



**SHOP TALK: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH CUTTING EDGE CONVERSATIONS**

**MAY 17-18, 2024**

**LR SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL**  
9715 Mabelvale Pike – Little Rock, AR 72103

# Welcome



Greetings,

The Little Rock School District (LRSD) is excited to host a Black Male Educator Summit on May 18, 2024. The theme of the summit is Shop Talk: Building Community Through Cutting Edge Conversations. We are excited you are joining us in shaping a transformative educational experience for our community.

This pivotal event aims to ignite a movement that will inspire others to step up, create, and lead initiatives across the City of Little Rock and LRSD to develop and improve outcomes for black male educators and students.

Throughout the summit, attendees will have the opportunity to hear from local and national educators who will underscore the significance of Black male educators (who make up 1.3% of teachers nationwide) in driving student achievement while attending to the holistic needs of EVERY child.

This summit will serve as a crucial platform for educators and the Little Rock community at large to address the critical need for representation and excellence in our classrooms. Through conversations, we will explore actionable strategies to foster environments where EVERY student and EVERY educator feels seen, heard, and valued.

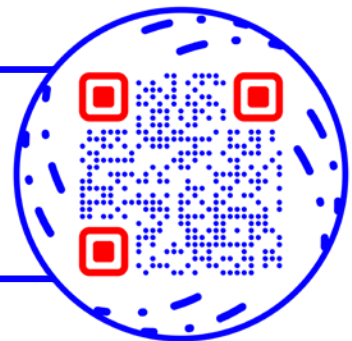
We're excited to introduce this groundbreaking educational summit to Little Rock. We believe its potentially life-changing impact will inspire and motivate attendees to make a difference in their respective communities. We look forward to seeing you!

**Dr. Jermall Wright**  
Superintendent  
Little Rock School District

**Digital Program -  
View Event Details:**

Agenda, Speaker Bios, Sponsors and More!

[www.LRSD.org/2024-BMES](http://www.LRSD.org/2024-BMES)





# AGENDA



Time	Focus	Speaker/Location
7:30 am	Registration & Breakfast	Cafeteria
8:00 am	Summit Opening	Auditorium
8:25 am	Official Opening	Leron McAdoo, LRSD Teacher
8:35 am	Welcome & Purpose	Dr. Jermall Wright, Superintendent - Little Rock School District
8:40 am	Greetings & Opening Remarks	Michael Mason, LRSD Board President Charles Blake, Southern Bancorp/Community Leader Dr. Terrence Roberts, Member of the Little Rock Nine
8:50 am	Words of Affirmation	National Park Service Superintendent, Robin White
8:55 am	Video Introduction of Keynote Speaker	
8:57 am	Keynote Address	Robert Jackson, Motivational Speaker, Former NFL Player and Classroom Teacher
9:40 am	Signature Sponsor Spotlights	Baldwin & Shell Construction, Imagine Learning, Concentric Educational Solutions
9:45 am	Introduction - Panelists for Discussion 1	Moderator Willie Brewster, Educational Redesigner & Leadership Coach Moderator
9:50 am	Panel Discussion #1 Current State of Black Males in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• George Maxey, LRSD Principal</li> <li>• Colton Gilbert, LRSD Teacher</li> <li>• Marquis Cooper, LRSD Guidance Counselor</li> <li>• Ian Roberts, Superintendent, Des Moines Public Schools (Iowa)</li> <li>• Dr. Errick Greene, Superintendent, Jackson Public Schools (Mississippi)</li> <li>• Dr. Melvin Brown, Superintendent, Montgomery Public Schools (Alabama)</li> </ul>
10:50 am	Breakout Sessions Explained	Brittany Crayton/Stefanie Vestal
<b>11:00AM – 2:15PM – BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND LUNCH</b>		
	Breakout Session A (Lunch A-Red) <i>"Bangin" in Little Rock 1994-2024: What to know about community youth violence and its implications on schooling &amp; Preventing the School-to Prison Pipeline</i>	Room 1310 • Willie Davis
	Breakout Session A (Lunch A-Red) <i>From Adversity to Achievement: The Blueprint for Successful School Leadership for Black Men</i>	Room 1308 • Rick Fowler
	Breakout Session B (Lunch B-Green) <i>Using Hip Hop Culture to Engage Today's Youth</i>	Room 1306 • Leron McAdoo, LRSD Teacher
	Breakout Session B (Lunch B-Green) <i>Black Male Educator Recruitment &amp; Retention: From an Administrative and Teacher's Perspective</i> Moderator Don Porter (Dr. Marian G. Lacey K-8 Academy)	Room 1302 • Maurice Guest, Jr. (eStem Charter School) • Kelton Ray (Cloverdale/LRSD) • Colton Gilbert (Central/LRSD) • Michael Tidwell (Parkview/LRSD) • Xavier Flowers (Central/LRSD)
	Breakout Session C (Lunch C-Blue) <i>In-Glow/Out-Flow: Black Men and Wellness</i>	Room 1300 • Willie Brewster, Education Redesigner & School Leadership Coach
	Breakout Session C (Lunch C-Blue) <i>"Effective Strategies to Engage the "Alleged" "un-Engageable" Student: Connecting the Dots Between Education and Wealth</i>	Room 1112 • Tendaji CDC • Sheila Hayes (Executive Director) • Jared Green • Brealond Simmons • Jonathan Green • DJ Thomas • Tiffany Wallace
	Breakout Session D (Lunch D-Orange) <i>Training Mental Health Heroes &amp; Sheroes in Black Barbershops</i>	Room 1110 • Lorenzo Lewis
	Breakout Session D (Lunch D-Orange) <i>Black Male Educators as Champions for Literacy</i>	Room 1108 • Patrick Oliver • Dr. Tiffeni Fontno
	Breakout Session D (Lunch D-Orange) <i>Mentoring Black Male Students 101</i>	Room 1104 • Tim Campbell
<b>2:15PM – 2:25PM – BREAK/TRANSITION TO AUDITORIUM</b>		
2:25 pm	Introduction of Panel Discussion 2 Panelists	Telly Noel, Moderator
2:30 pm	Panel Discussion #2 Black Males Educators: The Student Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kason Cain (LRSD Student)</li> <li>• Josiah Overton (LRSD Student)</li> <li>• Cameron Simmons (LRSD Student)</li> <li>• Brennan Washington (LRSD Student)</li> <li>• Omarai Williams (LRSD Student)</li> </ul>
3:30 pm	Remarks	• Mayor Frank Scott • Fred Love, State Senator
3:40 pm	Call to Action	Pastor Maurice Watson, Second Baptist Church
4:00 pm	What's next?	Ayodele Harrison, BMEs Talk Founder
4:15 pm	Special Awards and Acknowledgments	
4:30 pm	Adjourn	



# BREAKOUT SESSIONS



## Breakout Sessions: 11:00 am – 2:15 pm

Location	Focus	Presenter
RM 1310	<b>Breakout Session A (Lunch A-Red)</b> This session will not be offered during A lunch. <i>“Bangin” in Little Rock 1994-2024: What to know about community youth violence and its implications on schooling &amp; Preventing the School-to Prison Pipeline</i>	• Willie Davis
RM 1308	<b>Breakout Session A (Lunch A-Red)</b> This session will not be offered during A lunch. <i>From Adversity to Achievement: The Blueprint for Successful School Leadership for Black Men</i>	• Rick Fowler
RM 1306	<b>Breakout Session B (Lunch B-Green)</b> This session will not be offered during B lunch. <i>Using Hip Hop Culture to Engage Today’s Youth</i>	• Leron McAdoo, LRSD Teacher
RM 1302	<b>Breakout Session B (Lunch B-Green)</b> This session will not be offered during B lunch. <i>Black Male Educator Recruitment &amp; Retention: From an Administrative and Teacher’s Perspective</i> Moderator Don Porter (Dr. Marian G. Lacey K-8 Academy)	• Maurice Guest, Jr. (eStem Charter School) • Kelton Ray (Cloverdale/LRSD) • Colton Gilbert (Central/LRSD) • Michael Tidwell (Parkview/LRSD) • Xavier Flowers (Central/LRSD)
RM 1300	<b>Breakout Session C (Lunch C-Blue)</b> This session will not be offered during C lunch. <i>In-Glow/Out-Flow: Black Men and Wellness</i>	• Willie Brewster, Education Redesigner & School Leadership Coach
RM 1112	<b>Breakout Session C (Lunch C-Blue)</b> This session will not be offered during C lunch. <i>“Effective Strategies to Engage the “Alleged” “un-Engageable” Student: Connecting the Dots Between Education and Wealth</i>	• Tendaji CDC • Sheila Hayes (Executive Director) • Jared Green • Brealond Simmons • Jonathan Green • DJ Thomas • Tiffany Wallace
RM 1110	<b>Breakout Session D (Lunch D-Orange)</b> This session will not be offered during D lunch. <i>Training Mental Health Heroes &amp; Sheroes in Black Barbershops</i>	• Lorenzo Lewis
RM 1108	<b>Breakout Session D (Lunch D-Orange)</b> This session will not be offered during D lunch. <i>Black Male Educators as Champions for Literacy</i>	• Patrick Oliver • Dr. Tiffeni Fontno
RM 1104	<b>Breakout Session D (Lunch D-Orange)</b> This session will not be offered during D lunch. <i>Mentoring Black Male Students 101</i>	• Tim Campbell



# SPEAKERS / MODERATORS / PRESENTERS



**Robert Jackson**  
Motivational Speaker,  
Award Winning Author,  
Former NFL Player and  
Classroom Teacher

*Keynote Speaker/  
Session Presenter*



**Marquis Cooper**  
School Counselor/Pastor/  
Mentor/Author

*Panelist/Session Presenter*



**Charles Blake**  
Southern Bancorp/  
Community Leader

*Greetings &  
Opening Remarks*



**Willie Davis**  
Sergeant, Pulaski County  
Sheriff's Office

*Session Presenter*



**Willie Brewster**  
Educational Redesigner &  
Leadership Coach

*Moderator/  
Session Presenter*



**Xavier Flowers**  
LRSD Teacher  
Central High School

*Session Presenter*



**Dr. Melvin Brown**  
Superintendent,  
Montgomery Public  
Schools (Alabama)

*Panelist*



**Tiffeni Fontno**  
Educator, Librarian,  
Literacy Advocate,  
Vanderbilt University

*Session Presenter*



**Tim Campbell**  
Community Leader/  
Public Speaker

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



**Rick Fowler**  
High School Principal  
(Atlanta)/School  
Leadership Consultant

*Session Presenter*



# SPEAKERS / MODERATORS / PRESENTERS



**Colton Gilbert**  
Teacher/Assistant Director  
of Debate

*Speaker/Session  
Presenter/Panelist*



**Ayodele Harrison**  
Black Male Educators Talk  
Founder

*Speaker*



**Jared Green**  
Senior Behavioral  
Specialist, Tendaji CDC

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



**Shelia Hayes, M.Ed.**  
Executive Director,  
Tendaji CDC

*Panelist*



**Jonathon Green**  
Speaker

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



**Lorenzo P. Lewis**  
Founder/CEO  
The Confess Project of  
America, Atlanta

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



**Errick L. Greene,  
Ed.D.**  
Superintendent,  
Jackson Public Schools  
(Mississippi)

*Panelist*



**Michael D. Mason**  
President, Little Rock School  
District, Board of Education

*Greetings/Opening Remarks*



**Maurice Guest, Jr.**  
e-Stem Charter School

*Session Presenter*



**George Maxey**  
LR Southwest High School  
Principal

*Panelist*



# SPEAKERS / MODERATORS / PRESENTERS



## Leron McAdoo

LRSD Teacher  
Little Rock Central  
High School

*(MC) Speaker/  
Session Presenter*



## Ian Roberts

Superintendent,  
Des Moines Public Schools  
(Iowa)

*Panelist*



## Telly Noel

Media Director/COO of  
The Design Group

*Moderator*



## Dr. Terrence Roberts

Member of the Little Rock Nine

*Greetings & Opening Remarks*



## Patrick M. Oliver

Founder and CEO,  
Say It Loud!  
Readers and Writers, LLC

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



## Braelond Simmons

Program & Facility Manager,  
Tendaji CDC

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



## Don Porter

Dr. Marian G. Lacey K-8  
Academy Principal

*Moderator*



## DJ Thomas

Tendaji CDC

*Session Presenter*



## Kelton Ray

LRSD Teacher (Cloverdale)

*Session Presenter*



## Michael Tidwell

LRSD Teacher (Parkview)

*Session Presenter*



# SPEAKERS / MODERATORS / PRESENTERS



## Tiffany Wallace

Behavior Specialist,  
Tendaji CDC

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



## Robin White

National Park Service  
Superintendent

*Words of Affirmation*



## Pastor Maurice Watson

Senior Pastor, Second  
Baptist Church

*Speaker/Session Presenter*



## Dr. Jermall Wright

Superintendent,  
Little Rock School District

*Greetings/Remarks*

# STUDENT PANELISTS



## Kason Cain

LRSD Student

*Student Panelist*



## Brennan Washington

LRSD Student

*Student Panelist*



## Josiah Overton

LRSD Student

*Student Panelist*



## Omari Williams

LRSD Student

*Student Panelist*



## Cameron Simmons

LRSD Student

*Student Panelist*



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THROUGH CUTTING EDGE CONVERSATIONS**



## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### ROBERT JACKSON

#### **Former NFL Player, Classroom Teacher, & Award-Winning Author and Motivational Speaker**

**“For every problem, there is a solution” is Robert’s motto. Jackson began his teaching career 28 years ago in Indianapolis Public Schools after being cut from the NFL Minnesota Vikings in 1995.**

**He has become one of the most sought-after speakers in the country, delivering keynote addresses and workshops to educators, administrators, parents and students. Mr. Jackson has written and published 7 books and has written articles for ASCD EL Leadership Magazine. His ASCD book, “Becoming the Educator They Need: Strategies, Mindsets, and Beliefs for Supporting Male Black and Latino Students” won the Gold Excel Award for Technical Writing. He just released his new book , “For Mothers Raising Sons.”**

**He attended Western Kentucky University where he received his BS Degree in Industrial Technology while lettering 4 years in both Football and Track. He has keynoted and conducted workshops at national conferences.**

**Mr. Jackson has received numerous awards for his work. He is a Life Member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. and the NFL Players Association.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### WILLIE BREWSTER

#### Educational Redesigner & Leadership Coach

Mr. Willie Brewster is an education redesigner, leadership coach, doctoral student, and former school principal dedicated to uncovering and amplifying the strategies that bolster both individual and collective resilience among K-12 leaders. His dual roles as a School Design Partner and a doctoral student at Columbia's Teachers College uniquely position him at the nexus of theory and practice. Willie is passionate about studying and actualizing the systems that nurture principal success and wellness, especially in the post-COVID era. Willie's current research explores the impact of job demands and emotional labor on leaders of Color. More specifically, Willie studies the job and resources they utilize to navigate these demands. In conjunction with this, Willie encourages a leadership philosophy of glowing and flowing. His commitment to redefining impact at classroom, school, and system levels was recognized when he was honored with the Teachers College, Columbia University Student Impact Honor in 2023. Drawing from his firsthand experiences as a pandemic-era principal, Willie now advises educational leaders at various levels—from schools to districts to states—on visionary strategies to reshape the educational landscape. His goal? To ensure that our educators not only sustain but truly flourish. Before stepping into the realm of educational leadership, Willie made his mark as an award-winning teacher in Duval County Public Schools. A notable achievement from that chapter of his life was leading his students to achieve the highest math scores in North Florida in the 2015-2016 academic year, with a remarkable 100% proficiency rate on the Math Florida Standards Assessments. Currently residing in Detroit, Willie is proud to be a fellow of the National Fellowship of Black and Latino Male Educators. He is also an esteemed member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and an alumnus of both Teach For America and Leadership for Educational Equity (LEE).

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### DR. MELVIN BROWN

#### Superintendent, Montgomery Public Schools (Alabama)

Dr. Melvin J. Brown was announced as the next superintendent of Montgomery Public Schools by a unanimous vote of the Montgomery County Board of Education (MCBOE) on April 8, 2022. He previously served as the Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer of the Reynoldsburg City Schools District in Ohio.

Dr. Brown has 24 years of school administrative experience. He has served as Superintendent in Residence and Visiting Professor at The Ohio State University. Formerly, he served as the Deputy Superintendent for the Cuyahoga Falls City School District and prior to that as its Director of Human Resources. He also has served as Regional Vice President for Mosaica Education Inc. and as an Associate Superintendent for Prince William County Schools in the state of Virginia, where he supervised 20 schools and more than 22,000 students. Additionally, he has six years of experience as an elementary school principal and two years of experience as a middle school principal. His non-administrative experiences include teaching middle school language arts, teaching high school English, and coaching track and boys' basketball.

Dr. Brown holds an Ed.D. in Educational Studies, Educational Administration, from The Ohio State University. He also holds a master's degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., and a bachelor's degree in English from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Dr. Brown is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., to which he dedicates time providing service to the community. He has also served on a number of boards of directors, has chaired various committees, and is active with AASA and numerous other national networks. He is a 2021 honoree of Central Ohio's "A Tribute to African Americans Committee, Inc." and is Co-Author of the book, *STEM Century: It Takes a Village to Raise a 21st Century Graduate*.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### TIM CAMPBELL

#### Community Leader/Public Speaker

Tim Campbell grew up in the urban inner-city of Little Rock, Arkansas. He graduated from Central High School, at the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, and the Clinton School of Public Service. Tim is also a proud initiate of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated. Upon graduation, he was accepted into the U.S. Peace Corps Program. He served as a Community Health Facilitator in the Gambia, West Africa, and was the keynote speaker for the US embassy of Japan in 2021.

Tim has a wide range of community experience; in 2020, he served on the Governor's Task Force, reviewing policies to help mobilize the journey to change in Arkansas. Tim is also a 2019 Coverdale Fellow, 2022 Movement Institute Fellow, and a 2023 fellow of the New Leaders Council. Tim is also a viral TEDx speaker. His topic on youth in public service is set to scale thousands of viewers. Tim was recognized in the Arkansas Business 250 Most Influential Leaders in Arkansas in 2020 and received the 2022 Arkansas L.E.A.D. Award Recipient from the Martin Luther King Commission. Tim was recently recognized as 2022 Leader of The Year by The African American Empowerment Awards Association. He also received the Clinton School of Public Service's highest honor, The Shannon Butler Award. Tim's life story is highlighted in a PBS Documentary title "The Rose That Grew From Concrete". April 4th in Little Rock has been proclaimed Tim Campbell Day in the City of Little Rock.

Tim is also the creator of the Rose Gala, an annual award ceremony dedicated to celebrating youth and unsung heroes in the State of Arkansas' inaugural 2023 ceremony awarded seven youths and seven community leaders.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### MARQUIS COOPER

#### School Counselor/Pastor/Mentor/Author

Marquis is the Senior Pastor of Otter Creek Community Church in Little Rock, Ar. He is a 1994 graduate of Lee High School in Marianna, AR. He obtained A Bachelor of Arts degree from Philander Smith College, and a master's degree in counseling education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. While attending Philander Smith College he was a recipient of the Walton Delta Scholarship. Marquis is a licensed counselor for grades K-12 in the states of Arkansas and Tennessee. Presently he serves the school counselor at Carver S.T.E.A.M. Magnet School in the Little Rock School District.

Cooper was recently appointed to serve on the AFSP (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention) board for the state of Arkansas. Marquis also serves as the President of Bohemia Cares which is a non-profit organization that serves residents in Pulaski County. Cooper has received many honors over the past few years. Some of which include: the JV Educational Leadership Award, Citizen of the Year Award, Moton Strong-Lee Hall of Fame Inductee, Character Education Partnership as a National Promising Practice in Washington, D.C., and the SRS Community Leader of the Year.

Cooper is an accomplished educator and author. He has presented for multiple associations which include National Center for Youth Issues, TCA (Tennessee Counseling Association), APCA (Arkansas Parent Coordinators Association), ArSCA (Arkansas School Counseling Association), AEA (Arkansas Education Association), TCA (Texas Counseling Association), and the Multicultural Counseling Association. He offers professional development workshops to educators across various states. He offers motivational messages of hope to parents, students, pastors, youth leaders, and educators both near and far.

He and his wife Karmen have three children and presently reside in Little Rock, AR.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### WILLIE DAVIS

#### **Sergeant, Pulaski County Sheriff's Office**

**Willie C. Davis is a 32-year law enforcement veteran. He is a lifelong resident of Little Rock, Arkansas. He is a product of the Little Rock School District and a graduate of Hall High School.**

**He has a Bachelor of Science in Education Degree from the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) and a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UA Little Rock). Davis retired in July (2020) from the City of Little Rock Police Department as a Sergeant, after a twenty-eight-year Law Enforcement career. Davis currently serves as a Sergeant with the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office. He supervises the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officers, the O.K. Program of Pulaski County and the Junior Deputy Youth Programs.**

**Today Davis is a well sought-after speaker and encourager. He has received numerous awards for which he does not take credit for. He appreciates being the clay that God has molded to do this work. Davis has committed himself to interrupting the cycle of violence that has impacted so many young lives in the City of Little Rock. He believes that we must make deposits in our youth if we expect to see a returns regarding high-risk lifestyle choices. It can be done through compassion, consistency, and patience.**

**Davis is also known throughout the community and State for his work with the National Mentoring Model for African American Men and Boys called, the O.K. (Our Kids) Program. He believes that the highest calling for any man is to "positively impact the life of a child."**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### XAVIER FLOWERS

#### LRSD Teacher (Central High School)

**Xavier K. Flowers is a dedicated educator and mentor hailing from Helena-West Helena, Arkansas. His journey in academia and mentorship began in his formative years at high school, where he cultivated a passion for both academics and athletics.**

**A proud alumnus of Arkansas State University, Xavier holds a Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master's degree in College Student Personnel Services, reflecting his commitment to both academic scope and student support services.**

**Xavier's professional journey commenced as a college recruiter for Arkansas State University, where he focused on empowering underprivileged students in the Delta region of Arkansas to pursue higher education. Transitioning to Texas Christian University, he served as an academic advisor for nursing students, providing invaluable guidance and support for their academic journeys.**

**Driven by a profound desire to make a tangible impact on the lives of young people, Xavier shifted gears to become a secondary social studies teacher and football coach. His career path has seen him positively influence the academic and personal development of students at Central High School in Helena-West Helena, Lonoke High School in Lonoke, Arkansas, and currently at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.**

**Xavier's unwavering dedication to educational equity and student empowerment has earned him respect and admiration both within and beyond the classroom. His commitment to fostering a culture of academic excellence and personal growth serves as an inspiration to students, colleagues, and the broader educational community alike.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### TIFFENI FONTNO

#### **Educator, Librarian, Literacy Advocate, Vanderbilt University**

**Tiffeni Fontno is the Director of Peabody Library at Vanderbilt University. She holds a doctorate from the University of Dayton's Leadership for Organizations program, and her dissertation is titled "Narrative Inquiry Approach to Investigate Black Male Reading Motivation and Their Perceived Sense of Belonging in K-12 School and Public Libraries." Tiffeni is an active member of the American Library Association, and she has a background in education, including teaching as a 3rd grade teacher, a school librarian, and a technology teacher. Her expertise lies in education and curriculum librarianship, and she is passionate about literacy and children's literature.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### RICK FOWLER

#### High School Principal (Atlanta)/School Leadership Consultant

Mr. Fowler has served in many leadership roles, including but not limited to Middle and High School Principal. He most recently served as the Principal of Benjamin E. Mays High School in Atlanta. Prior to Benjamin E. Mays, he served in Fulton County as an Assistant Principal at Tri-Cities HS and Principal at Woodland MS. He is a strong proponent of the scaffolding that needs to occur from (K-12) in order to provide a quality education for all students in a safe and supportive environment. He is a proven balanced leader; a leader that drives instruction with data and best practices, creating supportive environments for all. Mr. Fowler holds a Bachelor's Degree from Howard University, and a Masters of Education from The University of Texas at Austin (August 2007).

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



# COLTON GILBERT

### Teacher/Assistant Director of Debate

Colton is a Debate Coach and Teacher at Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas. He has been involved in competitive speech and debate since 2004. In undergrad, Colton focused on Communication Studies with a minor in mathematics. In grad school, Colton received a Master's in Communication Studies from Arkansas State University and a Master's in Secondary Education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Since 2014, Colton has been Arkansas' delegate at NFHS Policy Debate Topic Selection where he served as chair of the Wording Committee in Summer of 2022. As a coach, Colton has coached debaters (both policy and LD) to out rounds at national tournaments and regularly qualifies students to the Tournament of Champions and NSDA.

In addition to coaching accolades, Colton prides himself on being an innovator in the classroom; creating engaging lessons that prepare his students to be the next wave of advocates for change. In 2021, Colton won the Marian G. Lacey Award for LRSD Teacher of the Year. He's been a teacher in the district for eleven (11) years and is a 2006 graduate of Parkview Arts/Science Magnet High. In his spare time, he enjoys video games on his Xbox and spending time with his beloved niece.



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## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



# JARED GREEN

### Senior Behavioral Specialist, Tendaji CDC

Jared Green was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. He also attended grade school in the Little Rock School District. He attended the University of Arkansas Fayetteville where he majored in Sociology. Mr. Green also received his master's degree in management and leadership at the University of Webster. As a former defensive lineman for the Razorbacks, he has a very strong background in sports, team building, and leadership. He has over ten years of experience working with the youth in the community.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### JONATHON GREEN

**Speaker, Tendaji CDC**

**Mr. Johnathan Green is a proud graduate of The University of Central Arkansas, where he received his bachelor's degree in health science, then furthering his education receiving his master's in health administration. I have 10 years plus of educational experience from working for the Little Rock School district to working for non-profit organization within the community.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### ERRICK L. GREENE, ED.D.

#### Superintendent, Jackson Public School (Mississippi)

Dr. Errick L. Greene was appointed superintendent of Jackson Public Schools in October 2018, shortly after the state had announced its plan to take over the persistently failing school district. He quickly led his team and the broader community in developing a bold new vision and strategic plan for the district.

Under Dr. Greene's leadership, the school district improved two letter grades on the state's accountability system, increased the graduation rate to the highest level in over a decade, greatly expanded early childhood education, increased private funding to support the strategic efforts, and made significant strides in resolving the numerous state standard violations.

Dr. Greene's service in the field of education extends more than 30 years and across several states and the District of Columbia. He started his impressive career as a middle and upper elementary school teacher before serving as a principal, principal supervisor, educational consultant, and senior district leader. Before joining the team in Jackson, Dr. Greene served as the Chief of Schools with Tulsa Public Schools, where he led the instructional leadership, family support services, and the district athletics teams.

Demonstrating his commitment to lifelong learning, Dr. Greene earned a doctoral degree in Educational and Organizational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania, two master's degrees in education – one from Trinity University and another from Howard University, and a bachelor's degree from Howard University. He regularly serves as a guest speaker and panelist on a variety of education issues, mentors emerging leaders, and participates in national networks, such as Chiefs for Change and The Aspen Superintendents Network.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### MAURICE GUEST, JR.

#### Director, eStem Charter School

**My name is Maurice Guest, Jr., and I am the Director of eStem High School.**

**As a native of Little Rock, I graduated from Hall High School and obtained my Bachelor's Degree from Philander Smith College. Afterward, I received both my Master's Degree in Teaching and my Master's Degree in Education Administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. I am proud to say, "I was born, raised, and educated in Little Rock – until recently, for I graduate from Arkansas State University with a Doctoral Degree this December.**

**Outside of my professional life, I am also a proud father. My daughter, Hannah, will be turning 14 in June. Watching her grow and mature has been a source of inspiration for me. She excels in everything she does.**

**My educational philosophy is straightforward. As an educational leader, I believe in the power of structure and discipline, the value of hard work, and the importance of setting high expectations for all students. Simply put, I strive to empower our city's most respectful, hardworking, and high-achieving students.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### AYODELE HARRISON

#### Black Male Educators Talk Founder

**Ayodele Harrison is a facilitative leadership coach and racial equity practitioner. He has over 2 decades experience, teaching and leading in K-12 schools (public, private and international), as well as in teacher preparation program administration in at the university level.**

**Ayodele is currently serves as Senior Partner at CommunityBuild Ventures (CBV) - a pro-Black solutions focused firm committed to eliminating racial disparities by developing powerful, impactful racial equity driven leaders and organizations. CBV partners with foundations, institutions and organizations to facilitate transformation grounded in racial equity and healing justice.**

**As Senior Partner, Ayodele leads CBV's signature leadership development initiative entitled Black Male Educators Talk (BMEsTalk). Ayodele designs and facilitates cohort-based training programs to help Black Male Educators (BMEs) to strengthen their adult leadership skills to accelerate student learning. BMEsTalk programming is designed and led by Black men for Black men to explore identity, challenge cultural stigma and reclaim masculinity to unlock greater leadership potential within.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### SHELIA HAYES M.ED.

#### Executive Director, Tendaji CDC

Shelia M. Hayes is the Executive Director for Tendaji Community Development Corporation. She attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville where she earned her Bachelors in Vocational Education with emphasis in Human Resource Development and her Masters in Adult Education. Mrs. Hayes has several certifications, including: Certified Trainer in Alternative to Suspension, Second Step Facilitator Training, Trainer and External Assessor for the State of Arkansas in YQPA-Youth Quality Program Assessment, and a Trainer of Trainers for Certified Life Skills Curriculum and Second Step Violence Prevention.

In addition to her education and extensive training, she has over 25 years of experience working with youth in the community. She is the founder of three very successful after-school youth programs: SUCCEED at Henderson Middle School, SUCCEED at Lawson Elementary School, and Program IMPACT at Tendaji CDC Youth Center. All of these programs center around providing youth with an opportunity to gain insight into the arts and aid in their education. During Mrs. Hayes tenure at Tendaji CDC, she also created the Reclaiming Scholars program. Reclaiming Scholars is a restorative justice program that is designed to work with students with non-violent disciplinary issues along with those students that need redirecting to a positive direction of choice. Mrs. Hayes firmly believes that “we all are a product of our environment and to expect change we MUST implement change”. Under Mrs. Hayes leadership, the Reclaiming Scholars model has grown since it’s implementation from two schools to two major districts and several Charter schools. These unique programs within the schools and community provides the students with a new beginning toward a brighter future. Mrs. Hayes believes that these types of programs are vital to our communities as they provide the youth and adults with new opportunities to become better citizens.

Mrs. Hayes is also a proud member of Little Rock Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. in Little Rock, AR.

Shelia Hayes a native of Lexa, Arkansas, believes her upbringing, love, and pride for her state has transformed her into an advocate for at-risk youth and all youth. She strongly believes that it indeed takes a “Village” to raise a child! Her passion lies in serving the community and addressing the needs of our youth.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### LORENZO P. LEWIS

#### Founder/CEO, The Confess Project of America, Atlanta

Lorenzo P. Lewis's journey exemplifies the transformative power of channeling personal pain into a meaningful global purpose. Beyond being a speaker and social entrepreneur, Lorenzo has become a beacon of inspiration for many. His core belief revolves around the idea of converting one's pain into a driving force for positive change.

At the heart of Lorenzo's impactful work lies The Confess Project of America, an initiative he founded. This project has evolved into a nationwide grassroots movement, touching the lives of countless individuals across more than 61 cities and 32 states. Through this initiative, Lorenzo has trained over 4,000 barbers and stylists to serve as mental health advocates within their communities.

The significance of Lorenzo's efforts has been duly recognized, with Fast Company listing The Confess Project of America among "The 10 most innovative health companies of 2021." This acknowledgment underscores the tangible impact of Lorenzo's vision and the effectiveness of his approach in addressing mental health challenges on a societal scale.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### MICHAEL D. MASON

#### President, Little Rock School District Board of Education

Michael D. Mason is the fourth child of the late Levada Parker Mason and the late Jesse W. Mason Sr. of Little Rock, Arkansas. Michael received his early education from the Little Rock Public schools, graduating from Little Rock Central High in 1976. Michael has been with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Fair Housing for 23 years. He spent 6 years in the Louisville Kentucky Field Office, Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Program Center.

In 23 years, he has successfully investigated hundreds of housing discrimination cases, completed hundreds of fair housing compliance reviews, and conducted numerous education and outreach training on housing discrimination laws. Currently, Michael works in the FHIP/FHAP Division overseeing Fair Housing Assistance Programs and Fair Housing initiative Programs. Prior to coming to HUD, he was the Director of EEO and Fair Housing for the City of North Little Rock Arkansas.

In 1981, Michael received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and in 1991, a Dual master's degree in management and public administration from Webster University. Michael has received numerous awards and certificates of appreciation from city governments and community organizations for his public service. In 2007 was nominated and 2016 Michael received Federal Employee of the Year Award for his outstanding Investigations in Federal Career Service and was a member of the Inaugural Class of the 2007 FHEO Leadership Development Program. Also, Michael is a certified Mediator.

Currently Michael is President of the Little Rock School District's Board of Education, member of the Board of Director's Rock Region Metro, former President of the UAPB/AM&N Pulaski County Alumni Chapter. Michael enjoys membership in Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Little Rock Alumni Chapter and Prince Hall Masons, Unity Lodge #454. A member of St. Mark Baptist Church.

Michael is married to Sarah Nakia Holmes, and they have (4) children and (5) grandchildren.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



# GEORGE MAXEY

### LR Southwest High School Principal

Maxey is a 20-plus-year educator with successful experience as a secondary turnaround/transformational administrator. He has a proven track record of turning challenging situations into success stories and brings a wealth of experience to the Little Rock Southwest school community.

One of Mr. Maxey's more notable accomplishments includes taking one of the most challenging schools in the 18th largest district in the United States (Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Florida), from a state grade of an F to a B in 5 years.

George Maxey is known as a student and community-centered leader who inspires students and adults to achieve what many believe impossible. Part of his success formula includes building rock-solid relationships with students, parents, and community partners. As a result of his accomplishments, he was promoted to lead the historic William Marion Raines Senior High School, also in Duval County Public Schools. Raines was one of 11 schools nationwide selected by the College Board for inclusion in the EXCEerator School Improvement Model program beginning in the 2006–2007 school year. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded the project. Principal Maxey implemented several initiatives in the 2009–2010 school year to improve the school: after-school tutoring, Saturday school, gender-based courses, and strict dress code policies. The impact of those additions resulted in the school's grade improving substantially enough for the school to be removed from the state of Florida's intervention list in just two years.

Maxey hails from Brooklyn, New York, and received his Bachelor of Science in Education from Kent State University in Ohio and his Master of Science in Education from the University of Akron in Ohio.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



**LERON MCADOO**

### **LRSD Teacher – Little Rock Central High School**

**Leron McAdoo, aka Ron Mc The HipHoptimist, is a nationally recognized spoken word poet, sought out personality, exhibiting professional visual artist, motivational speaker, actor, author, and seasoned educator. As a Hip Hop advocate and supporter, McAdoo uses the culture of Hip Hop as a vehicle to educate both young and old in the fields of music, writing, and art. This public-school instructor offers not only student-centered workshops and teaching residencies but also does professional development for adult learners.**

**Armed with the knowledge that the arts are a great but underutilized tool for educating, socializing, and building confidence, McAdoo designs customized interactive workshops, lectures, and residencies to fit any curriculum or organizational needs. Whether the goal is arts integration, team building, goal-setting, self-management, reflection, or empowering participants to be responsible decision-makers, through therapeutic and holistic approaches, students will receive academic enrichment, safety, and a positive outlet for voicing tension and being creative. Ron Mc intentionally embeds preventive and intervention strategies to help individuals develop agency, growth, and progress, especially regarding self-expression, empathy, and intersectionality. Participants leave said sessions “Mctivated” and with transferable workforce skills that will enable them to communicate, collaborate, and problem-solve more effectively -- and they’ll have fun engaging with the arts along the way.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### TELLY NOEL

#### Media Director/COO of The Design Group

Telly L. Noel Sr. is a dynamic professional who brings passion and expertise to the marketing and advertising industries. With over two decades of experience, Noel's work focuses on developing innovative campaigns that help clients achieve their goals. His keen attention to detail and deep knowledge across various advertising mediums, including digital, radio, and television, make him a trusted advisor to his clients.

Noel became an on-air personality for KIPR Power 92 FM, eventually transitioning to the station's sales department as an account executive. In 2007, he co-founded The Design Group, Arkansas' only full-service ethnic advertising agency. His extensive field experience and dedication to excellence have established him as a sought-after expert in the industry.

Noel's big-brand thinking drives him to create engaging and authentic communication strategies for local and national clients. He takes pride in challenging the status quo and guiding businesses to connect with new audiences through fresh approaches. His commitment to his client's success is evident in his ability to develop impactful marketing campaigns that resonate across diverse consumer segments.

An Arkansas Business 40 Under 40 honoree, Noel is deeply engaged in the Little Rock community. He has served on several boards, including the Historic Arkansas Museum, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arkansas, and the Friends & Alumni of McClellan (FAM) Foundation, a nonprofit he co-founded that provides scholarships to graduating seniors of Little Rock Southwest High School. In addition, Noel is an active member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., where he served as the director of the Little Rock Kappa League for several years. He is a devoted husband of LaShawnDa Noel, CEO/Superintendent of Arkansas Lighthouse Charter Schools, and a father of three sons, Telly Jr. (Tennessee State University), Tylan (Tuskegee University), and Trenton Noel (Howard University).

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### PATRICK M. OLIVER

#### Founder and CEO, Say It Loud! Readers and Writers, LLC

**Patrick M. Oliver is a writer, best-selling author, publisher, and literary consultant dedicated to promoting reading and writing as tools of empowerment. He is a product of East Little Rock and the Little Rock School District from elementary to high school.**

**Former senior subcontract administrator in the aerospace industry (Los Angeles); director of sales and marketing Third World Press Foundation (Chicago) and program director Open Book Program (Chicago).**

**Oliver is founder and president Say It Loud! Readers and Writers, LLC, a literary arts organization founded in 1997 in Little Rock. Through a variety of innovative projects Oliver engages children, youth, and adults in activities such as author book talks, vision boarding, professional development sessions, and community forums.**

**Currently, Patrick is a literary and business development consultant for educational institutions, non-profits organizations, publishers, and authors. He has been featured in several noted media outlets such as Essence Magazine, Tom Joyner Morning Show, NBC, ABC, and CSPAN Book TV. Recipient of numerous grants and community service awards. His latest book is On My Own: Vision Board Guidebook for Young People (2022).**

**More about Oliver go to [www.speakloudly.com](http://www.speakloudly.com)**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



# DON PORTER

### Dr. Marian G. Lacey K-8 Academy Principal

A native of Little Rock, Arkansas and a proud product of the Little Rock School District, Don Porter is an energetic educational leader. With over a decade of experience in the field of education, Mr. Porter's true passion is impacting the lives of others. His acumen and dedication have exposed him to numerous opportunities that have further enhanced his ability to contribute positively to the field. Included among these has been the opportunity to collaborate with a distinguished cadre of instructional leaders within the National Council for the Social Studies to produce the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) inquiry-based framework. More locally, He has served on the 2014 Arkansas Social Studies Curriculum Framework standards revision committee, and led the charge back in his home district to collaborate with a team of teachers district-wide to create, implement, and refine district social studies curricula at the middle level for the Little Rock School District.

As a campus administrator, Mr. Porter engages closely with teachers, students, and families to implement and refine practices to ensure that school becomes a place of healing for all stakeholders. Mr. Porter's work is centered on the premise of growing learners who become leaders. In his current role as the Student Achievement and Intervention Specialist at Cloverdale Middle School in Little Rock, Mr. Porter works closely with stakeholders to focus on and create a culture for learning within the walls of the school that impacts the lives of learners. Recently, Mr. Porter has been named the principal of Dr. Marion G. Lacey K-8 Academy, the Little Rock School District's newest campus.

Mr. Porter is actively engaged in the work of implementing the School Wellness Wheel as a means of building and growing healthy people so that they can achieve at high levels. He realizes that, at its heart, the school institution is a change agent and a place poised to impact the lives of learners and society as a whole. To this end, he enjoys collaborating with like-minded individuals to build capacity and partner in realizing better outcomes for stakeholders at all levels.

Mr. Porter is happily married to the lovely Mrs. April Nicole and together they are the doting parents of two amazing daughters. It is his hope that every school is transformed into a place where every child and staff member is at home.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



# KELTON RAY

### LRSD Teacher (Cloverdale)

**Kelton was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. He is a proud graduate of Little Rock Hall High School, Class of 2011. After high school Kelton attended the University of Central Arkansas where he was an All-Southland Conference performer on the UCA Bears track and field team. Upon graduating from the University of Central Arkansas with a degree in Public Relations/Business Administration, Kelton went on to work for PepsiCo for 6 years as a Foodservice Account Manager, among other roles.**

**He entered into education at the age of 28 and this is his 3rd year in the classroom. He has spent all 3 years at Cloverdale Middle School as a 7th & 8th Grade English Language Arts teacher while also serving as the head girls track and field coach for Little Rock Southwest High School. For the 2024 – 2025 school year he will be teaching 7th Grade English at the new Dr. Marian G. Lacey K-8 Academy.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



# IAN ROBERTS

### **Superintendent, Des Moines Public Schools (Iowa)**

**Dr. Ian A. Roberts serves as Superintendent of the Des Moines Public Schools, the largest and most culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse school system in the great state of Iowa. Prior to this role, he served three years as the Superintendent of the Millcreek Township School District, a high performing suburban school district in Erie, Pennsylvania; the Chief of Schools of Aspire Public Schools, a college preparatory district where he led the team of superintendents serving schools in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and Memphis. Ian also served as the High School's Network Superintendent with Saint Louis Public Schools, where he coached, supported, and evaluated high school and alternative schools' principals.**

**He is a pivotal intellectual voice in the K-12 arena offering expertise on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion; Culturally Responsive Instructional Leadership, and School/District improvement through shared accountability, empathy, and Compassion. These tenets he used during his tenure as a school principal and principal-supervisor in Baltimore City, Washington, D.C., and the South Bronx, New York.**

**Prior to becoming a principal, district leader, and leadership trainer. Ian was a world class and Olympic Athlete, competing in track and field at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, and world Championships in Maebashi, Japan and Seville, Spain, was a finalist at the Pan American Games, and gold medalist at the Central American Championships.**

**Ian matriculated in academic programs at Harvard University (Post-Doctoral Studies), Coppin State University (BS) Saint John's University (MS), Morgan State University (EdD), Georgetown University (MS), Trident University International (EdD).**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### DR. TERRENCE ROBERTS

#### Member of the Little Rock Nine

Management executive, psychology professor and “Little Rock Nine” member Dr. Terrence James Roberts was born on December 3, 1941 to William L. and Margaret G. Roberts. His father worked for the Veteran’s Administration and his mother ran a catering service in Little Rock, Arkansas. Roberts attended Dunbar Junior High School in the early 1950s, and was only thirteen when the U.S. Supreme Court issued the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to integrate schools.

Roberts had begun attending Horace Mann High School when, in 1955, Little Rock School System Superintendent Virgil Blossom submitted a plan to begin gradually integrating the public schools, a proposal the school board approved unanimously. Two years later, after an intensive selection process, the Little Rock Nine, with Roberts among them, entered Central High School. After the white community rallied in support of segregation, Little Rock mayor Woodrow Mann asked President Eisenhower to send federal troops to enforce integration, and one day later, the President sent the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock. Roberts endured conflicts and struggles throughout the 1957-1958 school year at Central High School. The following year, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus and the state legislature closed the school as an attempt to oppose integration. As a result, Roberts moved to Los Angeles, California to live with his relatives, where he completed high school in 1959. In 1967, he received his B.S. degree in sociology, and then received his M.A. degree in social welfare from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1970. In 1976, he received his Ph.D. degree in psychology from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. Roberts confronted Governor Faubus on ABC-TV’s *Good Morning America* television program in 1979, where he argued that Faubus had violated the public trust in 1955 in Little Rock by pushing his segregationist policies. Roberts became the department chair of Antioch University Los Angeles’ psychology program in 1994. In 1994, he again made an appearance on television when seven members of the Little Rock Nine appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, coming face to face with several Caucasian students who had tormented them.

In 1998, the Little Rock School District hired Roberts as their official desegregation consultant; to this day, Roberts provides similar services throughout the United States. The following year, President Clinton awarded Roberts the Congressional Gold Medal, the country’s highest award for civilian contributions to society. Roberts is currently the chief executive officer of Terrence J. Roberts & Associates, a management consulting firm that focuses on equitable practices in both industry and business. He is married to Rita Roberts, Ph.D., and they have two daughters and two grandsons.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### BRAELOND SIMMONS

#### Program & Facility Manager, Tendaji CDC

**Braelond Simmons was born and raised in Little Rock Arkansas. He is a product of the Little Rock School District and serves as Program & Facility Manager for Tendaji CDC. He attended the University of Arkansas at Little Rock where he received a bachelor's in Psychology. He has his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Webster University. He has over 14 years of experience with youth and is a strong believer that anyone can overcome their circumstances to succeed in life.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### DJ THOMAS

#### Behavior Specialist, Tendaji CDC

**Mr. Dominique Thomas received his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and master's degree in student affairs from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He received his Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is working on his Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary. Mr. Thomas is passionate about mentorship and leadership. He loves to work with children by providing them with the tools they need to be successful.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### MICHAEL TIDWELL

#### LRSD Teacher (Parkview)

**As a teacher, Tidwell became aware of the fact that many in the wider community had little engagement with the performing arts due to lack of exposure and economic disadvantages. In response, he established the Tidwell Project in 1990. He also founded the Centre for the DansArts, Inc., a dance academy, in 1994.**

**Tidwell teaches at Parkview Arts and Science Magnet High School in Little Rock where he serves as dance department chair.**

**Tidwell has received the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr., Commission "Salute to Greatness" Award, the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame Founder's Award, and the Governor's Individual Artist Award. In 2015, he was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



# TIFFANY WALLACE

**Behavior Specialist, Tendaji CDC**

**Ms. Wallace was raised in Little Rock, AR and graduated from UA-PTC with an associate degree in liberal arts and sciences with a concentration in social work. She then pursued her bachelor's in social work at University of Arkansas Little Rock.**

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### PASTOR MAURICE WATSON

#### Senior Pastor, Second Baptist Church

In August 2022, Dr. Maurice Watson was called as the Senior Pastor of The Second Baptist Church in his native Little Rock, AR, where he was called to preach at the age of 16. He joins The Second Baptist Church after serving for 7 profound years as the Senior Servant of the historic Metropolitan Baptist Church in Largo, MD.

St. Mark Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas was Dr. Watson's first pastorate where he served for 7 years. In November 1988, at the age of 28, he accepted the call to pastor the Salem Baptist Church in Omaha, Nebraska, where he served for 15½ years. Salem's membership grew from 1,200 to more than 3,500 and the ministry was able to move into a new 42,000 square foot, multi-million dollar facility by January 2000.

In April 2004, sensing a new call of God on his life, Dr. Watson accepted the senior pastorate of Beulahland Bible Church in Macon, Georgia. God opened the windows of Heaven and began to pour out blessings upon this ministry. Using Pastor Watson as a vessel, God touched the hearts of many and Beulahland experienced tremendous growth; thousands of souls were added to the ministry.

In early 2004, Dr. Watson's vision of "Faith on the Fast Track" led Beulahland through the construction of a second worship facility on the Macon campus grounds. This new 40,000 square foot edifice was completed in October 2009 and the membership now enjoys a state-of-the-art 3,000-seat sanctuary and innovative administrative complex. Dr. Watson's leadership took Beulahland to a second worship location in Warner Robins, Georgia in February 2005. After 5 ½ months of worship, the church was able to close on 13 acres of land to build a new worship facility for the Warner Robins area.

Dr. Watson received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from Philander Smith College in Little Rock. He earned a Master of Arts Degree in Theology at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, and a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama.

Dr. Watson is a prolific pastor with a dynamic itinerant preaching ministry that extends across the continent and globe. A sought-after preacher and expositor, in 2002, he served as the morning worship preacher at the Annual Hampton Ministers' Association Conference, and later served as the conference preacher in 2005 and 2015. He is a former Chaplain with the Bibbs County Sheriff Department and the Georgia State Patrol. In 2010, Dr. Watson was inducted into the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Board of Preachers of Morehouse College.

Motivated by his love for people, his love for preaching, and his belief that no one is beyond God's reach, Dr. Watson said, "I was born – put on this Earth, in this Universe – to be a preacher, teacher, and pastor of people. Seeing people helped and seeing lives transformed through what I might have to say, or what God might have to say through me, motivates me. It is my purpose for being alive."

Dr. Watson is married to Janice. They have two beautiful daughters, one son-in law, and two grandsons.

## SPEAKER AND PRESENTER BIOS



### ROBIN WHITE

#### National Park Service Superintendent

Robin White's journey to becoming a Superintendent with the National Park Service (NPS) is a testament to her resilience, determination, and commitment to serving her community. Born into a life of uncertainty and instability, Robin faced significant challenges from an early age. At just eleven years old, she tragically lost her mother, setting the stage for a childhood marked by frequent moves and transitions. Dubbed the "suitcase kid" within her family, Robin traversed foster homes, girls' schools, and the homes of various relatives across Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Despite the lack of formal education, she found profound lessons in the love and support of the women in her life, instilling in her a deep sense of belonging and community service.

Growing up in Mississippi, Robin absorbed valuable lessons about native plants and the realities of racial inequality in the South during the 1970s. Her family imparted survival skills, teaching her to navigate a world where Black individuals were often marginalized and discriminated against. Despite the pressures to conform to societal expectations, Robin's inquisitive nature and refusal to accept injustice set her apart. She questioned the status quo, grappling with the inherent contradictions of a society that devalued her worth while nurturing her innate sense of self-love and dignity.

Robin's educational journey took a non-traditional route, shaped by her experiences and her thirst for knowledge. Dropping out of school after ninth grade, she later earned her GED and pursued a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Indiana University Northwest. Subsequently, she obtained a master's degree in leadership, social issues, and public policy from Union Institute University, with aspirations of furthering her education in theology and divinity.

Robin's introduction to the National Park Service came through a workforce development program in Michigan City, Indiana. Despite initial skepticism about her suitability for the role, her passion for nature and community engagement quickly became evident. Assigned to environmental education at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Robin's unconventional background proved to be an asset as she connected with diverse communities and spearheaded initiatives to promote environmental stewardship.

Throughout her tenure with the NPS, Robin's dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion has been unwavering. From developing education programs at Petroglyph National Monument to serving as education specialist and chief of interpretation at Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, her impact has been profound. Robin's leadership extends beyond park boundaries, as evidenced by her efforts to foster partnerships, empower youth, and facilitate dialogue on pressing social issues.

As Superintendent of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Robin continues to embody the values of community engagement and social justice. Through innovative programs like the Youth Leadership Academy and initiatives addressing systemic inequalities, she is committed to leveraging the park's historical significance as a catalyst for positive change. Robin's steadfast dedication to equity serves as an inspiration to colleagues and community members alike, reinforcing the transformative power of inclusive leadership within the National Park Service.

Robin White's legacy within the National Park Service is characterized by her tireless advocacy for equity, her deep-rooted commitment to service, and her unwavering belief in the transformative potential of nature and education. With a vision of parks as inclusive spaces that reflect the diversity of American society, she continues to champion initiatives that honor the past, empower the present, and shape a more equitable future for all.



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