



**GRADS  
ARE BACK** 22

> FAMU SJGC

**“40 YEARS  
LEADING  
THE WAY”**





## Welcome back to the Hill and to “Grads are Back!”

As the School of Journalism & Graphic Communications (SJGC) celebrates “40 years...Leading the Way,” I am so happy that you are here to mark this occasion with us.

The SJGC was the first journalism program at a Historically Black College or University to earn accreditation in 1982. And while that is certainly worth celebrating, we also know that forty years later there still are not enough people of color in our newsrooms, boardrooms, or spaces where ideation takes place.

This is a pivotal time in the school’s history and in the industries we serve. As we continue to emerge from a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, it is necessary to super charge our efforts.

We know that hands-on experiences are deeply valuable to our students. So is innovation. That is why it is part of my mission to ensure our students have opportunities to grow and learn in spaces that produce both.

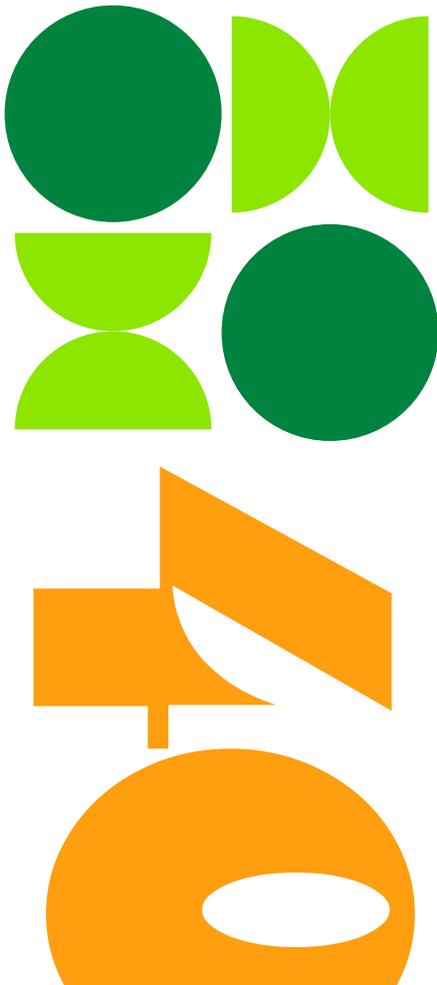
But we need your help as well.

When you survey the arch of your career, ask yourself where you would be without FAMU. Then, find the best way to contribute your gifts and talents to the SJGC. Whether that is by way of offering internships to students through your company, coming back to offer knowledge or by making a personal gift. Our students need to know you.

As Dean of the program, I am committed to ensuring that we prepare our students for success in all they endeavor to do.

This is an exciting time for SJGC, and I am happy to be on the journey with you.

Sincerely,





## Welcome home, FAMUly!

I am so glad you're here to celebrate for the 40th anniversary of our beloved School of Journalism and Graphic Communications.

Coming home to share our experiences with current students is invaluable. I hope that, through you, they will learn what is possible.

I know the skills I gained as a student while studying under Mrs. Gorham, Professor Kierstead, Dr. Abrams, and Mr. Earnest Jones have sustained me in every aspect of my career.

It's hard to believe that it has been more than 30 years since I walked these hills as a student.

It feels like just yesterday.

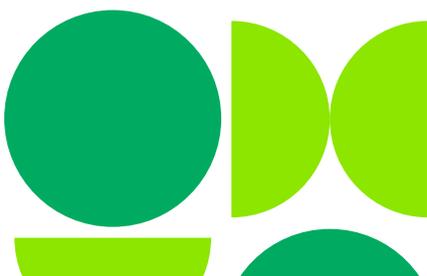
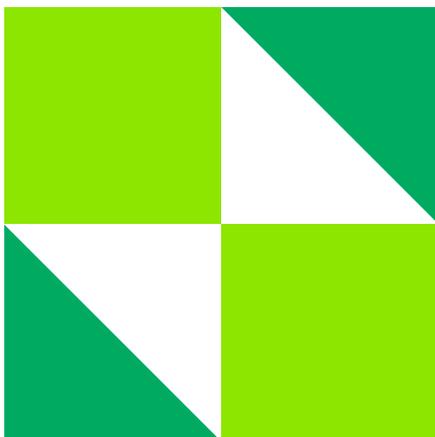
Thank you to Dean Mira Lowe and Board of Visitors Chair Kimberly Godwin Manning for trusting me and my co-chair Christian Whitaker with developing the sessions for today.

Thank you, also, to the Rattlers who said yes to giving their time and talents to Grads are Back this year.

Sincerely,

**Elise Durham**

GRADS ARE BACK CO-CHAIR  
BROADCAST JOURNALISM '91



# "40 YEARS LEADING THE WAY"

## Schedule of Event

**8:15 – 9:15 a.m.**

### **Board of Visitors Meeting**

Gallery

\*\*Invitation Only\*\*

**9:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

### **"Inclusion Begins with the**

**Letter 'I'"** The future of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the newsroom

Lecture Hall

**10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

### **Colloquium: "From the Bottom**

**Up!"** A candid conversation with members of the first graduating classes of the J-school.

Charles Winter Wood Theatre – Tucker Hall

**11 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

### **Grads are Back Career Fair**

Learn about exciting opportunities to jump-start your career!

SJGC Library

**Noon – 2:00 p.m.**

### **Grads are Back BBQ**

SJGC Gallery and Patio

Powered By: The Black Leadership Aids Crisis

Coalition Powered by AFS

**2 – 4 p.m.**

### **Content for Change Creator's House**

Powered By: Paramount

TV 20 Studio B

**2:15 – 3:15 p.m.**

### **"Pitching to Placement – Playing the P.R. Game"**

Room 1003

**2:15 – 3:15 p.m.**

### **"Lights, Cameras ... Action!"**

The Entertainment Zone- Recasting Your Skills

Photo Studio – Room 2058

Powered By: Warner Bros.

**2:15 – 3:15 p.m.**

**"Countdown to Deadline"** What it takes to make it in the newsroom and beyond

Lecture Hall

**3:20 – 4:20 p.m.**

### ***Designing the Career You***

**Love** Putting your passion to work in graphic design

Room 3133

**3:20 – 4:20 p.m.**

**"Branding Your Hustle"** Making your personal Brand work for You!

Lecture Hall

**3:20 – 4:20 p.m.**

### **"From Here to There: Where Your J-School Degree Can**

**Take You"** Learn what else you can do with your journalism degree

Photo Studio – Room 2058

**6 – 9 p.m.**

### **40<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Reception**

Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future

The Meek-Eaton Black Archives and Museum

**10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m..**

# “INCLUSION BEGINS WITH THE LETTER ‘I’”

The future of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the newsroom

**Lecture Hall**

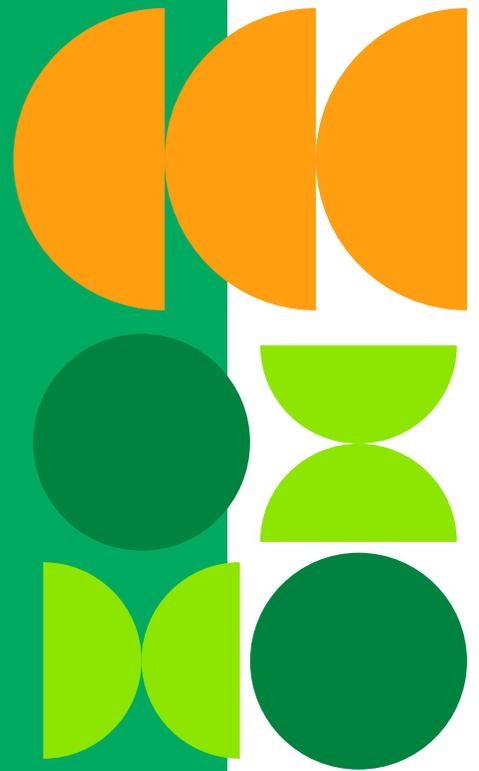
**Moderator:** Rod Carter, Evening Anchor, WNCN, Charlotte

**Panelists:** Monique Mitchell, Franchise Manager, “Karma’s World,” 9 Story Media // Heidi Otway, President, SalterMitchell PR // Kathy Times, President, Yellow Brick Media Concepts // Ginger Maddox, Executive Producer, WBBM-TV, Chicago



## **Rod Carter, Evening Anchor, CBS17 Raleigh**

Rod Carter is the weeknight evening anchor at CBS 17 in Raleigh, North Carolina. He joined the station after spending about two decades at WFLA in Tampa, Florida. As a life member of the FAMU National Alumni Association and current vice president of the Triangle Chapter of the FAMU NAA in Raleigh-Durham, Rod spends much of his time coaching and mentoring the next generation of journalists. For years he has been the lead teacher for the NABJ-FAMU Journalism Short Course, instructing students in broadcast during an intensive weekend course. Rod was a Fall 2021 adjunct professor of communications at St. Augustine’s University in Raleigh and is the immediate past Region III Director for the National Association of Black Journalists, as well as a past president of the Tampa Bay Association of Black Journalists. Outside journalism, Rod is a proud Life Member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. He is currently the International Director of Publicity for the fraternity. He is also the past 2nd Vice President and a charter member of the Sigma Xi Sigma chapter in Tampa. Since relocating to Raleigh, he has joined the Eta Sigma Chapter of the fraternity.





### **Monique Mitchell, Franchise Manager, "Karma's World," 9 Story Media**

Monique A. Mitchell is a certified full-time dreamer and doer, juggling many hats as an entrepreneur, publicist, podcaster, and media influencer. She's a skilled communications guru with over 11 years of experience in the entertainment and network television industries. Her inherent knack for public relations landed her a start with the historic and prestigious NBC Universal East Coast Page program in New York City where she worked for various shows and networks including: "Saturday Night Live," "TODAY," "30 Rock Live," Oxygen, and NBC News. She's held roles at Cartoon Network and Adult Swim as a publicist. Today, she works for 9 Story Media and Netflix's animated series created by rapper Chris "Ludacris" Bridges, "Karma's World." In her current role as franchise manager, she oversees talent and influencer relations, activations and events, DEI initiatives, communications, and more. In 2019, ESSENCE Magazine featured the launch of her Atlanta-based boutique PR agency, Mo Mitch Media where she works one-on-one with entrepreneurs, influencers, and creatives to build brands and gain maximum exposure.



### **Heidi Otway, President, SalterMitchell PR**

Heidi Otway is a former journalist who spent the last three decades building expertise in all aspects of media, crisis communications, marketing, and audience engagement. As the president of SalterMitchell PR, she leads public relations and public affairs initiatives, manages the reputation of top corporations and organizations, helps her clients make news, and develops campaigns targeting diverse stakeholders. Her award-winning work supports Fortune 500 companies, industry associations, nonprofits, educational institutions, and government agencies. She is accredited by the Universal Accreditation Board for public relations and is a Certified Public Relations Counselor.



### **Kathy Times, President, Yellow Brick Media Concepts**

Kathy Y. Times is an Emmy-award-winning storyteller and president of Yellow Brick Media Concepts public relations company. She uses her past experiences as a television news anchor and investigative reporter, chief communications officer, president/CEO of the largest journalism organization of color, the National Association of Black Journalists, and college lecturer to assist organizations and executives with developing strategic solutions for some of their most pressing communications challenges. In 2014, Kathy founded Kathy Times WOW professional development programs to help organizations, aspiring professionals, and senior leaders with assessing, defining, communicating, and activating the WOW in their authentic brand story. Kathy earned two bachelor's degrees from FAMU - in Computer Information Systems and Journalism. She continued her studies at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, earning a master's degree in Journalism. In her spare time, Kathy enjoys cycling through Tampa, going to the beach, and traveling with family and friends.



### **Ginger Maddox, Executive Producer, WBBM-TV, Chicago**

Ginger Maddox is a three-time Emmy award-winning journalist from Evanston, Illinois. Her 20-plus-year-career in television news has taken her to Savannah, Milwaukee, Miami, and now Chicago where she is the Executive Producer for CBS 2's flagship 10 p.m. newscast. Ginger is a proud 1999 graduate of the SJGC at FAMU, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Broadcast Journalism. She is a life member of the FAMU National Alumni Association.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

# COLLOQUIUM: “FROM THE BOTTOM UP!”

A candid conversation with members of the first graduating classes of the J-school.

**Charles Winter Wood Theatre – Tucker Hall**

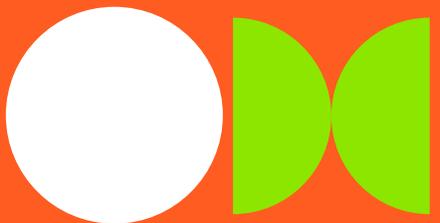
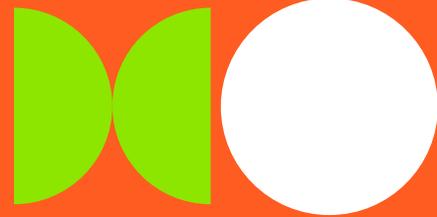
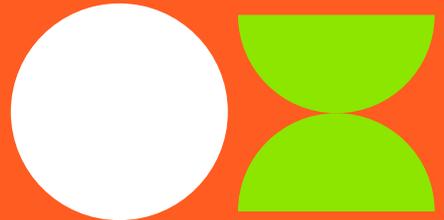
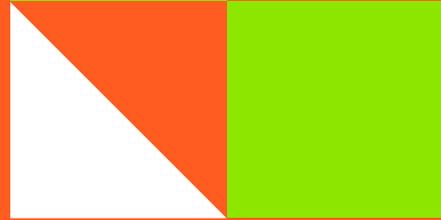
Dean Mira Lowe, School of Journalism and Graphic Communication

Kimberly Godwin Manning, President ABC News

Curtis Johnson, President, FAMU NAA

**Moderator:** Gayle Andrews, President, Andrews Plus

**Panelists:** Ken Darby, Retired, VP Communications and Gov’t Relations, Thales North America // Xavier Higgs, Publisher & Editor, First Source Magazine // Cheryl Smith, Publisher, I Messenger Media LLC





## **Kimberly Godwin Manning, President ABC News**

Kim Godwin, president of ABC News, oversees editorial and business operations for broadcast, digital, streaming, and audio news across the organization which includes trusted and iconic franchises “Good Morning America,” “World News Tonight,” “20/20,” “Nightline,” FiveThirtyEight, “The View” and “This Week.” She is the first Black woman to serve as a network news president. Godwin brings a breadth of experience in newsroom leadership garnered from an accomplished 35-year career dedicated to excellence and the vital role of journalism. At the network level, Godwin has executive produced news programming, managed a nightly news broadcast, created cross-digital content, and earned recognition for award-winning programming and reporting. She began her career running local newsrooms in markets across the U.S. She is a proud graduate of Florida A&M University, where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in broadcast journalism. She is currently the chair of the board of visitors at her alma mater’s journalism school. Godwin has been honored with six National News and Documentary Emmy Awards, two Edward R. Murrow Awards, an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia award, and a Sigma Delta Chi Award. She is also a well-regarded member of the National Association of Black Journalists and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.



## **Curtis Johnson, President, FAMU NAA**

Curtis Johnson is the founder and CEO of The Cuvey Group, LLC. Curtis earned a business degree from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. He also earned an MBA with a concentration in Marketing from the university’s School of Business. He is a SHRM Certified Professional, DISC certified workshop facilitator, John Maxwell Certified Speaker, Coach and Trainer. He also held 6 & 63 securities licenses. Curtis was recently elected as the 19th President of the Florida A& M University National Alumni Association and an avid supporter of his alma mater. Curtis actively supports his local community by serving on various Ft. Pierce community boards and committees and volunteers often with civic organizations to create positive outcomes for the underserved. Curtis is a Life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Curtis Johnson, Jr. is a servant leader and was elected as a Fort Pierce City Commissioner, District 1 in November, 2020..

**9:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

## **COLLOQUIUM: “FROM THE BOTTOM UP!”**

A candid conversation with members of the first graduating classes of the J-school.

**Charles Winter Wood Theatre – Tucker Hall**

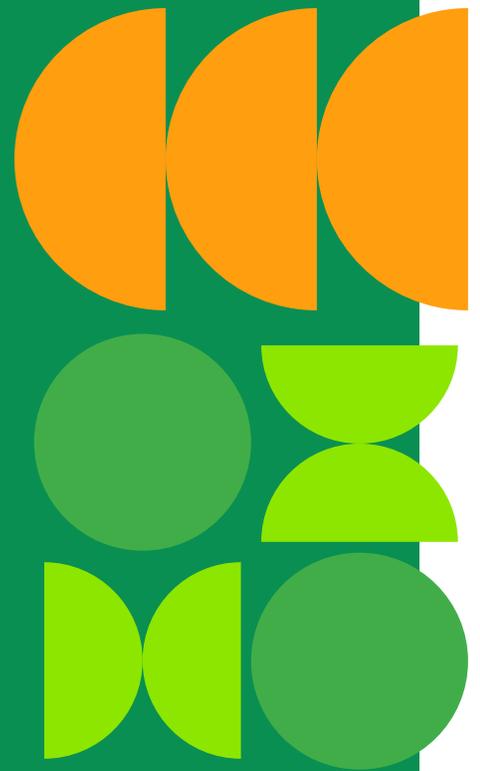
**Dean Mira Lowe, School of Journalism and Graphic Communication**

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**Moderator:** Gayle Andrews, President, Andrews Plus

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### **Gayle Andrews, President, Andrews Plus**

As an award-winning broadcast journalist, political analyst, university instructor, lobbyist, and political and corporate media consultant, Gayle Andrews brings a diverse array of experiences to the world of journalism, media consulting, and mass persuasion. Gayle is an enrolled member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and a fifth-generation Floridian of African American descent. Her grandfather C Blythe Andrews (who attended FAMU when it was a Normal School) and father C. Blythe Andrews Jr. and were founder and COB/ publisher respectively of the Florida Sentinel Bulletin, Florida’s oldest and largest Black newspaper. Gayle was the first FAMU news reporter to work for major-market TV stations, launching her career as an anchor and political reporter in Tampa, Orlando, and Tallahassee for CBS NewsNet. While reporting, she also taught FAMU’s original Advanced Television News course. She was a member of the prestigious Capitol Press Corps for 14 years, the sole person of color covering state politics, and the first communications director for the Florida Democratic Party. Gayle also served as press secretary to Florida Senate President Gwen Margolis. As president of Andrews Plus, a corporate and political media consulting firm, Gayle has been producing and placing Television, direct mail, radio & print media throughout the south and in Indian Country since 1992. She is proudest of receiving the Thelma Gorham Legacy Award from African Americans in Media. She is the president of the Black Press Association of Florida and a member of the Delta Kappa Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,



## **Ken Darby, Retired, VP Communications and Gov't Relations, Thales North America**

Ken Darby is the retired Vice President of Communications & Government Relations for Thales North America. He led overall communications strategy and brand positioning for Thales North America, including media relations & social media, employee engagement, executive communications, and marketing communications. He also led government relations responsibilities including outreach strategy for North America, including engagement with all levels of the U.S. and Canadian governments and third-party organizations. Ken also spent several years at Lockheed Martin, where he held various leadership positions at a global level in brand management, public relations, marketing, communications, and advertising. He received recognition for various advertising programs including the CLIO, Digiday, and AdWeek Gravity for outstanding brand awareness campaigns. Ken has a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from Florida A&M University and has completed the executive marketing leadership program from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College. He is a member of the International Association of Business Communicators and the Public Relations Society of America.



## **Xavier Higgs, Publisher & Editor, First Source Magazine**

Xavier Higgs is a Los Angeles-based writer, producer, and photojournalist. His more than 40 years as a storyteller have afforded him the opportunity to cover news events across the nation. His published articles, video, and still photographs have appeared in various publications including the LA Daily News, Pasadena Star News, Our Weekly, Los Angeles Sentinel, Christian Recorder, the National Association of Black Journalists' Journal as well as Miami television stations WTVJ and WPLG and WJXT in Jacksonville, FL. He is the producer of the bio documentary 'Louder Than Rock' the story of legendary guitarist Caleb Quaye, Elton John's first producer, and guitarist. Xavier also photographed the book covers for Lessons from Little Rock and Louder Than Rock the biography of Caleb Quaye. Xavier graduated from Florida A&M University's Journalism program in 1977. He is a longtime member of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and the Society of Professional Journalism - Los Angeles (SPJLA). Xavier is a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.



## **Cheryl Smith, Publisher, I Messenger Media LLC**

Cheryl Smith is a 1980 graduate of the Journalism program at FAMU. Upon graduation, she immediately went to work for the Capital Outlook and has enjoyed a decades-long career across all platforms. In addition to being the editor-publisher of I Messenger Media LLC, the umbrella organization for Texas Metro News, Garland Journal, Metro News, and I Messenger, Cheryl has also been a radio talk show host/producer and journalism professor for more than 20 years. In 2022 the National Association of Black Journalists inducted her into its Hall of Fame, and she was named one of 25 publishers over 50 by Editor & Publisher Magazine. She is a Golden Life Member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and a life member of the FAMU National Alumni Association.



## **Annetta Wilson, Annetta Wilson Media Training and Success Coaching**

Annetta Wilson is 1978 Broadcast Journalism graduate. She worked as a reporter at WCTV-TV in Tallahassee while attending FAMU, then went on to become the first African-American evening news anchor in Central Florida history at WKMG-TV (formerly WDBO-TV and WCPX-TV). She is currently a Certified Coach, Certified Trainer and President of Annetta Wilson Media Training & Success Coaching.

**2 – 4 p.m.**

# CONTENT FOR CHANGE CREATOR'S HOUSE

TV 20 Studio B

**Participants:**

Melanie Mitchell, Creator & Comedian  
Radio Big Mack - Paramount  
Conceited - Paramount  
Pretty Vee- Paramount

**Powered By:**

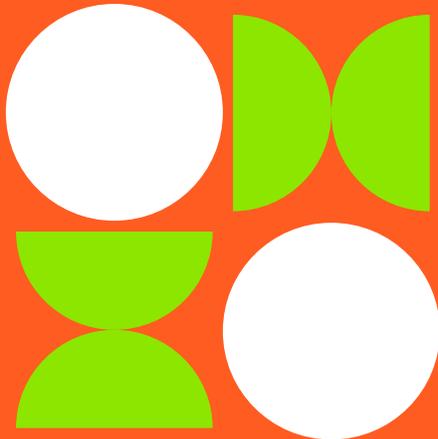


**CONTENT  
FOR  
CHANGE  
ACADEMY**

**CONTENT FOR CHANGE**

Content for Change is an initiative that aims to transform our creative ecosystem—from the content we produce to the creative supply chain that powers it to the culture that underpins everything we do. In 2020, BET created Content for Change, catalyzing efforts to dismantle the narratives that enable intolerance, stereotypes and systemic racism. Paramount expanded the initiative, extending the efforts across the company and the globe

The initiative is grounded in data-driven research and centered on three areas of commitment: content, creative supply chain, and culture.

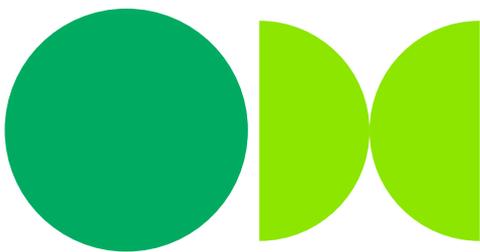
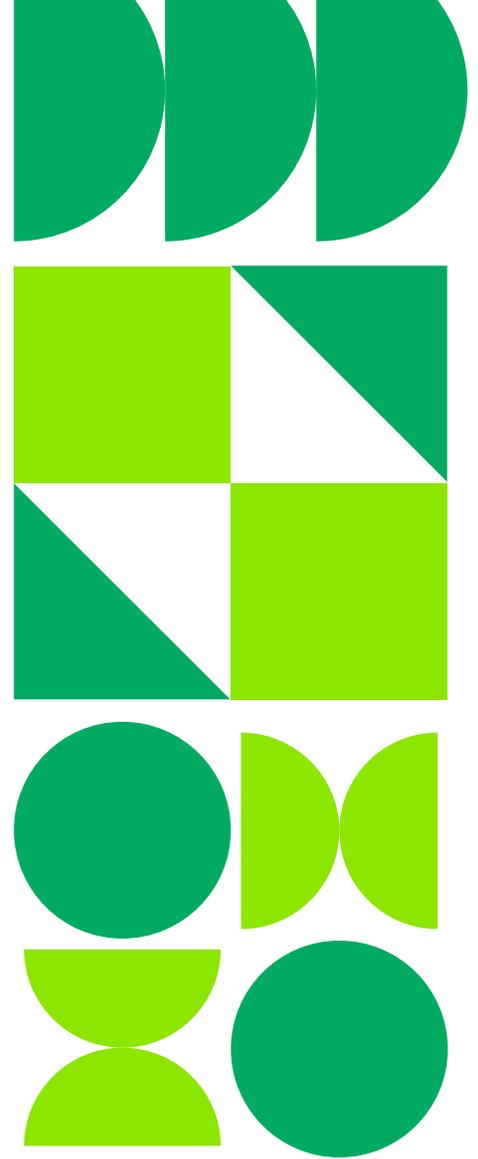


**11 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

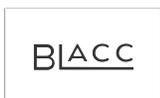
# GRADS ARE BACK CAREER FAIR

Learn about exciting opportunities to  
jump-start your career!

**SJGC Library**



Powered By: The Black Leadership  
Aids Crisis Coalition Powered by AFS



**Noon – 2 p.m.**

# GRADS ARE BACK BBQ



**SJGC Gallery and Patio**



**2:15 – 3:15 p.m.**

# PITCHING TO PLACEMENT – PLAYING THE P.R. GAME

**Room 1003**

**Moderator:** Betsy Helgager Hughes, CEO, BLH Consulting

**Panelists:** Eric Winkfield, Vice President, M Booth // Paula Witt, Music Publicist, Vice President, Sunshine Sachs Morgan & Lylis // Marsha Archer, President/CEO, M-Squared Public Relations // Jaylen Christie, Account Supervisor, Bernadette Davis Communications



## **Betsy Helgager Hughes, CEO, BLH Consulting**

Betsy Helgager Hughes is president/CEO of Atlanta-based BLH Consulting, Inc., the PR firm she founded in 2002. She uses a critical lens to assess insights and nuances of consumers, many of whom are multicultural. Prior to starting her firm, Betsy was the founder and vice president of Ketchum Public Relations' African American Markets Group, the global public relations industry's first dedicated, in-house team to focus on reaching the African American consumer. Betsy started her public relations career at Hallmark Cards, Inc. as a company spokesperson where she most notably launched the company's first Kwanzaa card. She is an honors graduate of Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University and the 1999 recipient of the Thelma Thurston Gorham Distinguished Alumnus Award for her contributions to the School's PR program and the public relations industry. She currently serves as the co-chair of PRSA Georgia's DEI Committee and on the advisory board of Deschutes Brewery based in Bend, Oregon.





### **Eric Winkfield Vice President, M Booth**

Eric Winkfield is a skilled communicator with a range of experience in developing and implementing communications strategies and programs for privately held and publicly traded companies. Some of the areas he often supports are a mix of integrated marketing, corporate affairs, DE&I, and crisis/issues management. Currently, Eric serves as a vice president at New York-based M Booth & M Booth Health where he serves as a senior counselor to clients such as American Express, Liberty Mutual, Proctor & Gamble, Fiserv, and the Center for Disease Control & Prevention. He also is the first to oversee the development and implementation of the group’s diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. The Miami, Florida native holds a Master of Science degree in Integrated Marketing Communications from West Virginia University and a bachelor’s degree in Public Relations from Florida A&M University. He is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and serves on the board of advisors for the After-School All-Stars DC.



### **Paula Witt, Music Publicist, Vice President, Sunshine Sachs Morgan & Lylis**

Paula Witt graduated in 1991 from the FAMU School of Journalism and Graphic Arts with a bachelor’s degree in Broadcast Journalism. She is currently a Vice President at the New York-based Public Relations firm Sunshine Sachs Morgan & Lylis. Her primary focus is personal PR for musicians and events including Janet Jackson, K-Pop group NCT 127, Harry Belafonte, the BET Awards, Carnegie Hall, and more. Paula’s career in Public Relations began at Greenpeace and the UniverSoul Circus in Atlanta, Georgia until she took a leap of faith and moved to New York City to focus on music. She currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. Paula is a long-time member of the National Association of Black Journalists, which she first joined as a student at FAMU.



### **Marsha Archer, President/CEO, M-Squared Public Relations**

Those who know her refer to her as a ‘true girl boss!’ A hotel and restaurant public relations guru, Marsha Archer, founder and president of Atlanta-based, M-Squared Public Relations, has represented the best of the hospitality industry. From Wolfgang Puck to Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Marsha has secured coverage in top-tier outlets and landed clients on popular shows such as Food Network’s Chopped and Best Baker in America. But when she’s not promoting a new hotel or taste-testing a new menu, this class of ‘96 FAMU J-School grad is dousing the flame of some of the biggest crisis situations across the country. With two offices in Atlanta and Charlotte M-Squared Public Relations is an ever-growing team of passionate communications professionals that lead the PR, social media, and marketing efforts for clients across the globe. Archer is British-born, Jamaican-raised, New Jersey and Florida-schooled, and ATL for life! She is a member of Jack & Jill of America and an officer of her Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. chapter in Atlanta, GA.



### **Jaylen Christie, Account Supervisor, Bernadette Davis Communications**

Jaylen Christie is an award-winning communications practitioner specializing in DEI strategies and overseeing the day-to-day execution of ongoing publicity initiatives that generate media coverage. Recognized by the Orlando Business Journal as a 40 Under 40 recipient and Black Enterprise magazine as a Modern Man of Distinction, Jaylen’s experience in communications includes work with brands such as Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, Walt Disney World, Baker Barrios Architects, Massey Services, Sodexo, and American Heart Association. This year, he spearheaded Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings’ inaugural Juneteenth event and earned an international Hermes Creative Award and a Radiance Award for Trailblazing Professional of the Year from the Public Relations Society of America’s Sunshine District. Jaylen holds a bachelor’s degree in Journalism from Florida A&M University and a master’s degree in communications from the University of Central Florida. He is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

**2:15 – 3:15 p.m.**

# “LIGHTS, CAMERAS ... ACTION!”

The Entertainment Zone - Recasting  
Your Skills

Photo Studio – Room 2058

Powered By:



**WARNER BROS.  
DISCOVERY™**

**Moderator:** Rashan Ali, TV/Radio Personality, Author

**Panelists:** Dontaira Terrell, Entertainment Journalist // Nathan Vinson, Weekend Audience Editor, People // Driadonna Roland, Exec. Producer, Hell of a Week with Charlamagne the God // Juwan Mass, Ghost Brothers, Discovery+ // Dalen Spratt, Ghost Brothers, Discovery+ // Marcus Harvey, Ghost Brothers, Discovery+



## **Rashan Ali, TV/Radio Personality, Author**

Rashan Ali is a multi-media personality, actor, author, and philanthropist from Decatur, Georgia. A graduate of FAMU, Rashan has been heavily immersed in radio and television since 2002. She launched her radio career at Radio One and has since been seen on CNN, Headline News, CBS Sports Network, NBA TV & ESPN properties as a sports anchor and sideline reporter. From 2017-2020, she led TV One's Sister Circle as the show's moderator and co-host. She is the founder of Sporty Girls, Inc., The Cool Soror Podcast and Brand, and The Coach's Daughter Production Company. You can see her on the new series, "All the Queen's Men" which is streaming on BET Plus. Rashan is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and is married to fellow FAMU alumnus Brian Smith. They have two daughters and live in metro Atlanta.



## **Dontaira Terrell, Entertainment Journalist**

Dontaira Terrell is a 2008 FAMU graduate and Ohio native. Her career as an entertainment journalist spans nearly two decades— most recently as Managing Editor for 21Ninety under the Blavity brand umbrella. Her work has appeared in national media, including Black Enterprise, BET, VH1, MTV, Shondaland, REVOLT TV, The Recording Academy (Grammys), etc.

She’s cultivated buzz-worthy conversations with celebrities and tastemakers such as Tyra Banks, Halle Berry, Gabrielle Union, Melissa McCarthy, Octavia Spencer, Regina King, Misty Copeland, Tyler Perry, Michael B. Jordan, Taraji P. Henson, and more.



## **Nathan Vinson, Weekend Audience Editor, People**

Born and raised in Tallahassee, FL, Nathan Vinson, a Spring 2019 graduate of FAMU’s SJGC, was committed to making his experience as a journalism student a full one. Over the course of four years, he served as a senior writer for the FAMUAN; an award-winning producer, host, and Music Director for WANM 90.5; Copy Desk Editor for Journey Magazine and the social media manager for the School of Journalism and Graphic Communication. Following graduation, Nathan was accepted into NBCUniversal’s esteemed Page Program, a rotational learning and development program that gives promising early career talent a start in the media industry. After finishing his rotational year with the company, he began seeking more digital-centric roles and landed at BuzzFeed as a social publishing fellow. After nearly a year there, he was recruited by People Magazine where he currently serves as the weekend audience editor for the outlet’s social platform.



## **Driadonna Roland, Exec. Producer, Hell of a Week with Charlamagne the God**

Driadonna Roland earned a B.S. in broadcast journalism in 2008 from Florida A&M University and has parlayed that degree into a decade-long career in journalism and entertainment. After starting her career as a newspaper reporter with Gannett, she transitioned to digital media with industry-leading outlets including NFL Network, BuzzFeed, REVOLT, and Complex. During the pandemic, she pivoted to Hollywood and is currently a development coordinator at Comedy Central, with a focus on unscripted content. Driadonna was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, and is a writing and literacy tutor for 826LA.

**2:15 – 3:15 p.m.**

# COUNTDOWN TO DEADLINE

What it takes to make it in the newsroom and beyond

**Lecture Hall**

**Moderator:** Denise Hendricks, Executive Producer, MSNBC

**Panelists:** Aiyana Ishmael, Editorial Assistant, Teen Vogue // Rana Cash, Executive Editor, Charlotte Observer // Tia Mitchell, White House Correspondent, C-Span Host, Washington Journal // Kareem White, Sr. Talent Producer, ESPN



## **Denise Hendricks, Executive Producer, MSNBC**

C. Denise Hendricks is an award-winning television producer and writer. She is currently the Executive Producer at MSNBC for The Cross Connection w/Tiffany Cross and The Sunday Show w/Jonathan Capehart. She has been in the news and entertainment business for several years producing for: CNN, HLN, “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” the OWN network, ABC’s “The Revolution” daytime talk show, BET’s late-night talk show “The Mo’Nique Show,” and for NBC, CBS, ABC and FOX television news affiliates across the country. Denise holds a B.S. in Journalism from Florida A&M University, an M.A. in Christian Education from the Interdenominational Theological Center, and a Screenwriting certificate from Emory University. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., the Producers Guild of America, and the National Association of Black Journalists.



### **Aiyana Ishmael, Editorial Assistant, Teen Vogue**

Aiyana Ishmael is the editorial assistant at Teen Vogue. Ishmael focuses heavily on the culture of fashion and how it intertwines with and affects underserved communities. She is an award-winning journalist from Miami, Florida, and a Spring 2021 graduate of Florida A&M University. Ishmael has bylines in the Wall Street Journal, Essence, Refinery29, and many more. As a journalist, Ishmael wants to ignite conversation and create change through storytelling.



### **Rana Cash, Executive Editor, Charlotte Observer**

Rana L. Cash, a 1992 graduate of Florida A&M, is the Executive Editor of The Charlotte Observer and a member of the McClatchy National Leadership Team. She rose through the ranks as a sports reporter, beginning her career covering high school and college sports for The Miami Herald. Her sports reporting continued at the Dallas Morning News and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, where she transitioned into leadership roles. Rana became an assistant sports editor at the AJC, Deputy Sports Editor at Sporting News, and NFL Editor at the Minneapolis Star Tribune before taking over as Executive Sports of the Louisville Courier-Journal. In the wake of the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and as the coronavirus pandemic gripped the world, Rana chose to leave sports and leverage her decades-long experience as a journalist to more greatly influence news coverage. She was named Executive Editor of the Savannah Morning News and Georgia state director, overseeing the Augusta Chronicle and the Athens Banner Herald. After diversifying the newsroom and launching more inclusion initiatives in Georgia, Rana accepted the Executive Editor's position at the Charlotte Observer. Rana is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.



### **Tia Mitchell, White House Correspondent, C-Span Host, Washington Journal**

Tia Mitchell is a Washington correspondent for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, covering national politics for a Georgia audience. She is frequently tapped to provide political expertise on CNN, MSNBC, FiveThirtyEight, NPR, and other national news programs. Prior to joining the AJC, Mitchell spent her career in Florida with the Tampa Bay Times and The Florida Times-Union newspapers where she covered local, state, and national politics. Since 2019, Mitchell has served as chairwoman of NABJ's Political Task Force. She is also active in her local NABJ chapter, the Washington Association of Black Journalists, and a member of the Washington Press Club Foundation Board. Mitchell is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and a lifetime member of the Florida A&M University National Alumni Association. She graduated from FAMU in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism. Mitchell is originally from Louisville, Kentucky.



### **Kareem White, Sr. Talent Producer, ESPN**

Kareem White is a senior talent producer at ESPN, where he has been employed for 15 years. White spent his first 5½ years at ESPN in the production research department working on shows such as "SportsCenter," "Mike and Mike," "NFL Live" and "First Take." Prior to his time at ESPN, White worked for the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Denver Broncos in the media relations/community relations department. He received a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from Florida A&M University in 1997 and a master's degree in sports management from Florida State University in 2003. He has worked at high-profile events, including several Super Bowls, NBA Finals, and College Football Playoffs. White is a two-time Emmy Award winner for work on "SportsCenter" and E:60. He is the former president of the Southern New England Association of Black Journalists and a strong supporter of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. White was born and raised in Bradenton, Fla., but currently resides in Bristol, Conn.

**3:20-4:20 p.m**

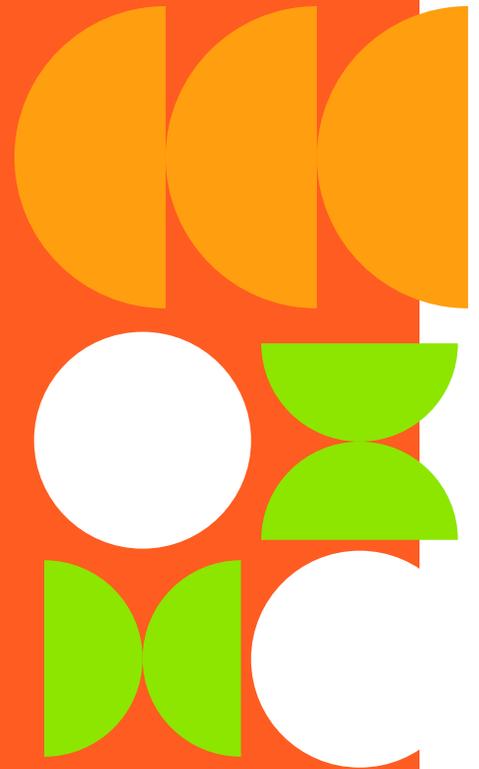
# ***DESIGNING THE CAREER YOU LOVE***

Putting your passion to work in graphic design

**Room 3133**

**Moderator:** Brian Rice (BS '91), SVP, Global Chief Brand and Design Officer, 3M Company

**Panelists:** Novia Lindsay, Amadeus North America // Jason Jones, Studio Jones Design // Keytron Jordan, Graphic Designer, Paramount/CBS Sports



## **Brian Rice, SVP, Global Chief Brand and Design Officer, 3M Company**

Accomplished creative leader, CPG branding strategist and design thinker with demonstrated leadership in managing creative communications, digital, social, advertising, print, packaging, retail, branded environments and experience design for the world's most valuable, trusted, and iconic brands. Executive level design leadership expertise from strategy development and planning through in-market implementation. Innately bridges analytical business thinking, marketing strategy, and consumer insights with strategic design solutions. Broad range of marketing expertise in brand purpose, equity, and positioning development including direct responsibility for strategic brand design, packaging, industrial design, product, and new product pipeline innovation. Team leader, builder, coach, mentor, friend, husband, and father.



### **Novia Lindsay, Amadeus North America**

Novia has over 20 years of experience in design for a wide variety of public, private, and government clients. Novia graduated from FAMU with honors in 2001, earning her bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from the School of Journalism and Graphic Communications. Novia also holds a certificate in Web Design and Interactive Media from the Art Institute of Atlanta as well as interface design and analysis training from Carleton University's Sprott School of Business. Prior to joining Amadeus, a global technology firm, she worked as a User Experience Designer at InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) where she worked to launch their industry-changing Guest Reservation System. Additional work focused on writing user interface guidelines, leading their change control process for user interfaces, and championing their Black Employee Resource Group (BERG). Prior to IHG, Novia provided graphics and branding support to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the Detroit Free Press. In addition to her professional design work, Novia served on the inaugural National Board for SISTUHS, Inc. and often consults with non-profits on increasing their digital presence and building brand awareness.



### **Jason Jones, Studio Jones Design**

Jason has over 25 years of experience in Graphic Design, Marketing, and Branding in industries ranging from hospitality to non-profits. He graduated from Florida A&M University with a degree in graphic design and later earned his M.B.A. from Herzing University. He is the owner of StudioJones Design, a design studio based in Orlando, Florida, and has worked with companies like Disney, Wyndham, Tupperware, ESPN, and more. Before starting StudioJones Design in 2012, Jason was the Art Director of Orlando Magazine, Marketing Art Director at the Orlando Sentinel, and a graphics intern at the New York Times. He is also a Graphic Design professor at Valencia College. When he's not crawling around in the mud at a Savage Race, relaxing at the beach, or traveling with his daughter, he helps students start their careers and clients build their brands.



### **Keytron Jordan, Graphic Designer, Paramount/CBS Sports**

Keytron Jordan is a Graphic Designer for Paramount/CBS Sports hailing from Miami, FL. He is a recent graduate of Florida A&M University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design. Before joining Paramount, Keytron was part of the 2020 cohort for the HBCU Entertainment Industry College Outreach Program. He has been a Little Brother in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America program since 2008. He is a member of Phi Sigma Theta National Honor Society and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

**3:20 - 4:20 p.m**

# “BRANDING YOUR HUSSLE”

Making your personal Brand work for You!

Lecture Hall

**Moderator:** Nick Nelson, CEO, The Brandpreneur

**Panelists:** Ameer Brown, Co-Founder/President, Breakr //  
Aaron Paxton Arnold, Writer/Producer for Television and Film //  
Nikki Frenney-Wiggins, The Nikita Consultancy, LLC



## **Nick Nelson, CEO, The Brandpreneur**

Nick F. Nelson is an award-winning brand strategist, creative executive, and CEO of The BRANDPRENEUR® Agency, the nation’s leading personal and professional brand development firm for people and businesses of color. BRANDPRENEUR helps people who are great at what they do GET NOTICED online. They do this by assisting in developing strategy and image and teaching them how to deliver brand messaging through custom content across social media. Throughout his nearly two-decade career, Nick has produced targeted marketing and communications strategies for leading consumer products and entertainment brands. Most notable are Disney, General Mills, HBO, NBC, STARZ, Warner Bros. Pictures, and Walmart. Recognized as the “Agency Marketer of the Year” by the Atlanta Chapter of the American Marketing Association in 2012, Nick became the first and only African American to receive the honor. Not limited to immersing himself in solution-oriented ideas that only impact his clients, Nick has graced stages as a keynote speaker, host, and panelist. His undeniable foresight in business and engaging spin on real-world issues keeps audiences captivated, making him an in-demand keynote speaker.



### **Ameer Brown, Co-Founder/President, Breakr**

Ameer Brown is the Head of Product and co-founder of MusicBreakr, a two-sided marketplace that connects artists and influencers, and fortune 500 brands to promote music and music-related initiatives across the entire internet (e.g., Twitch, Youtube, IG, Tik Tok, etc.). Breakr has raised \$7M to date. Prior to launching Breakr, Ameer spent 5 years working as an engineer at Adobe specializing in multimedia production. Before he made a career shift to software engineering Ameer worked for a full-service media agency in NYC where he learned the ins and outs of programmatic media planning and buying. He attended Florida A&M as a Public Relations major and is a native of Queens, New York.



### **Aaron Paxton Arnold, Writer/Producer for Television and Film**

Aaron Paxton Arnold is somewhat of a Renaissance Man. He graduated from FAMU's SJGC in 2000 and began his journey in PR/Marketing, working at Hill + Knowlton. After four years, he left agency life to pursue his passion as an unpaid intern assistant for Bad Boy Records and Sean "Diddy" Combs. He founded MusicsMyBusiness (MIMB), and in 2008, the company was named one of America's Smartest New Companies led by people under 30 by INC Magazine. Paxton is a sought-after speaker and has been named one of FAMU's 40 under 40 and among the top 125 Alumni in the University's 125-year history. Recently he received a certificate in TV, Humor, and Comedy Sitcom writing from Emory University and landed a spot as a comedy/sitcom writer for a PBS show. He completed his first pilot and short film and joined the LA-based agency MY Code as a Lead Creative. He is a member of Omega Psi Phi, a dad, and a husband based in Atlanta, Georgia.



### **Nikki Frenney-Wiggins, The Nikita Consultancy, LLC**

An experienced leader in Corporate Communications, Nikki Frenney, has spent more than two decades managing communications strategies for both corporate and government entities across the United States. In 2013, Nikki founded The Nikita Consultancy, a boutique communications firm that specializes in public policy communications, government relations, and speechwriting. In the mid-1990s, Nikki was a news reporter before beginning her career in public and media relations. Since 2001, Nikki has worked in the public transit industry, where she is well known as an influential communications strategist and a leader committed to changing the way public transportation is perceived by the public. Prior to her extensive work in public transit, Nikki served as spokeswoman for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement where she drafted communications priorities, plans, and speeches for Governors Lawton Chiles and Jeb Bush. Nikki is a graduate of Florida A&M University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism.

**3:20 – 4:20 p.m.**

# FROM HERE TO THERE: WHERE YOUR J-SCHOOL DEGREE CAN TAKE YOU

Learn what else you can do with your  
journalism degree

**Photo Studio – Room 2058**

**Moderator:** Courtney Culmer, Founder, Uplevel Communications

**Panelists:** Tola Thompson, Partner, Ballard Partners // Kanya Stewart, Communications Director, National Association of Black Journalists // A'sia Horne, Assistant Editor, The Woman King



## Courtney Culmer, Uplevel Communications

Courtney has been part of the communications and marketing ecosystem for almost 20 years, working for Fortune 500 companies like United Technologies Corp. (now Raytheon Technologies), NCR Corporation, and ESPN (a Disney company), and later providing communications and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) consulting services to industry leaders, influencers, and non-profits such as Google, the National Black Justice Coalition, and more. Courtney has a unique perspective on the pain points and opportunities for both companies and freelancers. Her passion for connecting people, creating value-based solutions, and helping underrepresented groups succeed led her to found Uplevel in 2020. She raised \$250K from angel investors to bring the vision to life and was recently selected for Google for Startups' Black Founders Fund, which included a \$100K cash award. Courtney received her B.S. in Broadcast Journalism from Florida A&M University in 2005 and holds a master's degree in Integrated Marketing Communications from Florida State University and an MBA from UCLA's Anderson School of Management. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and lives in Atlanta, Georgia.



### **Tola Thompson, Partner, Ballard Partners**

Tola Thompson is a partner with Ballard Partners one of the nation's leading government relations firms. A 16-year veteran of Capitol Hill, Tola most recently served as Chief of Staff to U.S. Rep. Al Lawson, a member of the powerful House Financial Services Committee. He also worked for ten years with former US Rep. Carrie Meek, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, where he served as communications director and managed a broad legislative portfolio that included telecommunications, education, labor, health, and agricultural appropriations. Tola previously served as assistant vice president and director of Governmental Relations at Florida A&M University where he worked across almost every facet of government to bring in over \$300 million in new funding to support the university's priorities.



### **Kanya Stewart, Communications Director, National Association of Black Journalists**

Kanya Stewart is a 2004 graduate of the FAMU School of Journalism & Graphic Communication, where she received a bachelor's degree in Journalism/magazine production. Stewart currently serves as the Director of Communications for the National Association of Black Journalists, advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion in news and media. An award-winning communicator, consultant, writer, and editor, she previously served her alma mater as the Assistant Director of Communications/Media Relations and Executive Editor of the Office of Communications. Stewart also worked closely with SJGC students as a student media adviser and internship supervisor. While a student at FAMU, she served as Managing Editor of Journey Magazine and in multiple leadership roles at The FAMUan.



### **A'sia Horne, Assistant Editor, The Woman King**

A graduate of Florida A&M University's Broadcast Journalism program, A'sia Horne has always been a storyteller. She is an ESPN alum who interned as an editor and the following year worked as a Production Assistant for the NASCAR Countdown show and live show. She then moved into advertising for an agency where she worked with clients such as La-Z-Boy Furniture, Honda, ARCO, and the Los Angeles Clippers. A'sia currently freelances as an assistant editor. She's worked on LeBron James' HBO show The Shop and as an assistant editor on NBC's Young Rock, 1883, Grey's Anatomy, Lena Waithe's show Twenties, and most recently as an assistant editor on the feature film The Woman King. If you ask what's one of her most outstanding achievements over the past few years, she will say being chosen to participate in the ACE Diversity Editing Mentorship Program (2019-2021) and starting her non-profit The Hue Collective, where she serves as co-founder.



**2 – 4 p.m.**

# **40TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION**

**Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future**

**The Meek-Eaton Black Archives and Museum**

**Mistress of Ceremony: Rashan Ali**





# ANNIVERSARY SJGC GIVING Campaign

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