moved from New York to Atlanta to help care for me, were incredible," she recalls. "They would allow me to cry but absolutely no pity parties. My manager, Ivy Taylor, helped me get back to an even better version of myself, and for that I am eternally grateful."

The support Ms. Belle received during her health crisis is similar to the encouragement she often heard during her singing career. At one point, she wondered if she still "had

it," a doubt that occurred just as her first contract with Sony Records was about to expire. In the spirit of true 'sisterhood,' her old friend Nancy Wilson stepped up with some sage advice.

"She told me that if it's in you, you have to fight so that it can take the stage," Ms. Belle said. "I took that piece of advice and ran with it. I began to understand that my gift was my validation, not my contract."

Ms. Belle has been on track ever since. With the release of her latest album, *The Day Life Began*, she continues to affirm that her journey is a testimony of accomplishment and inspiration that comes with and from the love of others. As she put it: "I draw strength from knowing that I'm operating within the purpose of my life, and I'm having a ball doing it."





# Let's raise expectations of what our community can be.

Join Comerica Bank in supporting our community.  
As a proud sponsor, together we can raise expectations  
of how great our community can be.



RAISE YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

MEMBER FDIC. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER.

---

# Austin Pamies

---



---

# Norris Weeks

---

LLC  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



EXPERIENCE • INTEGRITY • RESULTS

- COMMERCIAL
- CORPORATE
- LITIGATION
- GOVERNMENT
- PERSONAL INJURY

The attorneys at Austin Pamies Norris Weeks, LLC are an established and respected group of legal professionals dedicated to providing exceptional legal services. We operate with the highest degree of integrity and professional commitment to addressing the legal needs of our clients. We are experienced solution-oriented attorneys and litigators. Contact us today to discuss your legal needs.



**Austin Pamies Norris Weeks, LLC.**

401 North Avenue of The Arts  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311  
954-768-9770  
[www.apnwlaw.com](http://www.apnwlaw.com)

# A TALE OF TWO NEWS WOMEN

& 400  
YEARS



*"The essence of oligarchical rule is not father-to-son inheritance, but the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life, imposed by the dead upon the living. A ruling group is a ruling group so long as it can nominate its successors."*

*-- Author George Orwell in "1984", published in 1949*

**By: Kathy Eggleston**

George Orwell would be proud. It's been another challenging year for the patriarchy thanks to courageous women leaders across the country from all walks of life. From Congressional freshmen women who won't be silenced, to new leadership in corporate board rooms scared straight by #metoo, many of this year's great women's leadership stories have been widely covered. Two stories in particular, perhaps a little less covered, really inspired me this year.

The media industry began the year on high note with Susan Zirinsky becoming the first female president of CBS News. Zirinsky has been with the network for 45 years and is widely credit-

ed as the model for the witheringly smart news producer character portrayed by actress Holly Hunter in the 1987 film "Broadcast News." Yes, I said 1987. By the way, the film was nominated for seven Academy Awards. I humbly ask: what must a woman superlative enough to inspire a blockbuster film about how she does her job have to do, not to be passed over for the top spot until 32 years after the movie?

Still, chief executive positions often come carrying perilous risks for women. In an interview following Zirinsky's promotion, former editor of USA Today Joanne Lipman discussed research on the "glass cliff" showing that women often

are only invited to top leadership when a company is in crisis, such as the historic ratings woes and #metoo issues at the aforementioned network. The research also showed that new women CEO's are often given little time for the turnaround, but a full measure of the blame.

Regardless of the challenge, in many industries like media, the importance of accepting these roles is bigger than personal achievement. According to Lipman, while women comprise over 60 percent of journalism and communications majors, once in the workplace 75 percent of television news anchors are male. In print and digital news men retain the majority of front page placements. What does that mean? In numerical terms today, says Lipman, "More than 75 percent of the experts we quote in the media are male." Do you notice any correlation in the numbers in this paragraph? As Orwell wrote in 1984, it ensures "the persistence of a certain world-view."

Nikole Hannah-Jones has no intention of supporting "the persistence of a certain world-view." Hannah-Jones is the New York Times reporter, editor and conceiver of "The 1619 Project." In newsrooms and communications departments all over the nation there are cultivated resource lists of important national holidays, anniversaries, events and commemoratives, along with days, weeks or months interest groups have staked out to highlight their own narratives. National Hot Dog Day, anyone? But Hannah-Jones found no mention of 1619 on any of the 'important dates to plan stories' lists at her own paper or... anywhere.

What is 1619 to us? It is the date 400 years ago that the first 20 Africans were brought to Virginia in bondage, for the purpose that they and their descendants would be worked as enslaved chattel, subject to be bought or sold for the economic benefit of their enslavers, at will or at whim, in perpetuity, forever.

With all of four years' tenure at the Times, this young African American investigative journalist decided the story of this anniversary must be told with a breadth of coverage, a depth of reportage and a cultural integrity commensurate with its centrality to the story of the United States. No, no advocacy groups were demand-

ing the coverage. No, no other national news outlets seemed to think this was our most historically significant anniversary since the Bicentennial. Thanks to Hannah-Jones's vision and leadership, on Google search's page one, the minimalist historic American enslavement story "imposed by the dead upon the living" as Orwell would say, will give way to a thought-provoking new exploration from the Times.

At this writing, oligarchs' heads are, figuratively, exploding over the audacity of The 1619 Project to place the story of African peoples in America at the center of our democracy, as well as the piece's reframing of the very language we use to describe what happened. I will not tell you about the substance of the many articles and essays in the piece because no justice could be done to it here. I simply implore you to read it. All of it.

Just two more points. First, Hannah-Jones required the writers on The 1619 Project not to use the terms "slaves" and "slave owners," a change respected scholars have advocated for years. Instead, her writers were to use "enslaved Africans," "enslavers," or the like. Language matters. Humans are fathers and sisters and friends. Humans are not slaves, though they may become enslaved. And the term slave owner is a passive term for a willful choice. It feels different to say, "Twelve U.S. presidents were slave owners" than to say "Twelve U.S. presidents were enslavers." After reading The 1619 Project, I will never use the terms slaves or slave owners again.

Secondly, I am not a Times subscriber, so the way I learned about The 1619 Project was from an interview Nikole Hannah-Jones did with newly named lead anchor of CBS This Morning, Gayle King and team. I think the other morning shows had stars dancing or some such that day (not hating, just sayin'). King will exert increased influence over the show's content, no doubt understanding the importance of stories like this, and was selected for the post by... Susan Zirinsky.

Sisters Rising Together can come in all ages, shapes, sizes and colors. If Orwell were here, I'd tell him I have a pretty good idea for a new media leadership succession plan.

**BROWARD COUNTY ALUMNAE CHAPTER  
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.**

# *Congratulations*

**ON YOUR 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**WE WISH YOU CONTINUOUS SUCCESS**



*Sisterhood • Scholarship • Service*

# 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE AGENDA

FORT LAUDERDALE MARRIOTT HARBOR BEACH RESORT AND SPA

<b>Friday, September 13, 2019</b>	
<b>12:00 PM</b> Caribbean Ballroom Foyer	<b>Registration</b>
<b>4:00 PM</b> Caribbean Ballroom	<b>Leadership Masterclass</b> <i>Learn from experts how to constructively collaborate, leverage influence, navigate workplace conflict and drive change when change is needed.</i> <b>Moderated by:</b> Kathy Eggleston, Founding Director, Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. <b>Panelists:</b> Jocelyn Carter-Miller, President, TechEdVentures and SoulTranSync Susie Levan, Susie Levan and Associates, Inc. Yvette Miley, Senior Vice President, NBC News and MSNBC
<b>5:30 PM</b> Caribbean Ballroom	<b>Karen Hunter "Unplugged"</b> <i>Spend an evening with Karen Hunter, Sirius XM Radio Host, as we hear about her rise to national prominence, interviews with her most interesting guests and exactly what makes her tick. Nothing will be off limits for this hard-hitting interview where the tables will be turned and the focus will be on Hunter</i> <b>Moderated by:</b> Shirlyon McWhorter, Certified Speaker and Trainer, Motivate Worldwide
<b>7:00 PM - 9:00 PM</b> Caribbean Ballroom	<b>Opening POWER Reception</b> <i>Join us for an evening of <b>Building Relationships and Uniting Leaders</b> all while enjoying upbeat music, delicious food, African Drummers and more!</i>

<b>Saturday, September 14, 2019 - Youth Ambassadors Program</b>	
<b>All Youth Sessions</b> in Salon 7	<b>Tech Girls in Action</b> <i>Young Ambassadors will attend workshops tailor-made for young ladies interested in STEAM career paths. Throughout the day, the girls will be exposed to dynamic, influential, accomplished leaders who will impart seeds of wisdom.</i>
<b>8:40 AM</b>	<b>Youth Session #1 - Money Matters</b> <i>Basic money management skills, tips for financing education</i> <b>Led by:</b> Delores McKinley
<b>9:40 AM</b>	<b>Youth Session #2 - Introduction to STEAM careers/YouthSpark</b> <i>Defining STEM careers, introduction to females in the STEM career world, panel discussion, Q&amp;A.</i> <b>Led by:</b> Microsoft and Opal Wagnac
<b>11:10 AM</b>	<b>Youth Session #3 - Make Hustle Happen</b> <i>Turning your hobby or social cause into cash. More and more youth are entering the world of entrepreneurship and social change. What's your passion? How to monetize your ideas?</i> <b>Led by:</b> Microsoft and Jahne King
<b>1:45 PM</b>	<b>Youth Session #4 - The Importance of Etiquette in the Social Media Age/Social Issues</b> <i>Teens today don't communicate in traditional ways, so they are not always as exposed to the social etiquette norms of decision makers in the workforce or during the college application process. This interactive session will allow girls to ask questions about real-world issues.</i> <b>Led by:</b> Ava Gay Hue, Esq., Anne Casmir and Danielle Spradley, Esq.
<b>3:05 PM</b>	<b>Youth Session #5 - Technology/Creative Session</b> <i>Making a functional video game: coding and integration of art and music and more.</i> <b>Led by:</b> Microsoft



**Adult Saturday**  
September 14, 2019  
Agenda on the  
next page 

# 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE AGENDA

FORT LAUDERDALE MARRIOTT HARBOR BEACH RESORT AND SPA

**Saturday, September 14, 2019**

**7:00 AM**  
Caribbean Ballroom Foyer

**Saturday Registration**

**8:15 AM**  
Oceanfront Ballroom

**Breakfast and Recognition of Sponsors and Community Partners**

**HOT TOPICS**

**Mental Health and You**

*Mental health will be front and center as we bring together top-level mental health professionals to discuss how to combat the stigmatization of treatment and why suffering in silence is no longer acceptable. Finding balance can be challenging, but these leaders give insight.*

**Moderated by:** Michelle Austin Pamies, Esq., Principal, Austin Pamies Norris Weeks, LLC

**Panelists:** Edwina H. Bell, MD, Psychologist, President, Bell Psychological Services, Inc.  
Steven Ronik, Ed.D., Chief Executive Officer, Henderson Behavioral Health  
Delvena R. Thomas, MD, Psychiatrist, Founder, DRT Brain Love Foundation

**Unconscious Bias: Breaking Through Unspoken Barriers to Advancement**

*This session is designed to enlighten you on how certain biases impact the criminal justice system, health care, education, contracting and employment. Learn the impact of bias and how to minimize biases in order to advance.*

**Moderated by:** Jibrielle Polite, Executive Director, Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc

**Panelists:** Adamma DuCille, Assistant Director of Training and Capacity Building, CSC of Broward  
Barbara Chieves, CEO of Converge & Associates, Trainer for the Racial Equity Institute, Inc.  
Keisha Grey, Ed.D., Strategy Manager, CSC of Broward  
Melody Vanoy, SE Regional Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Trinity Health

**Q&A ON HOT TOPICS**

**Leadership: Turning Tragedy into Triumph with Ilyasah Shabazz**

**10:50 AM**

**MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS** (concurrent sessions – choose one)

Session **A-1**  
Salon 4

**Thriving in a Male Dominated Environment: Managing Men in the Workplace**

*Learn how women can work with men in a male dominated environment to achieve respect and success. Recognize the spoken and unspoken rules of engagement.*

**Moderated by:** Rebekah Ratliff, President, Capital City Mediations, LLC

**Panelists:** Juanita Britton, Founder, BZB International, Inc.  
Daphne E. Jones, CEO, Destiny Transformations Group  
Jeanine Lewis, Senior Director of Brand and Media, Office Depot, Inc.

Session **A-2**  
Salon 5

**Leading in the Age of Technology**

*This session will assist you in transforming your ideas into practical, usable and scalable solutions in the digital age. This session will also assist you in learning what's hot in technology, such as WOCEI's Online tool, Tell-A-Professional.*

**Moderated by:** Camila Morrison, Founder and President, CGM IT Group, LLC

**Panelists:** Aliya R. Aaron, CEO and Principal, AMR Healthcare Consulting, LLC  
Allan Daisley, Managing Director of Startupbootcamp, Digital Health SCALE  
Tia Dubuisson, Co-Founder and President, Belle Fleur Technologies

Session **A-3**  
Salon 6

**Becoming An Executive: Strategies to Achieve a Leadership Role in Any Organization**

*An Executive Coach and organizational leaders share their effective strategies that allow you to achieve in any environment.*

**Moderated by:** Lisa Orbe-Austin, PhD, Dynamic Transitions Psychological Consulting LLP

**Panelists:** Tawanna Black, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Center for Economic Inclusion  
Tricia McDermott-Thompkins, Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Perry Ellis

**12:00 PM**  
Oceanfront Ballroom

**POWER LUNCHEON: "Girlfriends Rising Together"**

**Grande Mistress of Ceremonies:** Terri Crook, Comedian, Entertainer and Television Producer

**Blessing:** Judge Iona M. Holmes

**Entertainer:** Kim Hawthorne, Entrepreneur, Speaker, Activist, known for role as Kerissa Greenleaf on OWN's "Greenleaf"

**Who am I? Discover Your African Ancestry**

Dr. Gina Paige, Co-Founder, African Ancestry, Inc

**Girlfriends Rise in Technology**

Janeen Uzzell, Chief Operating Officer, Wikimedia Foundation

**Special Remarks from Founders**

Michelle Austin Pamies, Kathy Eggleston and Burnadette Norris-Weeks

# 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE AGENDA

FORT LAUDERDALE MARRIOTT HARBOR BEACH RESORT AND SPA

<p><b>1:30 PM</b> Session B Oceanfront Ballroom</p>	<p><b>Full Group Session</b></p> <p><b>“Girlfriends Rising Together”</b> <i>Explore how women of color can rise together to be an effective force for change.</i> <b>Moderated by:</b> Traci Cloyd, On-Air Personality, Hot 105 FM <b>Panelists:</b> Golden Brooks, NAACP Image Award Recipient, Best known for her role as Maya Wilkes in “Girlfriends” Cocoa Brown, Comedian, Actress and Producer Kim Hawthorne, Entrepreneur, Speaker, Activist, known for role as Kerissa Greenleaf on OWN’s “Greenleaf”</p> <p><b>Q &amp; A ON FULL GROUP SESSION B</b></p>
<p><b>2:50 PM</b></p> <p>Session C-1 Salon 4</p> <p>Session C-2 Salon 5</p> <p>Session C-3 Salon 6</p>	<p><b>AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b> (<i>concurrent sessions – choose one</i>)</p> <p><b>Beautiful, Successful, Educated and Single</b> <i>This fun-filled session will explore the realities of looking for love for leaders of color.</i> <b>Moderated by:</b> Cathy Jerome, Senior Manager, Marketing Planning, Office Depot, Inc. <b>Panelists:</b> Samantha Bryant, On-Air Reporter, WPLG Local 10 News Miami Dr. Cassandra ‘Coach Cass’ Henriquez, Founder, The Real Love Network Ngum Suh, Founder and CEO, NLS Consulting, LLC</p> <p><b>Social Justice in America: When They See Us</b> <i>This panel will explore cultural competency and best practices for de-escalating dangerous situations when interacting with law enforcement. A long-time prosecutor, police chief and a judge each will share insight and instructional information designed create awareness and train others.</i> <b>Moderated by:</b> Brendalyn Edwards, Esq., President, Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association <b>Panelists:</b> Don L. Horn, Esq., Chief Assistant State Attorney, Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office Judge Jackie Powell, Circuit Court Judge, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit of Florida Chief Dexter Williams, Chief of Police, City of West Palm Beach</p> <p><b>Financial Health Is Your Business</b> <i>This panel will address everything from determining your investment personality and improving your credit score to preparing for retirement.</i> <b>Moderated by:</b> Dr. Simone D. Arnold, Vice President, Network Rules Operations Strategy, Fiserv <b>Panelists:</b> Alix Alexis, CFP®, CPFA, Financial Advisor, Senior Portfolio Advisor, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management Shani Curry St. Vil, Personal Finance Expert Clover Lawrence, Vice President, Senior Program Manager, Wells Fargo Doreen Robinson, Business Banking Manager, PNC Bank</p>
<p><b>4:00 PM</b> Caribbean Ballroom Foyer</p>	<p><b>WRAP-UP PARTY FOR WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE, INC., MENTEES</b> <i>Don’t miss this end of day celebration filled with sisterly joy, dancing and friendship.</i></p>

<p><b>Sunday, September 15, 2019</b></p>	
<p><b>6:15 AM</b> Hotel Main Lobby</p>	<p><b>Sunrise Walk by The Sea</b></p>
<p><b>8:00 AM</b> Caribbean Ballroom Foyer</p>	<p><b>Mimosas and Shopping</b></p>
<p><b>8:30 AM</b> Oceanfront Ballroom</p>	<p><b>SPIRIT OF SISTERHOOD BREAKFAST</b> <b>Keynote Speaker:</b> Regina Belle, Grammy Award-Winning Singer-Songwriter and Actress. Featuring Fashion Show by Macy’s</p>





**WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS NAME OR IF RETIRED, FORMER AREA OF WORK OR PROFESSION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIPCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS WEBSITE, IF APPLICABLE: \_\_\_\_\_

AREA(S) OF INTEREST AS EMPOWERMENT TOPIC(S) : \_\_\_\_\_

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER AT THE WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE? : \_\_\_\_\_

IF SO, WHAT DAYS ARE YOU AVAILABLE ? : \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP**

- MENTION AT THE NEXT WOMEN OF COLOR CONFERENCE AS MEMBER
- VIP SEATING FOR CERTAIN WOMEN OF COLOR EVENTS
- UPDATES ON IMPORTANT ISSUES AFFECTING WOMEN OF COLOR IN THE TRI-COUNTY AREA AND NATIONALLY
- SPECIAL MENTION IN SELECT WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE MAGAZINE PUBLICATIONS
- GREATER AWARENESS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO FORGE NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER LEADERS
- NOTICE OF FORUMS THAT CAN SERVE AS CATALYSTS FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE
- NOTICE OF PERIODIC LUNCH OR DINNER MEETINGS

**PAYMENT OPTIONS**

- CHECK ENCLOSED (WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE, INC.)
- 
- PLEASE CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD IN THE AMOUNT OF : \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 

(CIRCLE ONE) AMEX | MASTERCARD | VISA | ON FILE |

EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form and your BUSINESS CARD, if applicable, to:  
Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc.  
2219 Sistrunk Blvd (NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street) Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311  
Attention: Jibrielle Polite  
954.900.3494 (Phone) 954.768.9790 (fax)  
Website: southfloridawomenofcolor.com



Reserve your participation by August 25, 2020 to ensure inclusion in program materials. For more information visit the website at [www.SouthFloridaWomenofColor.com](http://www.SouthFloridaWomenofColor.com)

**FOR PURCHASE OF SPONSORSHIP LEVELS**

PRESENTING TITLE SPONSOR (\$15,000)

EMERALD SPONSOR (\$2,500)

DIAMOND SPONSOR (\$10,000)

SAPPHIRE SPONSOR (\$1,200)

RUBY SPONSOR (\$5,000)

TOPAZ SPONSOR (\$750)

**FOR PURCHASE OF WOMEN LEAD MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT**

Full Page (\$500)

Organization/Individual Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Please Circle One:  CHECK  MONEY ORDER  CASHIER'S CHECK

Credit Card # (Visa, MasterCard, Amex): \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV#: \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE, INC.  
 401 NORTH AVENUE OF THE ARTS (NW 7<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE)  
 FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33311  
 PHONE: (954) 768i 9770 (954) 900i 3494  
 FAX: (954) 768i 9790  
 SOUTHFLORIDAWOMENOFCOLOR.COM  
 PLEASE RETURN SPONSORSHIP ACCEPTANCE /AD ART WORK BY AUGUST 25, 2020



---

# GIRLFRIENDS RISING TOGETHER

---

**By: Cocoa Brown**

I have always been very big on sisterhood. Very big on queens recognizing queens. Queens supporting queens. I've never understood the whole "hating" mentality or cattiness amongst women, because everyone knows there is strength in numbers.

When they came up with the term 'Black Girl Magic' I was ecstatic! I wondered, "Where did this wonderful term come from?" I was so glad to see that we'd finally become intentional in embracing our beauty as black women, because when we support each other and look out for one another we can accomplish so much together.

You can see it more and more in the world of entrepreneurship. Sisters are one of the fastest growing groups of entrepreneurs and business owners. Why? It comes from having the understanding that at the end of the day you've got your girls. The sense of power coming from knowing your girls, your ride-or-dies, your crew have your back is like no other. I was fortunate in high school to have a crew that to this day, 30 years later, still has that ride or die mentality.

When I got married all except one of my bridesmaids had known me for 25+ years. We've all supported each other and watched each other rise up in all of our personal endeavors and in all of our own careers. We speak life and encouragement into one another. We've also been that rock, that voice of reason, that "SNAP OUT OF IT!" when we've all gone through tough and heartbreaking times. A community of support

not only in business but in all relationships is so crucial amongst Black women because if you're not supported by your own, it makes you leery of being supported by others.

I've always said if women came together and made a pact, we would no longer allow ourselves to be disrespected, negated or treated as less than by men. I think men would get their acts together and truly realize the blessing it is to have a Black Queen by their side. But as long as we remain divided, the age-old saying stands true: There's power in numbers, but a house divided is a house that's folded.

We have so many powerful examples of women rising together: the Oprahs, the Michelle Obamas, the Viola Davises, but we also know that we are a sisterhood even if we are silent. We don't have to know one another. When we see another sister rising, we should be proud because she's part of our tribe. It's so important to uplift our tribe. When we see another sister winning, she should know she has support because she is part of a collective group; a group rises together and fights together.

The beautiful community of girlfriends, my sisterhood, my tribe rising together is one that I am blessed and honored to be part of.

By: Dr. Gina Paige

# Being our Best SELVES

## ROOTS • IDENTITY • ACTUALIZATION

I am in the business of being Black and I love it! I have spent practically every day of the past 16 years educating Black people about the power of taking ownership of their identities. Undoing the negative impact of 400 years is a daunting, yet imperative task. Too many of us move through life with no connection to the power of our Blackness. After years of helping people unlock their genetic connection to their African past, I am absolutely convinced that we can and must control our narratives in order to thrive. In my role at AfricanAncestry.com, I've observed three core themes that limit us as Black women:

1. We look at ourselves through the lens of others, particularly as women.
2. Mainstream influences – magazines, music, movies and TV – teach us how we should look, what we should eat, how we are to carry ourselves, and so on.
3. For 400 years, everyone around us has imprinted who we should be. And none of those influences place value on who we really are, the daughters of Africa.

As a Black woman, business owner and cultural identity expert, I know that a vital part in overcoming these barriers lies within our DNA. I offer these actionable tips that will help us rise together by better understanding who we are:

**Be Intentional About You.** Continually explore who you are...your true self, not who you've been taught to be or who you think you should be. When we make this a priority, we can truly mine ourselves for our innate gifts. For some, this might take a good bit of 'being still,' overcoming fears and self-reflection. There is no right way to root yourself, but you must do it to free your passions and better understand your path. For me, along with going inside, finding my roots was essential. Becoming an industry pioneer, successfully growing my company and ultimately becoming a cultural voice for Black people all – in some way – can be traced to my learning that I share ancestry with the Fulani and Hausa people of Nigeria and the Kru people of Liberia.

**Africa is Your Girl...** [Get to Know Her!](#) Think about the pride we take in being from Brooklyn, DC or Chicago's Southside, etc. Listen to the roars in stadiums and arenas for the teams that represent where we're from. Now, when was the last time you shouted 'Go Cameroon' or self-identified in any way with Africa? Why not? ... you're just as much African as you are American. Make it your business to know her. A good place to start is your country and ethnic group of origin, but any and all of Africa is a part of us. Write down the negative things you've been taught to believe about the Motherland. Then counter that with a list of things you learn by getting to know



her better. Promote her amongst your friends and peer groups. Share 'Did You Knows' via your social networks. Designate family time to study and learn about every country on the Continent. Do something big or small in your world of influence to enlighten yourself and others around you. When we remove negative perceptions of Africa ... we remove negative perceptions of self.

**Mom Holds the Key.** Much like in American society today, African families were run by women – mothers and grandmothers. Our mothers hold the biological and environmental link to becoming the Black women we are meant to be. There are distinct traits, mores and behaviors that we get from our mother and that she got from her mother, and so on. As we focus on the futures of our Black daughters, we must also look back to the wisdoms of our AFRICAN mothers thousands of years ago. A mother's love, courage, strength and spirit are all in the DNA.

**Help A Sister Out.** Be intentional about surrounding yourself with woke Black women (and men). Be down with folks that are down with enhancing the African American experience. My entire AfricanAncestry.com team is Black and mostly women. Even my mother (and father), has a role in the company. And I intentionally



align the company with a significant number of Black-women-owned partners, vendors and the like. I do the same in my personal life. You don't have to own a business to incorporate positive, empowering Black influences into your personal and professional networks. Your innate connection to Africa is a wonderful gift. Use it to the max to create the life/world that you want.

## ABOUT DR. GINA PAIGE

*As the leading Black female authority on genetics ancestry tracing for people of color, business owner and cultural identity expert, Dr. Paige shares wisdoms on culture, empowerment and community through the lens of Black identity. Dr. Paige uses her platform to educate, uplift and inspire groups of all sizes including women's groups, top corporations, community groups, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, family events and faith-based organizations, among others. She's been tapped for keynotes, presentations, workshops, panels, talks, etc., leading lively sessions on topics from genetics ancestry tracing and heritage travel to Black identity and cultural and historical nuances that provoke new thought on who we are in today's America. Her engagements are typically coupled with AfricanAncestry.com's proprietary 'Ancestral Reveals,' which are ceremonial unveilings of participants' African roots. The*

*New York Times Travel Show, Wall Street Journal Health Forum, Chula Vista TEDx, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Planned Parenthood, Broward County Public Schools and The Walt Disney Company are among Paige's most recent engagements. Visit [www.GinaPaige.com](http://www.GinaPaige.com) to book Dr. Paige.*

## ABOUT AFRICAN ANCESTRY

*Founded in 2003, African Ancestry Inc. (AfricanAncestry.com) pioneered African lineage matching in the United States utilizing its proprietary DNA-database to more accurately assess present-day countries of origin for people of African descent. African Ancestry's products include the MatriClan™ and PatriClan™ ancestry tests and customized memorabilia and informative resources. African Ancestry is Black-owned and headquartered in Washington, DC. For general media inquiries, contact Nichole Taylor at [taylor@taylorcommunicationsgroup.com](mailto:taylor@taylorcommunicationsgroup.com).*





# A RETROSPECTIVE GLANCE TO BACK TO GHANA



# Get the point-of-sale device that can help turn your dream into a reality

**You're a leader with big plans for the road ahead. The Clover suite can help those plans pay off.**

When it comes to payment processing and improving operations, you need a solution that's all-purpose, dependable, and works as hard as you do.

With Clover, you can accept payments anywhere you are – in store, online, or on the go. Streamline your operations while automating daily tasks like managing staff, receiving online orders, processing deliveries, and more. And because one size doesn't fit all, Clover offers a full line of solutions designed to complement the unique needs of your business.

First Data proudly supports the Women of Color Empowerment Institute, which, serve as an important influencer both within our communities and nation. We're honored to help you thrive in the changing world of commerce and make the most of every transaction.



Clover Station



Clover Mini



Clover Go



Clover Flex



Clover Mobile

Join us at the **Women of Color Empowerment Conference** to learn more or simply visit us at **FirstData.com** for more information.

© 2019 First Data Corporation. All rights reserved. The Clover logo and marks are owned by Clover Network, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of First Data Corporation, and are registered or used in the U.S. and many foreign countries. All trademarks, service marks, and trade names referenced in this material are the property of their respective owners. Use of Clover requires a Merchant Processing Agreement. 568863 2019-7





# WOCEI TRAVEL CLUB

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US IN...

## MONTEGO BAY JAMAICA

DEC 13 - 15, 2019

Each year the Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. (WOCEI) offers existing members and those interested in being a part of the WOCEI sisterhood an opportunity to travel together to an exciting destination. Through our travel club, you not only can see the world, but experience, learn, and deepen friendships with like-minded women leaders.

Two years ago, we traveled to San Francisco, touring the world-famous wineries of Sonoma Valley and visiting Carmel, Monterey, Pebble Beach and Big Sur from our home base at Fisherman's Wharf. Last year we toured the country of Ghana, visiting Accra, Cape Coast, and Kokoforidua, participating in empowerment workshops and a "Shark Tank" competition for women business owners in Konko Village, Eastern Region.

We've traveled to Manhattan, NY, Charleston, SC and other interesting places in between. Where shall we go next? If you're a traveler at heart, join us for the upcoming trip to Montego Bay, Jamaica, December 13th - 15th 2019.

The Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. (WOCEI) is a 501 c (3) not for profit organization with a mission to expand and enhance leadership by women of color. We do this by producing impactful programming throughout the year geared towards professional and personal development.

**For more information about our travel club and the Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. Please call 954-900-3494.**

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

---



**TOYOTA**

**Let's  
Go  
Places**



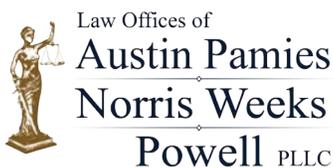
**PEPSICO**



**Office DEPOT®  
OfficeMax®**



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



---

# BURNADETTE NORRIS-WEEKS: ATTORNEY, ENTREPRENEUR & ADVOCATE

---

*The Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. has three amazing founders. This edition of Women Lead Magazine will feature Burnadette Norris-Weeks, Esquire. She's a giant killer attorney, an entrepreneur and a dynamic change for the empowerment of women everywhere. Here's insight into what makes this phenomenal "BOSS" tick.*

## **Why did you decide to become an attorney?**

Without fully realizing it at the time, I wanted to become a lawyer because the mother of a childhood friend was a lawyer. I remember always feeling a sense of empowerment whenever I had an opportunity to be around Ms. Pearl Crosby Smith, the only Black woman lawyer practicing law in Cocoa, Florida in the mid 70's. She was someone who had her own sense of style, her own law practice and was a woman who was well respected in the community. I enjoyed visiting my friend at their home, but especially enjoyed visiting Ms. Smith's law office after school on occasion. It was not until years later than I made the connection between the influence that Ms. Smith had on my eventual career choice.

## **How has your career evolved over the years?**

Fortunately, I am handling that same type of matters that I've handled for the past 29 years. I was fortunate to start my career with a boutique Tallahassee law firm that represented governmental entities, corporations, and handled serious personal injury matters. This is almost identical to the type of work that my firm handles now. In terms of size, I started my own firm in the late 90's and for many years, I was afraid to grow beyond two or three attorneys. I had an unwarranted fear that with more people there would be more headaches. I discovered, however, that

the opposite is true. Growth has allowed my firm to fully service clients and has freed me up to be laser focused when necessary. We have a great team of professionals and I love to come to work each day.

## **How do you personally try to help women following in your career path?**

When I moved to South Florida in the mid 90's, the area was very much a boy's network. The boys shared with other boys and if you joined integrated bar or community organizations, the time spent building relationships did not necessarily translate into business referrals. Things have changed a bit. More importantly, however, I've discovered that it is sometimes necessary to create your own networks. Specifically, networks that will support and foster the development of female professionals. My network happens to be the Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. Our organization offers a professional mentorship program where more seasoned professionals are paired with younger professionals for a year. Through the Institute, I've been a mentor for several young lawyers – and other professionals. It is important to me that I share important lessons learned in order to better the next generation.

**Tell us something about yourself that people would be surprised to learn.**

The beach is my favorite place on earth. I live for a few days a month when I go to the Ocean to swim. If it's a holiday and my work is done, you'll find in a chair by the sea.

**How do you balance your home life and work life?**

I often have the conversation of balance with friends who are also very busy professionals used to juggling many projects at one time. Over time, I've discovered there is no such thing as work/life balance. There is only an understanding that you will need to focus on what is most important at any given time. Whether it is work, family, friends, community volunteer work or my not-for-profit Women of Color Empowerment Institute, I focus on the demands of that day and shuffle the remainder items to another day. I've finally learned that it is fine to delegate because nobody can do it all. It's important to be surrounded by good people and not place unrealistic demands on yourself. Rather, I do whatever I am doing at any given time to the best of my ability.

**What development(s) have you been happy to see in recent years?**

When I first started practicing law there were not a lot of people of color in positions of elected leadership. Sure, you saw one or two here and there but things have changed. It is easier to compete because there are people in positions of leadership who are more willing to recognize your talents and give you opportunities if you are



qualified. This is a long needed and long awaited positive development for which I am grateful.

**What do you enjoy doing outside of work? Hobbies? Sports?**

I love to attend Miami Heat games. Whether we are winning or losing, I am a fan. I love almost any water sport. Would play more beach volleyball if I knew of others who also liked to play.

**What is your favorite quote?**

"There is only one way to avoid criticism: Do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing." --Aristotle

# WOCEI EVENTS

*Happen All Year Long!*



Member Appreciation - Spring



Leaders Connect - Summer



Leaders Connect - Summer



S.H.E Health Fair - Spring



Real Talk Dinner - Fall



Professional Development Series - Fall



Leaders are Readers - Winter

# WOCEI EVENTS

*Happen All Year Long!*



Leaders are Readers - Winter



Hear from a Superstar - Spring



Leaders Connect - Summer



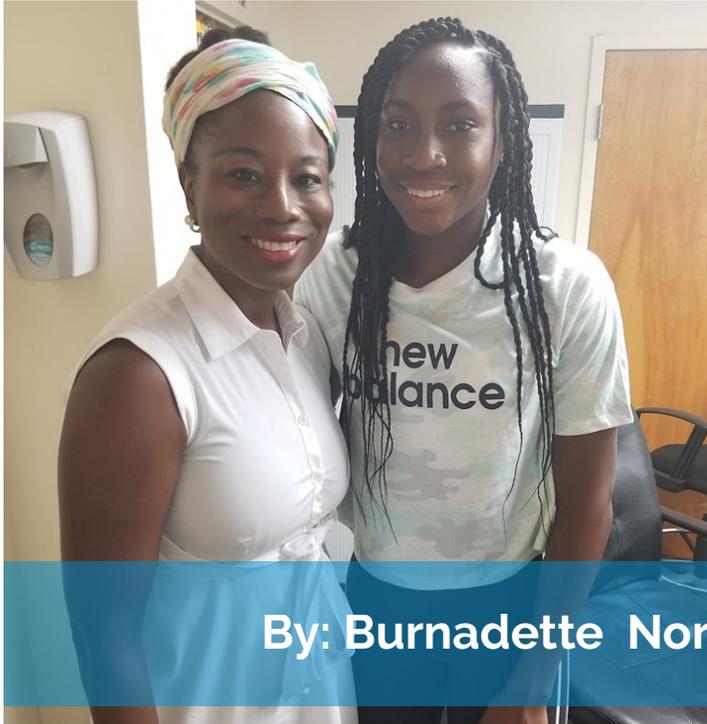
Advocates for Change - Holiday



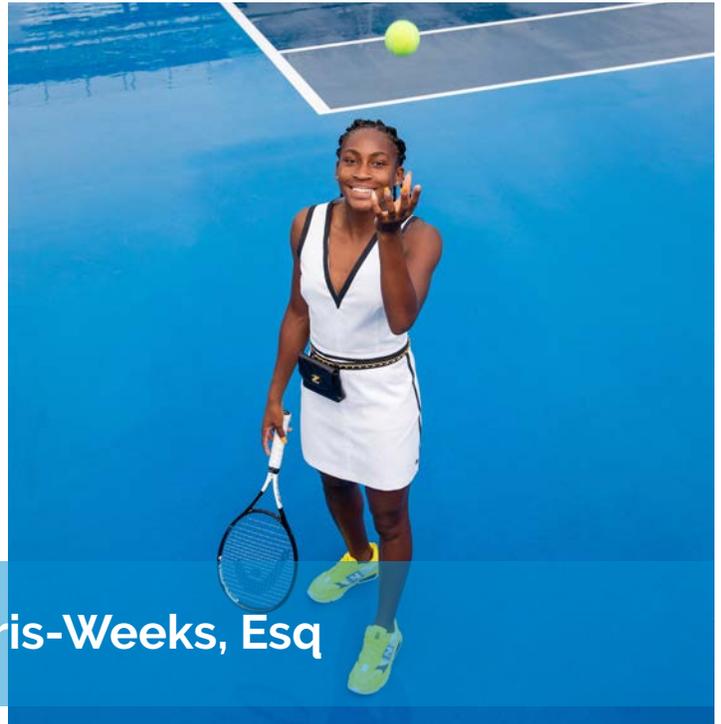
Jazz Night Out - Winter



S.H.E Health Fair - Spring



By: Burnadette Norris-Weeks, Esq



# WOMEN LEAD

## INTERVIEWS COCO GAUFF

*We recently caught up with 15-year old tennis prodigy, Coco Gauff, in her hometown of Delray Beach, Florida. The celebration was held at Pompey Park near the tennis courts where Coco still trains. Coco was fresh off her run to the fourth round at Wimbledon where she defeated her idol, Venus Williams, along the way. Coco received a heroes' reception with signs reading "Welcome Home from Wimbledon" positioned around the community gymnasium on a rainy Sunday afternoon. Hundreds gathered as members from her church, former track team pals, family, neighbors and friends all packed into a gymnasium hanging onto every word uttered by Coco. The baseball fields at the park are named after Gauff's grandfather. Coco signed autographs and mastered the media like a seasoned tennis star. Women Lead magazine was on hand to ask a few questions.*

**WL:** How did it feel walking into the gymnasium and seeing all of the people giving you a standing ovation with everyone cheering and shouting your name?

Coco: It felt amazing that so many people would come out to see me. I am super shocked and happy that the event was held here. I've been training on the courts here since I was six or seven and know this place well. There are a lot of places that this event could have been held, but this park is special for me.

**WL:** When you spoke earlier today you had a

message for everyone in the audience that even if people feel that you may not know them, you do. Why was that important for you to say?

Coco: Over the years I've seen a lot of these kids come and go at the park. Many of them are on my brother's football team or baseball team; I've seen their faces and said hi to them. I also volunteer with the Delray Beach American Baseball League and I know a lot of kids there as well. Obviously, I have not met everybody, but it was important for me to let them know that I see them. I also wanted them to know that I have

not forgotten about them.

**WL: What do you want to be known for in your community?**

Coco: I'm a fighter. No matter what, I'm a fighter and that is what I want people to know about me. I don't quit. I always want to come out on top.

**WL: You told the audience to not stop dreaming and to keep believing in yourself. What does that really mean to you?**

Coco: For me, I needed to say that because if you don't have a goal then there is no motivation and you really don't know what to do. It is important to have a goal because that can really drive you and that drive can then lead to amazing things.

**WL: Coco you clearly exude a type of confidence that many adults do not gain in their lifetime. How did you develop such confidence?**

Coco: I have a lot of support from my family. My family is my foundation and they give me confidence. They are the reason why I am able to

accomplish so many things.

**WL: What do you do in your spare time?**

Coco: I watch Netflix, play with my brothers and shop.

**WL: You have often said that the Williams sisters are your idols. As a young woman of color, how did you feel playing Venus Williams and winning?**

Coco: It was an amazing moment because having watched someone on TV for the longest time, paying to see their matches, learning from them and then meeting them is everything. Venus and Serena are my heroes. I never thought I would play them and the reason why is because I did not think that I would be on tour before they retired. It just goes to show how long their careers have lasted. They are still on top and still winning. As two Black women on the court that day, it was a very special win [against Venus]. It was surreal!



SUBSCRIBE!  
LIKE!  
TWEET!  
FOLLOW!



KEEP UP WITH US !

 @NationalWomenofColor

 @NationalWomenofColor  
@Sflwoc

 @SoFlaWomenofColor  
@sflwoc

[WWW.NATIONALWOMENOFCOLOR.COM](http://WWW.NATIONALWOMENOFCOLOR.COM)



Women of Color  
EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE INC.

# OUR 2019 WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Michelle Austin Pamies



Tracy Barnswell



Suzanne Boyd



Juanita Britton



Lorna Brown-Burton



Traci Cloyd



Candice Cobb



Terri Crook



Alison DeSouza



Kathy Eggleston



JoeAnn Fletcher



Jeanie Floyd



Ava Gaye Hue



Q'unea Gordon



Dione Gordon



Donna Guthrie



Bacardi Jackson



Cathy Jerome



Linda Jones



Marilyn Jones



Charlotte Lovely



Delores McKinley



Shirlyon McWhorter



Mia Merritt



Burnadette Norris-Weeks



Jibrielle Polite



Shelby Rushin



Damita Salters



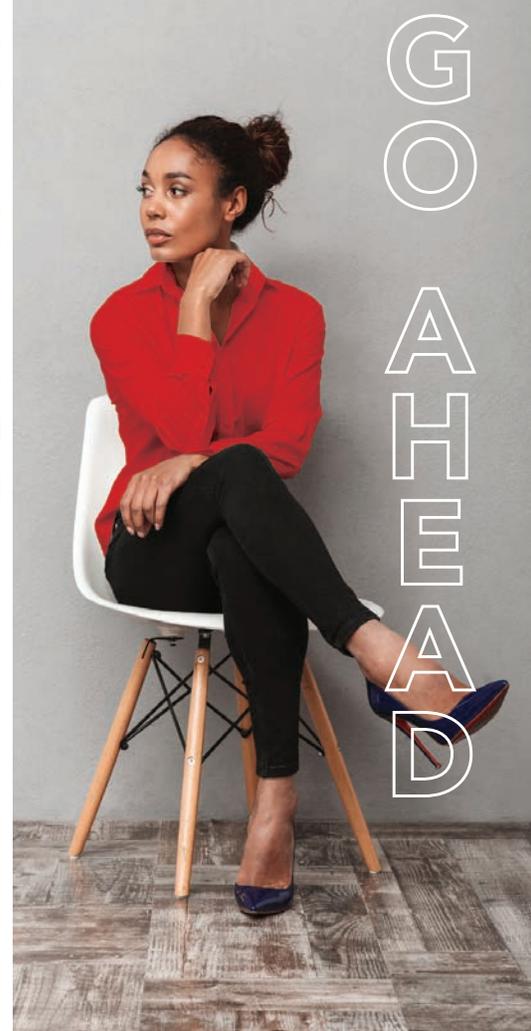
Danielle Spradley



Tina Teague

**Office DEPOT.  
OfficeMax®**

Proud Silver Sponsor



**BUILD  
YOUR  
BUSINESS**



**ACHIEVE  
YOUR  
DREAMS**



**WE'RE BEHIND  
YOU  
EVERY STEP  
OF THE WAY**



Congratulations  
to the Women of Color  
Empowerment Institute on your  
Ninth Annual Women of Color  
Empowerment Conference.



**WOMEN  
OF COLOR**  
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



***The Links,  
Incorporated***

TM

*Linked in Friendship, Connected in Service*  
***Fort Lauderdale (FL) Chapter***



# THE WOMEN OF COLOR EMPOWERMENT INSTITUTE, INC.

## 2019 CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**Adamma DuCille**  
Assistant Director of Training and Capacity Building, CSC of Broward



**Alix Alexis**  
CFP, CPFA, Financial Advisor, Senior Portfolio Advisor, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management



**Aliya R. Aaron**  
CEO and Principal, AMR Healthcare Consulting, LLC



**Allan Daisley**  
Managing Director of Startupbootcamp, Digital Health SCALE



**Barbara Chieves**  
CEO, Converge & Associates, Trainer for the Racial Equity Institute, Inc.



**Brendalyn Edwards, Esq.**  
President, Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association



**Camila Morrison**  
Founder and President, CGM IT Group, LLC



**Cathy Jerome**  
Senior Manager, Marketing Planning, Office Depot, Inc.



**Chief Dexter Williams**  
Chief of Police, City of Miramar



**Clover Lawrence**  
Vice President, Senior Program Manager, WellsFargo



**Cocoa Brown**  
Comedian, Actress and Producer



**Daphne E. Jones**  
Executive, Digital Technologies



**Delvena R. Thomas, MD**  
Psychiatrist, Founder, DRT Brain Love Foundation



**Don L. Horn, Esq.**  
Chief Assistant State Attorney, Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office



**Doreen Robinson**  
Business Banking Manager, PNC Bank



**Dr. Cassandra Henriquez 'Coach Cass'**  
Founder, The Real Love Network



**Dr. Gina Paige**  
Co-Founder, African Ancestry, Inc.



**Dr. Simone D. Arnold**  
Vice President, Network Rules Operations Strategy Fiserv



**Edwina H. Bell, MD**  
Psychologist, President, Bell Psychological Services, Inc.



**Evelyn D'An**  
President D'An Financial Services, Inc.



**Golden Brooks**  
NAACP Image Award Recipient, Actress, Best known for role as Maya Wilkes in hit show Girlfriends



**Ilysa Shabazz**  
Author, Community Organizer, Social Activist and Motivational Speaker



**Janeen Uzzell**  
Chief Operating Officer, Wikimedia Foundation



**Jeanine Lewis**  
Senior Director of Brand and Media, Office Depot, Inc.



**Jibrielle Polite**  
Executive Director, Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc.



**Jocelyn Carter-Miller**  
President, TechEdVentures, Soul TranSync



**Juanita Britton**  
Founder, BZB International, Inc.



**Judge Ilona M. Holmes**  
Former Criminal Division Circuit Court Judge, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit of Florida



**Judge Jackie Powell**  
Circuit Court Judge, Seventeenth Judicial Circuit of Florida



**Karen Hunter**  
SiriusXM Host Karen Hunter Show, Head of Talk Programming, The Urban View SiriusXM



**Kathy Eggleston**  
Managing Partner, Avenue Executive, Founding Director, Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc.



**Keisha Grey, Ed.D**  
Strategy Manager, CSC of Broward



**Kim Hawthorne**  
Entrepreneur, Public Speaker, Social Activist, Best known for role as Kerissa Greenleaf on OWN's Greenleaf



**Lisa Orbe-Austin, PhD**  
Dynamic Transitions Psychological Consulting LLP



**Melody Vanoy**  
SE Regional Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Trinity Health



**Michelle Austin Pamies, Esq.**  
Principal, Austin Pamies Norris Weeks, LLC



**Ngum Suh**  
Founder and CEO, NLS Consulting, LLC



**Rebekah Ratliff**  
President, Capital City Mediations, LLC



**Regina Belle**  
Grammy Award Winning Singer-Songwriter and Actress



**Samantha Bryant**  
On-Air Reporter, WPLG Local 10 News Miami



**Shani Curry St. Vil**  
Personal Finance Expert



**Shirlyon McWhorter**  
Certified Speaker and Trainer, Motivate Worldwide



**Steven Ronik, Ed.D**  
Chief Executive Officer, Henderson Behavioral Health



**Susie Levan**  
Susie Levan and Associates, Inc.



**Tawanna Black**  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Center for Economic Inclusion



**Terri Crook**  
Comedian, Entertainer and Television Producer



**Tia Dubuisson**  
Co-Founder and President, Belle Fleur Technologies



**Traci Cloyd**  
On-Air Personality, Hot 105 FM



**Tricia McDermott-Thompkins**  
Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Perry Ellis



**Yvette Miley**  
Senior Vice President, NBC News and MSNBC



**Burnadette Norris-Weeks, Esq.**  
Principal, Austin Pamies Norris Weeks, LLC, Founder, Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc

Your own downtown Fort Lauderdale office.  
**Only when you need it.**



Office & Meeting Space for 1 to 100 | Indoor & Outdoor Setups  
Board Room/Training Room/Dinner Events | Audio/Video/Teleconferencing

**AVENUE**   
**EXECUTIVE**  
AVENUE OF THE ARTS  
EXECUTIVE SUITES

405 N. Avenue of the Arts  
Fort Lauderdale  
(954) 681-4804

[www.AvenueExecutive.com](http://www.AvenueExecutive.com)  
[Reservations@AvenueExecutive.com](mailto:Reservations@AvenueExecutive.com)



*Burnadette Norris-Weeks, Esq. and Kathy Eggleston,  
Managing Partners*

# OUR NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD



**Paulette Brown, Esq.**  
Former President  
American Bar Association  
National Bar Association



**Jocelyn Carter-Miller**  
President  
TechEdVentures and  
SoulTranSync



**Xernona Clayton**  
Founder  
Trumpet Foundation



**Vanessa K. DeLuca**  
Brand Builder, Strategist  
and Former Essence  
Editor In Chief



**Donna Edwards**  
Member of the USHOR  
Maryland 4th District



**Cathy Hughes**  
Founder and Chairperson  
Urban One, Inc.  
(Formerly Radio One, Inc.)



**Karen Hunter**  
Radio Host, Journalist,  
Publisher and Founder,  
Party of Lincoln



**Beverly Johnson**  
Supermodel, Actress,  
Singer and Entrepreneur



**Paula Madison**  
Journalist and CEO,  
Madison Media Mgmt.



**Gina Paige**  
Founder  
African Ancestry



**Dr. Brenda Calhoun  
Snipes**  
Educator and Former  
Broward County  
Supervisor of Elections

These women are all collaborators, communicators and great role models for all women. All of these women have stellar reputations and are committed to ensuring that the next generation of women leaders is prepared for the future. Our advisory board members inspired us to start a mentorship program for young professionals. Applications for the next class of mentees will be available online starting October 2019. The Institute will select (10) women professionals who will be paired with an established professional

following an application process, including an interview. The mentors participating are leaders committed to the institute's mission to enhance and expand leadership by women of color. If you are a young professional or know of a professional under the age of 40 who is willing to be mentored, this may be the perfect empowerment program. For more information or to become a sponsor of this program go to our website: [www.nationalwomenofcolor.com](http://www.nationalwomenofcolor.com)

## CHARTER MEMBERS

These women have committed financially to the mission and goals of the Institute. Sincere thanks to the Charter Members of the Women of Color Empowerment Institute, Inc. These members have made a financial commitment to ensure that women of color can be successful in every field of endeavor through the provision of information and resources to help remove barriers, access opportunities and replicate successes.

Nancy Allen	Lisa K. Crawford	Rhoda Glasco	Marilyn M. Jones	Stefanie C. Moon	Ebony Daniels Sanon
Shirley Baker	Terri Crook	Foderingham	Cassandra E. Joseph	Burnadette Norris-Weeks	Salesia Smith-Gordon
Donne Rice Berry	Eileen Davis-Jerome	Rosalyn Frazier	Sophia Lopez	Julie Ownes	Lynn Solomon
Lanetta Bronte	Renee Davis-Prude	Vickie Frazier-Williams	Charlotte Lovely	Michelle Austin Pamies	Dinah Stephenson
Lashea Brooks	Kathy Eggleston	Phyllis Gillespie	Cynthia Martin	Andrea Pelt-Thornton	Tina Teague
Lorna E. Brown-Burton	Chetachi Egwu	Dione Gordon	Delores Y. McKinley	Brenda Powe	Marie Waugh
Anique Bryan	Yolanda English	Quenea D'Edra Gordon	Michelle Moore McNeil	Erica Ricketts	
Carmen Cain-Banner	Sonia W. Eutsey	Donna Guthrie	Shirlyon McWhorter	Brenda Rivers	
Traci Cloyd	Joe Ann Fletcher	Bacardi Jackson	Chantal Meo	Glorida Romero Roses	

“

The Bright Futures Scholarship has given me financial security. It has allowed me to truly enjoy my college experience at FAMU. Thank you, Florida Lottery!

”

– Khayah P.,  
Florida Agricultural & Mechanical  
University



*The Florida Lottery funds*  
**BRIGHT FUTURES**  
*with every ticket*

greater  
FORT LAUDERDALE  
**HELLO  
SUNNY**

Put a new spin on your  
next family adventure in  
Greater Fort Lauderdale.

Your ride begins at  
[sunny.org/reunions](http://sunny.org/reunions)



For more information contact  
Albert Tucker, Vice President  
t (954) 767-2456



VisitLauderdale



# A CELEBRATION OF SISTERHOOD.

This year, the spotlight shines brightly on you. Toyota Motor North America is proud to support the 9th Annual Women of Color Empowerment Conference. Through your accomplishments and contributions, you've helped change the world. Congratulations on your achievements and your leadership.



**TOYOTA**