



36TH ANNUAL NASHVILLE

ATHENA

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP
GALA

POWERED BY Cable

**BUILDING BRIDGES,
BREAKING BARRIERS**

JULY 21, 2026

GAYLORD SPRINGS GOLD LINKS

A Message from the 2026 Co-Chairs

Dear Friends,

It is our honor to welcome you to the 36th Annual Nashville ATHENA Awards & Scholarship Program.

This year's theme, **Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers**, reflects the women we are privileged to honor tonight. . They are leading in ways that create opportunity, strengthen organizations, and make room for others to thrive. Their impact reaches far beyond their titles or individual accomplishments because they understand that leadership is measured not only by what we achieve, but by how we support, mentor, and advocate for others along the way.

At a time when strong, thoughtful, and courageous leadership is deeply needed, the ATHENA nominees remind us what it means to lead with both excellence and purpose. They have challenged barriers, built relationships across differences, and used their influence to help move our community forward.

The ATHENA Leadership Model has always recognized that leadership is about lifting others as we rise. Tonight is an opportunity to celebrate these remarkable women, but it is also a reminder of the role each of us can play in advancing the next generation of leaders. We all have the ability to open a door, make an introduction, share an opportunity, speak someone's name in a room, or encourage a woman who is still discovering the strength of her own voice. These actions may feel small, but together, they build stronger organizations, stronger communities, and a stronger future.

We are especially proud that the Nashville ATHENA program continues to invest in young women through scholarships that support their educational and leadership journeys. . Empowering future leaders is one of the most meaningful ways we can carry this legacy forward.

To our nominees, thank you for the example you set and the many ways you serve Middle Tennessee. To our scholarship recipients, we hope you feel the strength of this community standing behind you as you pursue your goals. And to our sponsors, Patrons Society members, volunteers, partners, and guests, thank you for your generosity, commitment and belief in the power of women's leadership.

As we celebrate 36 years of ATHENA in Nashville, that progress happens when barriers are challenged, bridges are built, and leaders choose to bring others with them. Our hope is that each of us leaves tonight inspired by the women in this room and recommitted to creating more opportunities for women to lead.

With gratitude,

Dr. Maya Faison & Dr. Michelle Cummings Steele
2026 Nashville ATHENA Co-Chairs

Welcome to the 2026 Nashville ATHENA Awards!

What an incredible privilege it is to gather together in celebration of leaders whose impact extends far beyond their titles. Tonight, we honor women who have transformed workplaces, strengthened communities, inspired future generations, and demonstrated that true leadership is measured not only by what we accomplish, but by how we empower others along the way.

The ATHENA Awards represent more than excellence. They represent a commitment to lifting as we climb, to opening doors that once seemed closed, and to creating opportunities that make our community stronger for everyone. Each nominee and recipient reminds us that leadership rooted in service has the power to leave an enduring legacy.

To our nominees, congratulations. Being recognized by your peers is a remarkable achievement and a testament to the influence you have had on the people and organizations around you. Your dedication, innovation, resilience, and generosity have not gone unnoticed.

To our award recipients, we celebrate you. Your leadership reflects the very spirit of ATHENA. One that inspires progress, champions others, and demonstrates that success is most meaningful when it creates opportunities for those who follow.

This evening would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors, community partners, volunteers, and the many individuals who believe in the mission of recognizing and advancing women's leadership throughout Middle Tennessee. Thank you for investing in this tradition and in the future leaders it continues to inspire.

As President of CABLE, I am proud to be part of an organization that believes leadership is not defined by position, but by purpose. Every day, I have the privilege of witnessing women who are building stronger businesses, more inclusive workplaces, and more connected communities. Tonight is our opportunity to pause, celebrate those accomplishments, and be reminded of what is possible when leadership and service go hand in hand.

My sincere congratulations and deepest gratitude to our ATHENA Co-Chairs, Dr. Michelle Steele and Dr. Maya Faison, whose vision, leadership, and unwavering dedication made this evening's celebration possible.

Congratulations once again to each of our nominees and recipients. Thank you for allowing us to celebrate your achievements, your influence, and the remarkable legacy you continue to build.

Here's to an unforgettable evening of celebration, inspiration, and well-deserved recognition.

With appreciation,

Dr. Contrecia T. Tharpe

President,
CABLE Nashville



Dr. Adrienne Battle

Director of Schools

adrienne.battle@mnps.org

615-259-8421 office

615-214-8850 fax

Dear 2026 Traditional ATHENA Nominees,

Congratulations! Being named a nominee for the Traditional ATHENA Award means your community has already recognized what many of you have known quietly for years: that your leadership matters, that your example matters, and that the way you have chosen to lift others along the way matters just as much as anything you have built or achieved on your own.

I was honored to receive this same recognition last year, and I still think often about what it means to carry the name ATHENA. It is not simply an award for accomplishment. It is a reflection of a spirit, one defined by exemplary leadership, superior performance, deep commitment to community, and a genuine, unselfish investment in other women. That is a high bar. It is also, I believe, exactly the bar each of you has already been meeting, whether or not anyone was keeping score.

This year's theme, Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers, feels especially fitting. Every woman in this nominee class has, in her own way, done both. You have opened doors that were once closed. You have made room at tables that were not always built with you in mind. You have mentored the women coming up behind you, even while still finding your own footing. That is the work. It rarely comes with applause in the moment, but it changes the trajectory of everyone who benefits from it. Somewhere behind each of you is a mother, a mentor, a colleague, or a friend who believed in you before you fully believed in yourself. Somewhere ahead of you is a young woman who needs to see exactly what you have done.

That is the real gift of ATHENA. It is not only a recognition of where you stand today. It is a signal to every woman watching that there is no ceiling on what she can become, because she can see it modeled in you.

Whatever comes next on the evening of the gala, know that you have already succeeded in the ways that matter most. You have led with purpose. You have mentored with intention. You have served with passion. Continue to build those bridges, keep breaking those barriers, and know that this entire community is rising with you.

Congratulations again, and my deepest respect and gratitude for everything you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrienne Battle".

Dr. Adrienne Battle

Superintendent of Nashville Public Schools
2025 Traditional ATHENA Award Recipient

Congratulations to each of the 2026 ATHENA Young Professional nominees.

Being named an ATHENA nominee is an incredible honor. More than recognition, it reflects the way you move through the world. Long before your accomplishments were celebrated on a stage, someone experienced your leadership through a conversation, a decision, a risk you took, or a moment when you chose to show up for someone else.

When I received the ATHENA Young Professional Award last year, I found myself reflecting on the stories we carry. Every person in that room had a story of triumph and disappointment, confidence and uncertainty, success and sacrifice. Those stories shape us, and they shape the kind of leaders we become.

This year's theme, Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers, reminds me that bridges are built through connection. They take shape when we take the time to truly see one another, to listen before we speak, to seek understanding before judgment, and to recognize the humanity in every person we encounter.

Throughout my own leadership journey, I have learned that one of the greatest gifts we can offer another person is the practice of attunement. It is the choice to notice someone, to understand their experience, and to let them know they matter. I believe the brave decision to see people fully has the power to change lives. When people feel seen, they find courage. When they feel understood, they begin to believe in what is possible. That is where barriers begin to fall.

Each of you has already demonstrated that kind of leadership. You have chosen to invest your talents not only in advancing your own goals, but in creating opportunities for others. You have opened doors, challenged systems, mentored emerging leaders, and strengthened your communities in ways that may never be fully measured. Your impact reaches far beyond your résumé. It lives in the people whose lives are different because you chose to care.

As you celebrate this milestone, I hope you take a moment to reflect on those who helped build the bridges that carried you here. Think of the mentors who believed in you, the colleagues who encouraged you, the family and friends who stood beside you, and even the challenges that shaped your resilience. None of us arrives at these moments alone.

Thank you for the leadership you model every day. Thank you for choosing courage over comfort, collaboration over competition, and purpose over recognition. Whether your name is called as this year's recipient or not, your leadership is already making a difference. You are helping shape a stronger, more connected future.

Congratulations again to each of you. May you continue building bridges, breaking barriers, and reminding others that they, too, are worthy of being seen, valued, and empowered to lead.

With gratitude and admiration,

Vanessa Helbig Johnson

Senior Vice President of Community Programs & Executive Director of Girls Inc.

YWCA Nashville & Middle TN

PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL

WELCOME + INTRODUCTIONS

GREETINGS

INVOCATION

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

DINNER

HISTORY OF ATHENA AWARDS

RECOGNITION OF 2026 PATRON SOCIETY MEMBERS

SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATIONS

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

PANEL DISCUSSION

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL NOMINEE PRESENTATION AND

NAMING OF RECIPIENT

TRADITIONAL NOMINEE PRESENTATION AND NAMING OF

RECIPIENT

CLOSING REMARKS



TRADITIONAL NOMINEES



DAFFANY D. BAKER

YWCA Nashville & Middle
Tennessee

FUN FACT

I love to brunch throughout Nashville. I am a total FOODIE! My recent visit was to Federales & it was AMAZING! Thank me later. :)

Daffany Baker is a proud mother (one to include a deployed Navy sailor), 2x best selling author, motivational speaker, & community leader. Her career highlights a number of years as a school educator and over 15 years in the correctional arena. She strives to always lead by example both personally and professionally.

In her previous role, she served as Associate Warden of Treatment at Debra K. Johnson Rehabilitation Center. Daffany founded The Pretty Firecracker Foundation solely dedicated to those previously incarcerated to help overcome barriers that may hinder them from becoming acclimated back to society. She has book clubs in two correctional facilities where she serves. Daffany enjoys giving back and being a positive beacon of light in their lives.

In her current role, Daffany serves as Senior Vice President of Domestic Violence Services for the YWCA Nashville & Middle TN overseeing the largest most comprehensive DV shelter in the state. (70 beds). She speaks throughout TN & beyond to raise awareness about domestic violence. By being a survivor herself, she takes her role very seriously and the impact her team has on transforming lives.

Some of Daffany's most recent accomplishments include DV Outstanding Survivor, Outstanding DV Service Provider (YWCA), Outstanding Innovative DV Program/ Survivors First, Soar Girl Soar Award-Girl Affirm Yourself, Star Leader Award- Bridging the Gap Tennessee, Nashville Women Who Rock- Organizational Impact Award, & Privy Music & Arts Festival Pay It Forward Honoree.

One of her most proud accomplishments is having a vital role in an 8 million domestic violence shelter renovation. The shelter never closed during this project. Having a background in correction, she was honored to be selected by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys to start a domestic violence defendant diversion program in partnership with Nashville District Attorney Glenn Funk's office. This program- Survivors First- has become a model throughout the nation. Their team had the honor of being showcased at the Innovative Justice conference held in Houston Texas recently.

It's also beyond rewarding when she sees her past softball players in the community sharing their goals and real time accomplishments with her as they continue to grow. Daffany has ministered to young girls through coaching softball for over the last 10 years, with one being her own daughter.

Daffany's faith is a guiding light in her life, and she strives to live one that reflects her beliefs. She loves family and in her spare she's locked in at her daughter's softball or volleyball games or else traveling to make memories. Her deep sense of spirituality, instilled by her family from an early age, strengthens her resolve to make not only a positive impact on Nashville but also the world.

"The measure of a leader is not the number of people who serve him but the number of people he serves". - John C. Maxwell

As a professional leader building for those that are watching and coming after her, Daffany's intention always aims to serve.



Danielle Whitworth Barnes is the CEO and President of the Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee, where she leads one of the region's most influential youth-development organizations serving more than 10,000 girls and 4,000 volunteers. A lifelong champion for women and children, Danielle is driving a bold vision to elevate the Girl Scout experience, expand access in underserved communities, and cultivate the next generation of purpose-driven leaders. Under her leadership, the council is strengthening program quality, deepening community partnerships, and opening doors to new opportunities for Girls across Middle Tennessee.

Danielle's passion for service has shaped every step of her career. Before joining the Girl Scouts, she led the U.S. National Human Services practice at Ernst & Young, partnering with government leaders across the country to tackle complex issues such as homelessness, food insecurity, mental health, and gun violence. Her expertise lies in helping organizations translate data into strategy—and strategy into tangible, measurable outcomes for families.

Earlier in her career, Danielle served as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services under two different governors. Overseeing a \$2.1 billion budget, more than 4,000 employees, and 113 facilities, she delivered services to approximately two million Tennesseans annually. Danielle reshaped the agency around a Two-Generation framework, expanded access to essential services, modernized technology systems, strengthened customer experience, and increased economic mobility through targeted employment pathways. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she successfully launched and operationalized statewide initiatives, including P-EBT, Pandemic Cash Assistance, and Pandemic Child Care, to support families through unprecedented disruption.

Danielle previously served as Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel for the Tennessee Department of Human Resources, where she co-authored and implemented the Tennessee Excellence and Accountability (T.E.A.M.) Act. This landmark legislation modernized the state's civil service system, established a statewide mediation program, revamped performance management, and advanced pay-for-performance for state employees. She began her career in private legal practice as a general civil litigator and government relations specialist.

A graduate of Spelman College and the University of Tennessee College of Law, Danielle holds an SPHR certification and a law license. She is also deeply engaged in community work through organizations including the Jack and Jill of America Foundation, Tennessee State Museum, Governor's Early Literacy Foundation, the Tennessee Adoption Project, and MLB Music City. She has been named one of Nashville NFocus Magazine's Most Powerful Women and Nashville Business Journal's Nonprofit Leaders In Charge.

Whether she is speaking to corporate leaders, public officials, or the next generation of changemakers, Danielle brings a clear message: invest in people, especially our youth, to create stronger families, stronger communities, and a stronger future for all.



DANIELLE BARNES

Jack and Jill of America, Inc -
Nashville Chapter

FUN FACT

Honestly, my favorite thing to do in Nashville is visit new restaurants. There's nothing like the energy of the city paired with amazing people!





MELEISHA J. EDWARDS

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,
Kappa Lambda Omega Chapter

FUN FACT

My favorite thing to do in Nashville is to try out the restaurant scene. I love all of the variety and love trying new places.

Meleisha J. Edwards received her BA from Fisk University and her MS from Middle Tennessee State University. She once was a medical student and left to pursue her true passion. Although she still in healthcare, she truly has a passion for film and television.

Meleisha is an award-winning writer/producer, with multiple award credits for several films. Most recently, Meleisha and her team won a 2026 NAACP Image Award for their Short Live Action Film, "Ella". In 2024, Meleisha was appointed to the Nashville Entertainment Commission, where she has served the last couple of years. Meleisha also was also offered membership into the Producers Guild of America, a national membership of film producers and is offered by invitation. Locally, she won the Finishing Fund Award from the Tennessee Entertainment Commission, along with her co-director, Mary McCallum, for her directorial debut feature film, SingleVille.

Some of her other credits and awards include "Best Hometown Short Film" at Indie Memphis Film Festival for a short film, "Minority" as well as "Best Short Film" for the NAFAA awards, also known as the African Oscars, for her multi-award winning short film, In The Spotlight. Her debut film, Masquerade, has also won several awards across the country.

She has produced over 30 multimedia projects including documentaries, shorts, and features. She has been able to work with talents such as Jill Scott, David Arquette, and Issa Rae's production team. She is also the producer of the film, Dark Girls 2, which premiered on OWN. Meleisha is currently the VP of Production with 353 Media Group and continues to freelance and produce projects in Tennessee and around the country.



Lora Barkenbus Fox was raised in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. She graduated from Indiana University with a B.A. in political science and environmental studies in 1992 and went on to graduate cum laude with her law degree from Georgetown University in 1996. Lora clerked for the Tennessee Court of Appeals for two years and spent almost three years in private practice. She has been providing client advice and litigating cases for the Metropolitan Government Department of Law from 2000 to the present.

At home, Lora and her husband have enjoyed raising their three college-aged children with special family traditions, like camping trips, an annual summer trip to Chautauqua Lake in NY, and poker nights. In her spare time, Lora enjoys playing piano and pursuing vigorous athletics pursuits such as soccer, triathlons, and tennis.

At her work, Lora has enjoyed advocating for the city she loves, arguing on behalf of the Metropolitan Government in more than 50 appellate cases, including arguing at the Tennessee Supreme Court three times. As Associate Director of Law, she supervises the half of the office that provides client advice to the Metropolitan Government. Her favorite part of that job is supervising the many talented and skilled attorneys who work for Metro.



LORA FOX

Lawyers' Association for Women,
Marion Griffin Chapter

FUN FACT

Lora's favorite activity is the annual free Green Hills Festival. She established this Festival ten years ago and it is a wonderful neighborhood event.



KATHY GARTHWAITE

Davidson County Democratic
Women (DCDW)

FUN FACT

My favorite thing in Nashville is meeting people through a variety of diverse groups and gaining new friends and insights.

At its core, my career has aimed to enhance the communication between those providing needed services and those seeking them and to improve the effective delivery of those services.

For the first 20 years of my career, I held progressively responsible administrative and clerical positions supporting front-line clinicians as they provided care to military veterans and their families at the Pittsburgh Veterans Affairs Medical Center, a neuro-psychiatric facility in Pennsylvania. My work often required getting key clinical information including laboratory tests and medication regimens to the correct clinicians when it was needed. As computers were added to clinical workflow, I recognized their potential to facilitate clinical information flow and thereby transform patient care enhancing both its efficiency and quality. Therefore, I sought new roles that would allow me to grow and lead as information technology became the critical tool in connecting care givers and patients.

My move to information technology required relocating to a national information technology support center which provided customer service for all Veterans Affairs hospitals. In my new role, I also joined a national team to teach supply and logistics software to local supply chain leaders and experts. When the Clinton-Gore National Partnership for Reinventing Government initiative provided the impetus for private-sector inspired database management, I was selected to join a small team to integrate databases to improve operational efficiency among closely located medical centers.

When the Department established an additional national information technology office, I was selected to work as a contracting officer's technical representative for software being developed in partnership between the Veterans Health Administration and the private sector. My diverse career experiences prepared me for and supported my selection to lead the implementation of bar coding for medication administration. This project would be among the most complex ever attempted in the Department. The requirements for this project included adding wireless capability, handheld bar scanners and bar-coded patient wrist bands, as well as union negotiations and totally new processes for all nurses and pharmacists across 172 hospitals. Remarkably, our public-private team accomplished the project in 10 months. This project implementation has received recognition and awards from several national leadership organizations. The systematic use of bar coding to assure that patients get the right medication at the right dose and at the right time has saved many thousands of lives and is now a standard of care in hospitals worldwide.

Since my retirement from the Department of Veterans Affairs, I have been active in supporting adult education as a student, board member and board president at the Vanderbilt Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; in promoting dialogue among diverse communities as a partner in OneNashville; and in providing youth and adult civics education classes as vice president of Clubs United for a Progressive Strategy. I have also worked for meaningful policy reforms through my efforts with diverse individuals by working on select political campaigns in California, Philadelphia and Nashville.



Sheila Gibson is a native of Oak Ridge, TN, and has resided in Nashville for twenty-nine years. Sheila is currently employed by Healthcare Corporation of America (HCA). She has worked at HCA for 30 years in the Information and Technology Services Group (ITG) as Assistant Vice President of Acquisitions, New Constructions and Divestitures and she is the Chair of the ITG Culture and Values Council.

Sheila earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree in Business Administration from University of New Orleans; a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Bristol University; and she is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). She was a member of the Women's Basketball team for the University of New Orleans and University of Alabama/Huntsville, where she was All-American her sophomore year. Following her collegiate career, she played 2 years semi-pro for Athletes in Action. Most recently, Sheila led the City of Nashville Leadership team that partnered with Athletes Unlimited (a professional women's basketball team) leadership team to finalize the decision for Nashville to host AU's 2025 Women's Basketball season.

Sheila is an advocate for athletics and supporting women, with a strong desire and passion for mentoring and guiding young leaders and youth. Sheila executes this passion in the Nashville community with board membership and community engagement for the numerous nonprofit organizations:

- Community/Board Engagement:
- PlayMakers Nashville – Serves on Board of Directors (Partnership Lead)
 - Play Like a Girl (PLAG) – Serves on Board of Directors and serves as Board, Chair
 - Nashville Sports Council (NSC) and Women in Sports Committee (WIS) – Serves as NSC Board Member and serves as WIS, Chair
 - Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC) – Executive Board Secretary, Board of Director, and serves as Inclusion Arts Committee, Co-Chair
 - Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) – Serves as Board Member
 - Education Equal Opportunity Group (EEOG) – Serves as Board Member
 - Pivot Technology – Serves on Advisory Board

- Recognition and Community Awards:
- 2025 Creative Girls Rock – Innovator Award
 - 2024 Nashville Black Chamber – Community Advocate Award
 - 2022 Nashville Technology Council – Diversity and Inclusion Advocate of the Year
 - 2020 YMCA – Impact Award
 - 2018 Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity – Community Service Award
 - 2016/2017 HCA Phil Patton Community Award (Finalist) – Annual community service award presented by HCA Foundation and Corporate Sponsorship Program.
 - 2015 EEOG Pioneer Award – voted on by EEOG President and board members
- Leadership Programs:
- 2016 Emerging Leader Class – graduated
 - 2022 L'Estate Leadership Program (Donnellson/Hermitage) Class – graduated

Sheila enjoys working out, listening to music and spending time with her family and friends.



SHEILA GIBSON

HCA Healthcare

FUN FACT

My favorite thing to do in Nashville includes two primary activities:

Attending Sporting events
Attending venues that provide "live" music and entertainment





ERICA GILMORE

Office of the Metropolitan
Trustee

FUN FACT

I love playing with my dogs Draco and Remington and taking East Nashville hot yoga and walking in Nashville Greenways.

Currently, Erica serves as the Trustee for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. She broke the glass ceiling as the first woman and African American to serve in this role. An experienced executive, and advocate, Erica Gilmore, has worked to make government more accountable, transparent, and accessible. Taking on tough challenges and forging innovative solutions.

Erica Gilmore has spent her entire career fighting for traditionally marginalized and middle-class communities. She has served as a Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County At-Large Council Member, Speaker Pro Tempore, Minority Caucus President, and District 19 city council member -- earning a reputation as a strong, pragmatic legislator who champions bold, and progressive solutions to remedy Nashville's toughest challenges.

She was first elected to the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County Council in 2007 where she served as the 19th District Councilmember, which had 17,000 to 19,000 constituents and was a mix of the downtown urban core as well as a variety of neighborhoods, and universities. In 2008, she was elected by the council body to the Speaker Pro Tem position, the highest-ranking position in the city. In 2015, she was elected to councilmember at large where she received the second highest vote getters on council for Nashville and Davidson County.

She previously served as the Assistant Dean of Student Conduct and Student Affairs at Tennessee State University. Erica is a frequent speaker and commentator on issues related to women and children, racial justice, public health, civic engagement, and service. Erica is a member of a wide array of civic and professional organizations Rotary, Delta Sigma Theta Incorporated, Les Gemmes, Tennessee Trustee's Association, Past President and Treasurer, Tennessee Association of Property Tax Professionals, Finance Committee for County Officials Association of Tennessee, Nashville Women's Breakfast Club, President, member of LeadershipNashville and former member National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, National League of Cities, Nashville Emerging Leaders, and Young Leaders Council. In addition, she is the Founder of the Gilmore Youth Leadership Institute, an initiative for young girls ages 12-18 to become more civically and politically engaged. This initiative was housed at Fisk and Vanderbilt University.

Erica is a Certified Public Administrator through the Naifeh Center of Effective Leadership. She is a proud alumna of Tennessee State University, earning a Master of Arts in English and a graduate of The John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She obtained a B.A. degree in English from Howard University and completed coursework abroad at the American University of Beirut.

Erica is a native Nashvillian who cherishes her community. She is the parent of Anyah Gilmore-Jones who is a graduate of Howard University. She comes from a family with a long commitment to public service. Her mother is Tennessee State Senator Brenda Gilmore, and her father is Mr. Harry Gilmore, a retired Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County Juvenile Court Officer.



Dr. Keilani M. Goggins is the Managing Director of the Boundless Educators Initiative (BEI) at the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR). In this role, she guides the strategic direction of a \$40M national initiative that partners with teacher preparation programs across the country to strengthen teacher pipelines, improve educator retention, and expand opportunities for educators from historically underserved communities.

Keilani's career spans more than twenty years in education, philanthropy, and nonprofit leadership. She has launched youth development programs, built fellowships that elevate teacher voice in policy, and designed professional pathways for aspiring educators. At the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, she helped bring Girls Inc. to the region, creating new opportunities for young girls to thrive. At Vanderbilt University, she supported pre-service teachers and students entering education and public service. Later, as the inaugural Director of the Hope Street Group Tennessee Teacher Fellowship, she built a model that empowered teachers to share their expertise and influence state-level decision-making.

Dr. Goggins contributes to national conversations on educator workforce and policy through writing and speaking. She is a co-author of "Doing Better for Black Educators: Six Policy Recommendations" and has written for Education Week. She has also contributed to multiple national reports through the Boundless Educators Initiative and has presented for organizations including the University of Pennsylvania, the American Institutes for Research, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and The Hunt Institute.

Keilani serves on the board of B.E. Academy for Girls and is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated, and The Links, Incorporated.

A first-generation college graduate and proud product of Tennessee's public schools, Dr. Goggins earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, her master's degree from Tennessee State University, and her doctorate in Leadership and Professional Practice from Trevecca Nazarene University. She lives in Murfreesboro with her husband and two children.



DR. KEILANI GROGGINS

The Music City (TN) Chapter of
the Links, Inc.

FUN FACT

I love getting lost in Nashville and finding new spots to eat, listen to music, or people watch. It's such a fun city!



GAYLE GOODALL

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metropolitan Nashville Chapter

FUN FACT

My favorite thing to do in Nashville is to relax in Centennial Park on a beautiful sunny day enjoying nature and its beauty.

Gayle Goodall is a native of Nashville, Tennessee, raised in South Nashville. At the age of nine, she joined Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church, where she remains an active member. Her involvement in the Health Ministry has allowed her to lead and participate in various programs focused on Black women's health, including breast cancer awareness walks, diabetes education, and heart health events. Most recently, she had the privilege of serving as Mistress of Ceremonies for the American Heart Association and Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church's inaugural Women's Heart Luncheon.

After graduating from Glenclyff High School, she was awarded the Annabelle Jones Scholarship in 1986, which supported her pursuit of higher education at Middle Tennessee State University. She graduated in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a minor in Economics/Finance, becoming the first college graduate on her mother's side of the family.

Professionally, she brings over 35 years of experience in Sales Management. She currently is a Real Estate Agent with Keller Williams Mt. Juliet. She is a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metro Nashville Chapter and currently serves as Co-Chair of the Economic Empowerment Committee which provides programming to advocate for black women and girls. Her business acumen has also supported numerous fundraising initiatives and community programs, particularly those that align with women's health and wellness through my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She has organized events such as the Healthy Family Day Health Fair in South Nashville and "When You Look Good, You Feel Better," a cancer survivor pampering event in partnership with the American Cancer Society. Her contributions have included securing prizes, obtaining corporate sponsorships, and designing impactful community health initiatives. She was a 2022 Nashville Athena Traditional Award Nominee and 2019 Presidential Spirit Award Winner – Nashville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Her current and past service includes:

- Co-Chair, Economic Empowerment, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metro Nashville Chapter
- * Co-Chair, 2026 – 27th Annual Sister for Sister Leadership Conference, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metro Nashville Chapter
- Board Member, The Minerva Foundation of Tennessee, Inc.
- Trustee Board Member, Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church
- Past Co-Chair, 49th Southern Regional Conference, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (2024)

She has been happily married to Curtis Goodall for over 20 years. They are proud parents of daughter, Curesha and son, Brandon.



DaJuana "Dee" Hammonds is an arts educator, leader, and advocate, and a proud alumna of Fisk University (B.S.) and Lipscomb University (M.Ed.). She currently serves as an Arts Educator and Dean of Fine Arts at Warner Arts Magnet Elementary School. Dee is the recipient of the Queen Smith Award, a national honor presented by the Council of the Great City Schools recognizing outstanding contributions in urban education. In February 2025, she became an Emmy Award winner for her work on the MNPS District Song and Documentary, Every Student Known: The Creation of an Anthem. She was also named a Top 25 Grammy Music Educator Award semi-finalist and selected twice by the Country Music Association Foundation as a Music Teacher of Excellence. Additionally, Dee received the First Night Honors Award for Best Actress in a Play and is the founder and director of Acting Up, a nonprofit children's musical theater program.

Dee credits her passion for music and theater to her elementary music teachers who gave Dee her first solo and introduced her to the arts program at Chattanooga High School Center for Creative Arts, where Dee attended high school and graduated valedictorian. She credits her high school arts teachers for introducing her to musical theater, casting her in her first lead roles, and creating leadership opportunities that led her to music education.

A performer, musician, and gifted songwriter at her core, Dee continues to pursue her passion beyond the classroom, remaining active onstage and in music creation. Her original songs can be found on all major streaming platforms, including I Belong, This Is Where I Belong, and Every Student Known from the Metro Nashville Public Schools album; Declare Your Name and I Am Clean from the Riverside Project; and her personal anthem and single Fearless, produced by her husband, Chad Hammonds. Dee has performed live background vocals for Grammy Award winner Natalie Cole and recorded background vocals on the number-one hit Believe from Brooks & Dunn's Grammy Award-winning platinum album Hillbilly Deluxe. Her stage credits include 6888 (Paige), Next to Normal (Dr. Fine/Dr. Madden), Fan Me With a Brick (Catherine), Caroline, or Change (Dottie), Crowns (Velma), and Ragtime (Sarah's Friend). Dee shares her life with her husband, Chad, and together they are raising seven children: Leslie (17), Chloe (15), Carter (12), Ellington-Renee (9), Grant (8), Dawson Rose (7), and Tye (30).



DAJUANA HAMMONDS

Metro Nashville Public Schools

FUN FACT

My favorite thing in Nashville is my beloved alma mater, Fisk University! I love to give tours of our beautiful historic campus.





MEMORIE WHITE JOHNSON

Hendersonville Area (TN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

FUN FACT

I love to explore Nashville's incredible food scene. Many of my Nashville dining adventures are shared with favorite little dining partner, my son.

Memorie K. White is a Nashville-based attorney and entrepreneur and the founder of Providence Title LLC, a boutique title and escrow company specializing in residential and commercial real estate transactions. Through her leadership, Providence Title has built a reputation for professionalism, precision, and exceptional client service, serving buyers, sellers, developers, and real estate professionals across Middle Tennessee.

In addition to her legal practice, Memorie is deeply committed to civic engagement and community leadership. She actively supports organizations focused on education, literacy, and community development and regularly collaborates with professionals across the legal, real estate, and nonprofit sectors. She serves on the board of Woodbine Community Organization (WCO), Inc. and The Equity Alliance. She is a member of The Nashville Bar Association, Napier Looby Bar Association, Greater Nashville Association of Realtors, and The National Association of Real Estate Brokers.

Memorie is known for her relationship-driven approach to business and her passion for building strong professional and community networks.

Outside of her professional work, she enjoys travel, culinary experiences, and spending time with her family. She lives in Nashville with her husband, Donnell Johnson Sr., and their son Donovan.



Dr. Michelle McKenney Jones is Professor of Management at Belmont University in Nashville, TN, where she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in human resource management, as well as undergraduate courses in organizational behavior, first-year seminars, and management principles. Before joining Belmont, Dr. Jones was a creative human resources leader at Ford Motor Company for 31 years, retiring in May of 2024. Dr. Jones' areas of human resources expertise include recruitment and selection, compensation, succession planning, organizational development, personnel investigations, labor relations, salaried personnel administration, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Dr. Jones received her B.B.A. and M.B.A. from Loyola University of New Orleans and completed her Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) from Trevecca Nazarene University in August of 2022. Her dissertation topic was entitled: A Correlational Study to Examine the Relationship Between Wellness Program Usage and Gen Z Engagement in the Workplace. The primary focus areas of her research include generational cohort analysis, mental well-being programs, and employee engagement. As an academic, Dr. Jones aims to contribute mightily to the scholarship, spiritual development, and engagement of students by creating a classroom environment that builds character and equips students with compassion, courage, and leadership to make impactful changes in the world around them.

Equally important to Dr. Jones is her community, where she serves on the board of the Nashville Ballet and chairs its Personnel Committee. She is an active Business Partner at Glenclyff High School (GHS) in Nashville, serving on the Advisory Board and the GHS Scholarship Board. To date, the scholarship board has awarded more than \$30,000 to graduating seniors. She regularly conducts workshops and seminars for the public and private sector, is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and serves as Vice-President of the Pierians, Inc., an organization committed to advancing the arts of the African American experience. Dr. Jones is also an Associate member of Jack & Jill of America, Inc., and diligently serves on ministries at her church in Nashville, TN.

Dr. Jones is married with two daughters and currently resides in Nolensville, Tennessee.



DR. MICHELLE MCKENNEYJONES

Nashville Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter (NMAC) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

FUN FACT

I enjoy visiting our treasure of local museums, attending seasonal festivals and outdoor concerts, and engaging with the community through church and social events.





DR. MARCIA MILLET

Parthenon (TN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

FUN FACT

Listening to music at the Schermerhorn Center and shopping at the Ladies of Charity Thrift Store. Music and shopping give me a sense of peace.



Dr. Marcia J. Millet is a native of High Point, NC. She has worked for over 35 years in the field of Education. Her work experience ranges from teaching in a K-12 setting to administration at the University level. She received her Ed.D. degree from Tennessee State University, her M.A. degree from the Ohio State University, and her B.A. degree from Bennett College. Dr. Millet completed post-doctoral work at Harvard University through their Women in Education Leadership Program and received additional administrative training through the Emerging Leaders Institute which is sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. She currently serves as the Associate Provost for Faculty Initiatives, Tenured Full Professor and Department Chair of Education at Fisk University. Prior to this appointment she served as Assistant Dean of the Graduate School at Tennessee State University and Department Head/Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at that same institution. Other administrative posts held include, Director of Sponsored Programs and Research/Senior Grants Manager; Associate Dean; Director of Teacher Education and Managing Director of the Metro Nashville Urban Residency Program. She is also the President/CEO of Millet and Associates consulting.

Dr. Millet has numerous professional accomplishments. These include being inducted into the Education Hall of Fame at The Ohio State University, recognized as an outstanding alumna of Bennett College; K-12 Teacher of the Year in the Metropolitan Nashville Public School system; Impactful Woman of Color in STEM by Penn State, and a National Science Foundation Finalist for the President's Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics for the State of Tennessee.

Dr. Millet continues to make significant contributions in her chosen field. She was recently appointed to the inaugural editorial board for the Journal of Trauma Studies in Education. She also serves on the Board for the Tennessee Higher Education in Prison Initiative. She was invited to participate in the 2020/2021 NCURA Region III Research Administration Mentoring Program (R3RAMP). She was the coordinator for a STEAM academy for girls for the Parthenon (TN) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated. Dr. Millet made significant contributions to the college environment during the time she served as the 1st Lady of Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, AL.

In terms of grantsmanship, she and her team, in collaboration with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) wrote and received an \$8,000,000 grant for a STEM project whose goal was to increase the math proficiency of pre-service and in-service teachers in Tennessee. She is also a 2020 recipient of the Noyce Capacity Building Grant entitled "Exploring Partnerships to Build Trajectories into Stem Teaching Professions" which is awarded by the National Science Foundation. Dr. Millet's research interests include women in leadership, teacher preparation and retention, girls and STEAM/STEM education, trauma research, and, diverse and global issues in education. She is a recurring Plenary speaker at The Ohio State University – Newark campus where she shares information on diversifying curricula and BIPOC communities. Dr. Millet recently completed a book entitled "128 Tips for K-12 Teachers."

This journey didn't start in a boardroom. It started with \$27. No safety net. No blueprint. Just a vision—and a woman who refused to let where she began determine where she would end. There were moments that didn't go as planned. Doors that didn't open. Seasons that required me to fail forward, quietly and persistently. But what carried me was not luck—it was faith, focus, systems, and innovation. Four principles that became the foundation of everything I've built. Today, I am the founder and chief executive officer of NaSah's Nurture Nature, a wellness and retail brand that has operated for over 2 decades in one of the most competitive environments in the country: airport concessions. For years, I built independently, creating structure where none existed and turning challenges into systems. More recently, I have expanded through partnerships with global corporations, increasing both scale and access for women and minority entrepreneurs. But the real story is not the business. It is the people. Over ten thousand individuals, primarily women, have moved through environments I have built. They entered for opportunity, but left with so much more—skills, confidence, and direction. Many have gone on to become entrepreneurs, doctors, attorneys, and leaders in their communities. That is the measure of my work. I define BOSS as "Bringing Others Sustainable Success." It is not a title—it is a responsibility. It shows up in how I teach women to move from participation to ownership and in how I build systems that continue to work long after I step away. It also shows up in the most personal role I hold—being a mother. I have raised a son who is educated, creative, and purpose-driven—an artist and music producer building his own path with a focus on mental health education and acceptance. Watching him merge creativity with impact reminds me that what we build in others is the truest form of legacy. My work also extends into maternal health, where I serve as a Morehouse Graduate and licensed community-based doula, perinatal patient navigator, and community health worker. Through Doula of Dreams, I support women—particularly marginalized women—during critical moments in their lives, because advancement must include both economic opportunity and well-being. Along the way, there have been honors and opportunities to speak on national stages. But those are not the headline. The headline is this:

I build people.
I build systems.
And I build pathways where others can rise. Because success is not what I achieve alone—it is what continues because I chose to fail forward and bring others with me.



ANGELA MITCHELL – HILL

NaSah's Nurture Nature

FUN FACT

I enjoy long drives, sunshine, and quiet moments that bring me peace, help me reset, and keep me grounded so I can show up fully.





DR. SANDRA PREWITT

Global Suicide Prevention Alliance

FUN FACT

I enjoy the daily interaction with native Nashvillians and visitors, as well. They each have engaging stories about their origin, and why they love Nashville.

Dr. Sandra Prewitt is an international suicidologist, researcher, writer, and faith leader whose work sits at the powerful intersection of spirituality and suicide prevention. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Global Suicide Prevention Alliance and the Executive Pastoral Leader of Branch of God Ministries, where she provides inspirational leadership, compassionate care, and strategic direction to advance both faith-based and global mental health programs.

Dr. Prewitt holds a Doctor of Education from Trevecca Nazarene University, a Master of Arts in Christian Ministry from Lipscomb University, a professional certification from Roosevelt University, and a Bachelor of Science from Tennessee State University. Her academic and career path reflect a deep commitment towards lifelong learning and to pursuing solutions that tackle the complex relationship between religion and suicide prevention—an area in which she continues to conduct active research.

An energetic and purpose-driven leader, Dr. Prewitt’s story represents one of extraordinary growth and service. Successfully transitioning from the church kitchen to the pulpit and beyond, she has spent decades spearheading humanitarian efforts intended to elevate the social, spiritual, and economic well-being of underserved communities. She has assisted numerous churches in developing and implementing meaningful programs designed to guide the spiritual development of adults, youth, and children alike.

On the international stage, Dr. Prewitt is a passionate advocate dedicated to reducing the stigma surrounding suicide and alleviating the suffering associated with suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Her work is grounded in both faith and evidence-based insight, allowing her to reach various audiences with empathy, credibility, and hope. Across all her endeavors, she remains deeply committed to community betterment and uplifting individuals to live with determination and fortitude.

Outside her professional achievements, Dr. Prewitt is a proud mother of two accomplished adult children—her son, a sports executive, and her daughter, an attorney—who reflect her standard of excellence, determination, and service.



Dr. Nicole Rowan is a transformational leader, visionary strategist, and catalyst for purpose-driven impact. As the Founder and CEO of Press Play on Purpose, LLC, she partners with nonprofit organizations and faith-based institutions to strengthen leadership, scale operations, and drive sustainable, measurable community impact. With over a decade of experience, Nicole is known for turning vision into execution and strategy into results.

She holds a Master of Science in Business Management from Indiana Wesleyan University and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Northwood University. In recognition of her extraordinary leadership and service, she was awarded the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award by President Joe Biden—the nation’s highest civilian honor for volunteer service.

Dr. Rowan has also earned two distinguished honorary doctorates: a Doctorate in Christian Humane Letters and a Doctorate in Business Leadership Development, underscoring her rare ability to integrate faith, leadership, and organizational excellence.

Her professional track record reflects high-impact leadership across multiple sectors: As Executive Director/CEO of Rebuilding Together Nashville, she secured multi-year funding, expanded partnerships, and led transformative community revitalization initiatives. At Metro Action Commission, she launched the HOPE initiative, connecting underserved residents to critical housing resources and advancing housing stability. As Executive Director at the YMCA of Middle Tennessee, she exceeded fundraising goals and increased access to life-enriching programs for underserved youth and families.

Nicole is also a respected leadership trainer and facilitator, equipping emerging and executive leaders with the tools to lead with influence, clarity, and purpose. Her expertise spans leadership development, program design, strategic planning, and community engagement—making her a trusted partner for organizations ready to grow and evolve.

In ministry, Pastor, Dr. Rowan is a trailblazer. She made history as the first ordained female pastor and first online pastor at Triumphant Church, and was ordained as a minister in 2017 and an associate pastor in 2020. Her leadership continues to break barriers while inspiring others to lead boldly in both faith and service. She is a mentor to other female ministers and serves as a role model to female clergy members.

Through Press Play on Purpose, LLC, Dr. Rowan delivers more than consulting, she delivers transformation. She serves as a strategic partner to organizations ready to activate their vision, amplify their impact, and lead with purpose. Dr. Nicole Rowan doesn’t just help organizations grow—she positions them to lead, influence, and transform communities.



DR. NICOLE ROWAN

Urban League Guild of Middle Tennessee

FUN FACT

My favorite thing about Nashville is community. I love the spirit of Nashville because the people of Nashville helped me build community. It is home.





DANA TAFT

American Marketing Association (AMA)
Nashville

FUN FACT

One of my favorite things to hear is people say that I can be found everywhere in Nashville that's because I truly enjoy taking advantage

Dana Taft is a seasoned leader in the hospitality and corporate travel industry, currently serving as a key driver of excellence at Signature Transportation. With a career rooted in delivering high-touch service, Dana specializes in navigating the complexities of Sales and Marketing in business travel and luxury transportation. She has a proven track record of building strategic partnerships and managing sophisticated travel programs that prioritize efficiency, safety, and the "Gold Standard" of guest experience.

Throughout her career, Dana has been a dedicated advocate for the evolving role of women in hospitality, blending operational expertise with a forward-thinking approach to industry trends. Dana brings a wealth of experience in adapting to technological shifts while maintaining the essential human connection that defines the hospitality sector.

Outside of the office, Dana is a proud Mom of one College graduate, another on his way to college, and her third still at home for a little while longer. If you follow her social media, you know Dana endeavors to make the most out of each day, making business pleasure and pleasure business.



Tash Weddle is a dynamic leader, social entrepreneur, and sought-after speaker dedicated to advancing women's health and leadership. With more than two decades of experience in strength training, wellness, and nonprofit management, she combines athletic discipline with strategic vision to build sustainable systems that expand access and produce measurable results.

A former Division I basketball player at North Carolina State University and the University of Evansville, Tash developed resilience, focus, and competitive discipline through high-level athletics and recovery from injury. Those formative experiences shaped her belief that confidence is built through preparation, accountability, and consistent effort — principles that continue to guide her leadership.

She went on to serve as a strength and conditioning coach at Vanderbilt University, Purdue University, and the University of Tennessee, contributing to teams that reached NCAA Final Four and National Championship appearances. After 17 years in collegiate athletics, she earned the prestigious Master Strength Coach designation — a distinction held by only a select number of women nationwide. Inspired by her upbringing in a small Indiana town with limited access to preventive health resources, Tash co-founded The New Beginnings Center (TNBC) in 2011. As CEO, she has led the organization in serving nearly 5,000 women through evidence-based fitness, nutrition, and behavioral education programs. By positioning preventive health as foundational infrastructure for women's confidence and economic mobility, TNBC reframes wellness as a catalyst for leadership.

To ensure long-term sustainability, she founded TNB Fitness, a market-rate women's fitness studio structured as a social enterprise. Through its commitment to reinvesting twenty-five percent of revenue into TNBC's scholarship programs, TNB Fitness has contributed more than \$950,000 to expand access to preventive health resources for women across Middle Tennessee. This integrated nonprofit-social enterprise model demonstrates how entrepreneurial strategy can directly fuel expanded community access.

Tash's leadership has earned recognition as one of the Nashville Business Journal's "Most Admired CEOs" and "Women of Influence." She was nominated for the CABLE Power of Inclusion Award and received the 2025 Health Impact Award from Women Who Rock Nashville. A member of Leadership Nashville's Class of 2024, she served as Co-Chair for Quality of Life Day in 2025, collaborating with cross-sector leaders to address systemic community challenges.

Through entrepreneurship, mentorship, and public speaking, Tash continues to champion a vision in which strength — physical, mental, and professional — equips women to lead confidently in every sphere of their lives. Her work is rooted in building durable structures that ensure access, accountability, and opportunity for generations to come.



TASH WEDDLE

BrainTrust

FUN FACT

What I love most about Nashville is its people — driven, generous, and always willing to show up, work hard, and lift one another higher.



TANYA WHITE-ANDERSON

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Alpha Delta Omega Chapter

FUN FACT

My favorite thing to do is to visit Cheekwood and all museum exhibits. I am a lover of history and how it shapes our present.

Tanya White-Anderson is an accomplished professional with extensive experience in healthcare relationship management and community leadership. She currently serves as an Experience Manager with Cigna Healthcare, where she supports provider partnerships, and strategic collaboration efforts, including coordinating multi-payer conferences for the Tennessee Medical Association.

Previously, Tanya worked as a Network Manager II with BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, providing contract support and helping maintain effective provider network operations. Her professional background reflects a strong ability to build relationships, manage complex initiatives, and deliver exceptional service.

In addition to her career, Tanya is deeply committed to community service and civic engagement. She actively contributes to organizations such as Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and Key to the City Sumner County, where she supports outreach efforts, and program development that strengthen community connections. She has also coordinated Weddings and Events for over 30 years with Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Nashville.

Tanya is the wife of Andre Anderson and proud mother of four wonderful children; Robert, Perez, Madison and Chelsea.

Tanya is recognized for her professionalism, organizational skills, and passion for service. She remains dedicated to fostering meaningful partnerships and making a positive impact in both her professional and community endeavors.



My name is Dr. LaRhonda J. Williams. I am the daughter of the late H. Beatrice Williams and retired Lt. Col. James W. Williams. I am an identical twin to LaShonda J. Daniels and the sister of two brothers, James Jr. and Brandon Williams. I am married to my life partner, Monica L. Williams, and proud step-mother to four dynamic adult children. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, a Master's degree in Criminal Justice Administration, and a Doctorate in Education. My work is driven by a strong commitment to equity and community well-being, values that I hope resonate with others. I aspire for my story to inspire others to pursue meaningful work that benefits their communities.

I moved to Tennessee in 1996 and began my career working with individuals involved in the justice system. My experience includes assisting court-ordered individuals with mental health issues and working with the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC). Throughout my career, I have held various roles, including institutional supervisor, District Director for the Nashville area, overseeing commissioned officers responsible for supervising sex and gang offenders, Parole Director for Middle Tennessee, and Warden of Treatment at the Deborah Johnson Rehabilitation Center. Currently, I work as a Medical Auditor Supervisor, managing a team of auditors who ensure medical treatment and compliance across all TDOC and Core Civic prisons. Additionally, I work part-time for Family and Children Services as a Crisis Specialist, where I provide support to vulnerable individuals and resources to help reduce the risk of suicide. My community involvement reflects my deep commitment to fostering connections and supporting others.

On weekends, I trade my business suit for jeans and a T-shirt. I enjoy listening to podcasts, being active in my sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and serving as the President of Williamson County Democratic Women, where I volunteer, educate the community on civic matters, and provide service when needed. I also enjoy traveling to arts and crafts shows and walking in our state parks. I am a dog mom, a wife, and a grandmother. I feel blessed to have the means to travel and to spend quality time with family and friends.



DR. LARHONDA WILLIAMS

Family & Children's Service

FUN FACT

I absolutely love downtown Nashville! Whether I'm catching a Predators hockey game or just strolling around, there's always something fun to do.





LIZ WOOL

NAWBO Nashville Chapter

FUN FACT

My favorite thing to do in Nashville is to visit the Frist Museum. The variety of artistic mediums, artists and exhibitions— I delight in!

Liz Wool is a servant leader, speaker coach, corporate trainer, published author, and tireless advocate for women in business. As Founder and CEO of Public Speaking and Presentation Pros a nationally certified Women's Business Enterprise headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, she is on a mission to help entrepreneurs and women in business reach higher levels of success and visibility through effective speaking and presentations.

A nurse by training, Liz's career covers 30 years and includes roles at Johns Hopkins and in pharma and biotech. She leverages her experience leading learning and development at global healthcare companies including Gilead Sciences and Scios, a Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research and Development company. She has held faculty positions at the University of California Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, and San Francisco State University. She launched her first medical research consulting firm during a recession — a testament to the courage and conviction that have defined every chapter of her career.

What makes Liz's story particularly compelling is its origin. Her transformation from struggling with a speech impediment as a child to becoming a confident public speaker and global presenter is truly inspiring — and it is precisely that personal journey that fuels her fierce commitment to helping women find their voice to build their future. "My joy comes from the 'helping high,'" she says, "when you help someone from a stage or small conference room and the lightbulb goes off."

Liz is a Certified Master Trainer, Instructional Designer, and Training Director with three decades of experience in international corporate training and global speaking engagements. She holds a Fellow Designation, Association of Clinical Research Professionals (ACRP), where she served on the Board of Trustees— a four-year volunteer commitment to an international nonprofit of 15,000 professionals— and as Chapter President of the Northern California Chapter. She has been an Invited Judge for the Clinical Researcher of the Year Awards and a published author in ACRP's The Monitor, SoCRA Source, Enterprising Women Magazine, and has been both an author and featured in Minority Business Entrepreneur Magazine.

Liz's community leadership is equally distinguished. She serves as Chair of the Membership and Events Committee for NAWBO Nashville, Ambassador for WBEC South SHEConnects, and is a member of the National Speakers Association, Toastmasters International, Association of Talent Development, FemCity Nashville, eWomen Network, Nashville CABLE, and local Chambers of Commerce. She is certified as both a WBENC Women's Business Enterprise and SBA Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB). Her accolades speak volumes: Liz was named a 2025 Enterprising Women of the Year Award recipient and a 2025 Nashville Business Journal Woman of Excellence honoree. She is also a Top-Rated Speaker for ACRP, SQA, and PMI, and a featured guest on Nashville's WSMV Today in Nashville and SCOREconnect.

In the summer of 2026, Liz launches the Public Speaking & Presentation Pros Academy — a global, video, on-demand training platform extending her mission to women everywhere. Her legacy is not measured in businesses built. It is measured in women elevated, voices amplified, and lives transformed.



Dr. Nahed A. Zehr immigrated to the United States with her family at the age of six, not speaking a word of English. Her professional growth, achievements, and values are rooted in three defining influences: her parents' sacrifices and unwavering commitment to education, the support of her husband, Joel, and their three children, Nurah, Nadeen, and Saleem, and a gallery of women who recognized her potential, opened doors, and invested in her development. In turn, Dr. Zehr has built her life and work around building structures and taking intentional action to ensure others are seen, supported, and able to grow and advance.

Nahed is the Founder and Principal of True Contributors, LLC, a boutique executive coaching and leadership development firm based in Nashville. She partners with senior leaders and teams to strengthen how they perform together—helping organizations build trust, improve execution, and develop leaders who can navigate complexity with clarity and purpose. Previously, she served as Executive Director of the Faith & Culture Center and as a professor in the department of religion and philosophy at Western Kentucky University.

Her leadership extends across both professional and civic spaces. She currently serves on the Board of the Nashville Public Library Foundation and on its Executive Committee as Secretary, contributing to strategic fundraising and community engagement efforts. As part of the Begin Bright Task Force, she helped support a successful \$20 million initiative to expand early childhood literacy across Nashville.

Nahed previously served as President of the Junior League of Nashville, where she led a 1,400-member organization through a period of transformation, modernizing its structure and strengthening its ability to develop women as civic leaders.

She has also served as President or Co-President of two of Metro Nashville Public Schools' largest parent-teacher organizations, leading complex, volunteer-driven organizations with measurable impact on students, families, and school communities.

Her work is guided by a simple belief: meaningful impact happens when we recognize potential—and build the structures and take the action required to help it grow.



DR. NAHED ZEHR

Junior League of Nashville

FUN FACT

I love exploring Nashville with my husband and children—parks, the downtown library, Cheekwood in bloom—along with local coffee shops, restaurants, and supporting our public schools.





YOUNG PROFESSIONAL NOMINEES



KINSEY COLLIER

Parthenon (TN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

FUN FACT

As a little girl my father took me to The Parthenon to see Athena. I've loved Greek Mythology since and even studied mythology in college.

A native Nashvillian, entrepreneur, community leader, and business owner whose leadership spans real estate development, construction, and operational services. As Founder & CEO of Kyle Blue Development and leader of multiple business ventures, I have built a respected career in one of the nation's most traditionally male dominated industries through vision, resilience, and relentless determination. As a licensed residential, commercial, and industrial general contractor, I have successfully transformed entrepreneurial ambition into impactful business leadership.

Over the past nine years, I have built a career from the ground up beginning in wholesaling and investment acquisitions before evolving into a successful developer, builder, and business owner. As one of the only Black women independently leading residential development and construction projects in the Nashville market, I have become a visible example of leadership, innovation, and representation.

Deeply inspired by Shirley Chisholm's belief that "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair," which built my tenacity life and career with that same spirit of perseverance. Never accepting limitations as final answers. Instead, leading with self-motivation, grit, and an unwavering commitment to achieving goals while creating opportunities for others along the way.

A proud fourth-generation graduate of Fisk University. My tenure continued the product of a legacy of strong, courageous women who trained, led and taught the value of perseverance. That foundation shaped the powerhouse leader I am today one committed to creating impact not only through business, but through advocacy.

Extremely passionate about advancing women in business and construction, mentoring women pursuing contractor licensing, entrepreneurship, and real estate development, while intentionally supporting women owned businesses and encouraging greater visibility for young women in the skilled trades. I believe representation matters not simply in presence, but in creating meaningful access and opportunity.

Beyond business, I have contributed more than 400 hours of community service and leadership through mentorship, youth development, civic engagement, and women's advocacy. I am an active member of The Parthenon Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, Jack and Jill of America, The Girl Scouts of America, Inc., The Table, a Member at Large of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC), NAACP and a new member of Nashville CABLE.

As a Girl Scout Troop Leader and mother, I am especially passionate about shaping the next generation of female leaders. My daughter often says she wants to build homes one day because she has watched her mother lead by example a reminder that leadership begins with what young girls are empowered to believe is possible. I believe true leadership is measured not only by what we accomplish, but by the opportunities we create for others to rise.



Born in Monterey, California, April is the daughter of a career senior naval officer. After 13 military moves, April calls Nashville home. Before Nashville, April's 4 year undergraduate experience was the longest time she lived in one place. The experience from military moves led to the ability to adapt easily and connect people from all walks of life. April loves working with students and is passionate about mentorship, coaching and serving others. She places value in implementing strategy and streamlining existing processes to better serve students and institutions.

Professionally, April has been at Meharry Medical College for ten years where she has served as Director of Admissions, Director of Student Life and is currently the Associate Dean of Admissions & Recruitment and Assistant Professor in the School of Graduate Studies. She is a champion for student wellness, leadership development and overseeing the admissions process for the College's five schools.

April is in a number of professional and service organizations including Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Nashville Cable, the Pierians, Incorporated, Hendersonville Area (TN) Chapter of the Links, Inc, Scott Hawkins Leadership Institute (Cohort II), The Links, Inc National STEMReady Committee, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, Advancing Women in Nashville (Cohort III) and serves as the founding advisor to an elementary school chapter of NSBE Jr. which was founded in 2019. The Chapter conducts science experiments with elementary school students in the Nashville area.

For a women's service organization, April served as chair of youth programming for the Hendersonville Area (TN) Chapter of the Links Incorporated for 4 years. During the pandemic, they hosted book clubs for students on Zoom in an attempt to address learning loss, conducted science experiments in a virtual setting and established a precedent of providing laptops and technology assistance to students. Culminating her tenure as chair, April's Chapter won the first place award for youth programming among 72 chapters across 17 states.

April also volunteers as clinical/shelter therapist at the Oasis Center. Their mission of helping young people live healthy and productive lives aligns with her goals to support youth growth and development.

In her spare time, April is an avid reader, a long distance runner and she enjoys spending time with family and friends. She counts them as her greatest support. As a navy brat, her sisters were her first friends and April learned to love writing from her mother, a published author and developed a passion for STEM from her father. She is a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, enjoys the symphony, art galleries and going to the theater and the ballet. She lends her voice to voice over work and in her spare time, she enjoys reading, baking cakes, training for marathons, and spending time with family. April received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Theater from Spelman College, a Master of Education degree from Harvard Graduate School of Education and a PhD in Global Affairs and Education from Pepperdine University.



APRIL CURRY

Hendersonville Area (TN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

FUN FACT

I love running, live music, & spending time outdoors! Working out, great conversations while taking in city views & long walks top my list.



DR. NADINE DE LA ROSA

Nashville (TN) Chapter of The
Links, Incorporated

FUN FACT

I love Nashville's culture and nature, visiting the African American Music Museum, concerts at City Winery, and hiking Radnor Lake with my son.

Dr. Nadine De La Rosa is a proud native of the Bronx, New York, whose personal and professional journey is grounded in a deep commitment to equity, leadership, and transformative change in higher education. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work and Spanish from Western Kentucky University, a Master's degree in Higher Education Leadership, and a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Vanderbilt University.

With over 17 years of experience in student affairs, Dr. De La Rosa has built a career centered on supporting student success and strengthening institutional effectiveness. She brings expertise in organizational development, change management, residential college system design, and curricular innovation. Known for her strategic mindset and collaborative leadership style, she integrates frameworks such as CliftonStrengths and principles of positive psychology into her work, helping individuals and teams identify and leverage their strengths to enhance performance, engagement, and well-being.

As a scholar-practitioner, Dr. De La Rosa is passionate about advancing innovation, leadership development, and evidence-based decision-making in higher education. Her work reflects a values-driven approach that prioritizes equity, accountability, and sustainable impact across departments and institutions. She is particularly committed to cultivating strengths-based cultures that empower individuals while driving organizational excellence.

Currently, she serves as Director of Strategic Initiatives in the Division of Student Affairs at Vanderbilt University, where she provides leadership and operational oversight to 26 offices and senior administrators. In this role, she leads large-scale initiatives focused on systems implementation, organizational strategy, and continuous improvement, often incorporating strengths-based approaches to leadership development and team effectiveness.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Dr. De La Rosa is deeply committed to community engagement and service. She serves on the boards of the Nashville Public Library and the Belcourt Theatre, contributing to initiatives that promote access to education, arts, and culture. Her leadership extends beyond the workplace, reflecting her belief in civic responsibility and community connection.

Driven by her roots and guided by purpose, Dr. De La Rosa continues to lead with integrity, vision, and a commitment to making a lasting impact in higher education and the broader community.



I have the best job in the world! As an immigration attorney, I consider it a profound privilege to champion and guide immigrants to achieving their dreams. Every case is an opportunity to guide someone through a path that affects their business, career, their family, and their dreams. As a mother of three, I strive to show my children that meaningful work is not only about professional success, but about using your skills and influence to make life better for others.

I am the Managing Attorney and owner of The Immigration Group, P.C., a women-owned law firm that helps clients around the globe with work visas and green cards. I also counsel multinational companies through corporate restructuring, I-9 compliance, and government audits. Beyond my work with clients, mentorship has been a central part of my professional life. I mentor women attorneys, especially new moms, helping them navigate work-life balance, career planning, and the unique challenges of starting their own practices. I also mentor women in the immigration field who aspire to open their own firms.

My faith defines every step of my work and home life. At my church, First United Methodist Church of Murfreesboro, I teach Sunday School to the youth as well as serve on the Women's Ministry Committee and Discipleship Committees. I also volunteer as a substitute teacher with the English Language Learner program through Read to Succeed. It is a joy to be in community with people from so many different walks of life.

When I am not working, or serving, I am at home with my children making s'mores in the backyard or walking to the playground. In my itty bitty amount of "me time", I love to read. I am passionate about fiction because it allows us to step into other people's lives and perspectives, as studies show that reading fiction strengthens empathy and compassion, which I carry into my work, mentorship, and parenting. I host a book club in my home for local moms, where we share stories, exchange ideas, and support one another. Some of my favorite books I've read recently include Finding Flora by Elinor Florence and The Boxcar Librarian by Brianna Labuskes. I get this from my mom, who is an English teacher and librarian.

At my core, I am someone who believes in leading by example. I want to show my children, mentees, and community that it is possible to thrive professionally while nurturing a life filled with family, faith, and friendship. Being a mom, a women business owner, a mentor, and an engaged community member defines me and guides how I approach every opportunity, challenge, and relationship in my life.



VICTORIA GENTRY

Lawyers' Association for Women,
Marion Griffin Chapter

FUN FACT

One of my favorite things in Nashville is to walk around Radnor Lake! It is gorgeous in every season and such a treasure.



LA'KISHIA HARRIS

Turner Construction Company

FUN FACT

As a Nashville native, I love how this city continues to grow while still feeling deeply rooted in connection, culture, and pride.

La'Kishia Harris is a dynamic and strategic leader whose work lives at the intersection of industry, community, and workforce development. In her role in Community & Citizenship with Turner Construction Company in Nashville, she leads initiatives that connect business priorities with meaningful community impact, helping ensure that growth and opportunity move hand in hand.

Known for her ability to bring people together, Harris develops and leads programs that strengthen partnerships between the construction industry, schools, nonprofits, and civic leaders. Her work focuses on expanding workforce opportunities, supporting economic mobility, and creating pathways for individuals and communities to thrive. Whether she is building relationships with community partners, designing impactful experiences, or advancing initiatives that connect local residents to careers in construction and the skilled trades, she leads with both strategy and heart.

Prior to joining Turner Construction, Harris served as the leader of the Innovative Schools Model Grant within Metro Nashville Public Schools, where she helped drive efforts to strengthen career pathways and better align middle and high school experiences with workforce opportunities. Her leadership helped expand access to career and technical education while introducing innovative learning experiences that prepared students for emerging industries and real-world success.

Earlier in her career, Harris served in the administration of former Mayor John Cooper, where she contributed to community engagement efforts and civic initiatives designed to help shape a stronger future for Nashville. She also served as a FUSE Fellow, where she led the development of Nashville's Out-of-School Locator, a citywide tool created in partnership with community stakeholders to connect families and students to meaningful out-of-school opportunities. That work later helped spark the creation of the Out-of-School Collaborative, designed to ensure the momentum and impact of the work would continue beyond any single administration.

A proud graduate of Tennessee State University, Harris holds a master's degree in School Psychology and has built a career rooted in service, collaboration, and action. She is widely recognized for her unique ability to connect vision to execution, bringing together cross-sector partners to create initiatives that are both thoughtful and transformative.

Beyond her professional work, Harris is deeply passionate about mentorship, leadership development, and helping others show up confidently and authentically in every space they enter. She believes in opening doors, creating access, and showing people what is possible. Her leadership is marked not only by what she builds, but by how she makes people feel seen, valued, and empowered along the way.

La'Kishia Harris believes that lasting impact happens when industry, education, and community come together with purpose. Through every role she has held, she has remained committed to building those bridges and creating opportunities that leave a meaningful legacy.



Alana Hibbler is a passionate public service professional and community advocate, currently serving as a Design and Construction Project Manager in the Division of Planning and Facilities Development for Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation. She is dedicated to facilitating partnerships and collaborative efforts that address community challenges and foster sustainable development. Her diverse background includes experience in public works, infrastructure, planning, design consulting, project development, social media management, grant writing, photography, event planning, academic instruction, and community engagement within municipal government and non-profit organizations.

With over 15 years of experience working across local municipalities, nonprofit and public agencies, and private-sector partners, Alana has built a career centered on relationship building, community engagement, and strategic project management. Her areas of expertise include public-private partnerships, project development, grant writing and coordination, government operations, administration, and supervision.

She transitioned from the Davidson County Sheriff's Office as a Facility Officer to Metro Parks Planning. Alana oversees planning initiatives for future parks and community centers, park improvements, and renovations. She has also coordinated in-kind grants and donations to support the Parks Planning and Facilities Development Division.

As the only daughter among four children—Derrick Hibbler, Bennett Hibbler Jr., and Aarie Hibbler—she is the favorite daughter of Adriana Bethel-Hibbler and Dr. Bennett Hibbler Sr. Raised in an Air Force household, born in Maryland, her family relocated to Tennessee from Turkey. As the Salutatorian and a student-athlete, she graduated from Station Camp High School in Gallatin. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, a Meeting and Event Planning Certification from Belmont University, and a Master of Arts in Civic Leadership from Lipscomb University.

Alana is a graduate of the 2020 Leadership Middle Tennessee class and The Academy powered by Corner to Corner. She has also served as an AmeriCorps member in Knoxville, Tennessee, and currently contributes her leadership through service on community boards that include: The Union High Museum Council, Habitat for Humanity of Sumner County, NAACP Sumner County Branch, Friends of Highpoint Health Sumner, First Baptist Church-Winchester Street Trustee Board, and the Jefferson Street Historical Society. She is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Most recently, Alana has focused on two new initiatives: a global platform for sharing testimonies and a program guiding adolescents through career exploration and future pathway development.

Outside of her professional work, Alana enjoys participating in sports, traveling, exploring new cities, the arts, food, cultures, and spending quality time with friends and family.

Alana approaches her work with the belief that strong communities are built through intentional design and meaningful relationships—one connection at a time.



ALANA HIBBLER

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,
Alpha Delta Omega Chapter

FUN FACT

My love for Nashville is in learning the history, the diversity of cultures and outdoor spaces, exploring the city, and collaborating on projects and ideas.





DR. JOCELYN IMANI

Nashville Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter
(NMAC) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

FUN FACT

Celebrating culture is fun! Celebration of Cultures (Celebrate Nashville Cultural Festival) is a staple from childhood and I LOVE Kwanzaa Nashville.

Dr. Jocelyn Imani is a highly accomplished public scholar. She brings a wealth of experience in the historical-cultural and education industries, complemented by a diverse skill set in nonprofit organizations, government, event management, international relations, and proficiency in Spanish. With a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) centered on African Diaspora and Public History, Dr. Imani is a formidable researcher and advocate for environmental justice. Her professional journey is marked by a strong commitment to public engagement and scholarship, aligning her skills and expertise with her passion for bringing history and culture to the broader publics.

A proud daughter of the South, Dr. Jocelyn Imani hails from the vibrant city of Nashville, Tennessee. She earned Bachelor's degree in history from Fisk University. This formative period nurtured her love for heritage, instilling a sense of purpose and a commitment to exploring untold narratives. Her thirst for knowledge and a desire to make a meaningful impact led her to earn her Ph.D. from Howard University.

Dr. Imani is not merely an academic but a storyteller, educator, and community builder with a compelling mission. She joined Trust for Public Land as the inaugural Senior Director of the Black History and Culture initiative in 2022. Through this work, she affirms her commitment to reshaping how Black history and culture sites are cultivated, stewarded, and experienced. Her work revolves around the visionary notion of making shared spaces more relevant and accessible to all, recognizing that history is not just a collection of facts but a living, breathing part of our collective cultural identity.

A dedication to historical preservation and education has been a throughline in Dr. Imani's career. She has worked as an interpretive ranger, historian, and curator in the National Park Service. Her duty stations included Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, Grand Canyon National Park, and several postings in the Washington Support Office. She also served on the inaugural staff of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture. She has educated and encouraged students at universities across the country as a member of the faculty and as an honored guest. These universities include Howard, Fisk, Coppin State, Washington Adventist, Harvard, Yale, Southern Adventist, and Texas Southern. Dr. Imani is actively engaged in her community and serves as a member of the Nashville Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Junior League of Nashville. She is also on Board of Directors for Progress, Inc.,

Dr. Imani's passion for arts, music, and culture runs deep. She is part of a lineage of educators and storytellers, and her connection to the arts is intrinsic, having sung before she even spoke. This unwavering love for heritage and humanity enriches her perspective and underscores her profound commitment to preserving and sharing the diverse narratives that shape our ideologies. Dr. Jocelyn Imani is a dynamic force and a beacon for those who seek to understand and appreciate the cultural tapestry of our world.



I'm Morgan Jones: a mother, leader, and builder committed to creating spaces where women can grow, connect, and step fully into who they're called to be.

By day, I operate as a field sales manager with AT&T, where I lead with strategy, clarity, and trust. I don't believe in transactional sales. I do believe in guiding people through decisions, helping them understand their options, and delivering solutions that make sense for their lives long-term. I take pride in how I show up, and my results reflect that.

I'm also an Army veteran, and that experience shaped me in ways that carry into everything I do. It taught me discipline, accountability, and how to lead under pressure. It also taught me that leadership isn't about titles it's about how you perform, how you show up, and how you carry others with you.

In my community, I serve as Membership Chair for Nashville CABLE, where I focus on creating meaningful experiences for women. I don't just want people in the room I want them connected, encouraged, and walking away with something that moves them forward. I'm intentional about building spaces where women feel seen, supported, and positioned to grow.

I also dedicate my time to serving women and families through organizations like Hope Clinic for Women and Nashville Strong Babies. Whether it's mentoring, supporting programs, or simply showing up consistently, I believe in doing work that actually makes a difference in people's lives.

At my core, I'm a mother and that's my most important role. Everything I do is with intention because I know my daughter is watching. I create space for her to see leadership, confidence, and self-worth in real time so she can grow up knowing exactly who she is and what she's capable of.

I'm also the future founder of Magnificent Birthing, a vision I'm building to support women through pregnancy, birth, and motherhood with care, education, and advocacy. I believe in creating something that lasts and truly serves.

I don't just talk about growth, I live it. I build, lead, and create spaces where other people can rise too. In business, service, and community, I move with intention, make an impact, and I'm just getting started.



MORGAN JONES

Nashville Cable

FUN FACT

My favorite thing to do in Nashville is to participate in the many events happening around the city. I constantly surprise myself with new adventures.





CYNTHIA LEE

Napier-Looby Bar Association

FUN FACT

Two of my favorite things to do in Nashville are attending concerts and enjoying leisurely Sunday walks at Shelby Park.

Cynthia Lee is a Mississippi native, attorney, and leader whose life and career reflect both excellence and a commitment to service. She is an attorney at Holland & Knight, where she practices in the areas of labor and employment and litigation. In her practice, Cynthia advises employers on all aspects of the employment relationship and helps companies navigate complex workplace challenges. She is known for her sound judgment and ability to bring clarity to difficult situations.

But who Cynthia is extends beyond her profession. At her core, she is a servant leader. She currently serves as President of the Napier-Looby Bar Association, where she works to create community and opportunity for Black attorneys. Her commitment to the profession is also reflected in her service with the National Bar Association and other local and national legal organizations. Additionally, Cynthia serves on the Board of Directors for the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, supporting its mission to expand access to justice for those who need it most. She has devoted significant time to pro bono work, including preparing a clemency petition with the Illinois Prison Project – one of her most meaningful experiences as an attorney to date. She has also served on the Davidson County Juvenile Court Foster Care Review Board and previously taught Poverty Law at the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Grounded in the belief that “service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth,” Cynthia credits the foundation of her values to the women who raised her, particularly her late mother, Sonja Lee. From their mother, Cynthia and her sister, Lyndria, learned not only to strive for excellence, but to extend a hand to others along the way. This lesson continues to guide how she moves through life. At the center of it all is Cynthia’s faith. Her belief that she has a God-given purpose and the promises of Psalm 37:23 and Romans 8:28 guide and anchor her through every season.

Cynthia is also a passionate traveler with a love for culture and connection. She has a well-used passport and a deep appreciation for the experiences gained along the way. Whether traveling solo or with loved ones, she seeks to immerse herself in the people, stories, and traditions of every place she visits. Some of her favorite destinations to date include Cuba, Ghana, and South Africa. In 2026, she launched “Journey With Cynt,” a travel blog that has been a long-time dream of hers.

Cynthia is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and a graduate of Jackson State University, where she was a member of the renowned Sonic Boom of the South. She also holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Alabama and a Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Whether in her legal career, service, or travels, Cynthia Lee leads with intention, connects with people authentically, and remains committed to making a meaningful and lasting impact.



Leigh Lovett is a proud Nashville native. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Spelman College and master’s degree in Marketing Communication’s from Northwestern University. Leigh has over 18 years experience in marketing and social media. She has previously held positions at Mars Petcare and General Mills. During her tenure at General Mills, she worked on iconic brands such as Cheerios and Nature Valley. Leigh was the first Social Media Manager at Dollar General and help create the DG Media Network in 2021. Leigh now is the Director of Social & Influencer Marketing at Dollar General. Leigh has been honored with several Dollar General nominations including Emerging Leaders, Women in Leadership and Develop2Lead.

In 2018, Leigh co-founded Blogger Xchange. Blogger Xchange is now Nashville’s largest creator community. As the owner, Leigh created Blogger Xchange CARES in 2025 which connects the BX Community to deserving Nashville non-profits for monthly volunteer events. Blogger Xchange has a focus on helping Nashville Black and women owned businesses. Leigh is passionate about ensuring local businesses have the marketing resources and knowledge they need to scale and succeed.

Leigh is a proud, lifelong member of First Baptist Church Capitol Hill. Leigh also has long-standing memberships in the Music City (TN) Chapter of the Links Incorporated and Alpha Kappa Sorority, Incorporated.



LEIGH LOVETT

The Music City (TN) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated,

FUN FACT

I’m a Nashville creator. I focus on what’s new and exciting. I love to visit new places, but I’m passionate about the “oldies” getting love



AMANDA MAGUSIAK

American Marketing Association (AMA)
Nashville

FUN FACT

Grabbing an iced coffee from a local shop
and visiting one of the many antique stores
in Nashville.

Amanda Magusiak is a Nashville sales and marketing leader who blends creative storytelling, meaningful connection, and representation in the fabric of her work. As the Director of Business Development at Prisma, she brings her clients brand to life with a solution-oriented mindset. Solving problems is her bread and butter.

A natural networker, Amanda is VP-Elect of Membership for the American Marketing Association's Nashville Chapter, and donates her time to the Tennessee Pride Chamber. She approaches networking with a genuine curiosity, seeing it as an opportunity to connect individuals that have similar passions and goals, both personally and professionally.

Amanda's background in interpersonal communication informs her daily life. While pursuing her M.A. in Communication, she primarily studied rhetoric and political communication to better understand why and how we communicate with each other. At the end of the day, we are all humans looking for connection. Amanda strives to live out this mentality in all personal and professional endeavors.



Dr. Allison Quintanilla Plattsmier is a nonprofit executive, consultant, educator, and nationally recognized thought leader in philanthropy and social impact. She serves as Founder and CEO of AQP Consulting, where she has supported more than 75 nonprofit organizations across the country, helping to raise over \$7 million and lead capital campaigns ranging from \$1.2 million to \$8 million. She has also served as an interim executive director for eight organizations, guiding teams through periods of growth and transition.

Allison currently serves as CEO of ENP, where she provides strategic leadership to expand community-based programs focused on equity, access, and neighborhood empowerment. Under her leadership, ENP has expanded its reach, serving more than 5,000 residents and distributing over \$1 million in essential items through its FreeStore program.

A passionate advocate for workplace equity, Allison's leadership is deeply informed by both her research and lived experience. Her doctoral work examined gender discrimination in the nonprofit sector, and she actively works to address the systemic barriers women face, including the motherhood penalty and wage inequity. As a facilitator and speaker, she leads trainings on salary negotiation, leadership development, and inclusive workplace practices, equipping women to advocate for themselves and advance into leadership roles.

As a mother, Allison is especially committed to building workplaces where women do not have to choose between leadership and family. She has championed policies such as paid parental leave, babies at work, flexible work environments, and caregiver support, helping to redefine what sustainable leadership looks like.

Her work has been recognized with honors, including Nashville Business Journal's Women of Influence: Nonprofit Leader, the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Tennessee Human Rights Commission's Outstanding Service Award, and ALPFA's Latina to Watch. She holds multiple advanced degrees, including an Ed.D. and DBA, and is currently pursuing her J.D.



**DR. ALLISON
QUINTANILLA PLATTSMIER**
Young Nonprofit Professionals Network

FUN FACT

You'll often find me belting out Paramore at
Lowbar, dominating trivia at Edley's, or
training for the Rock & Roll half-marathon at
Mill Creek Greenway.



CREEA SHANNON

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metropolitan Nashville Chapter

FUN FACT

Meeting with my Sisters on the Same Page Book Club sisters, women empowered by reading books that ignite our souls and fuel our unstoppable sisterhood!

Creea Shannon is a Nashville native, Ph.D. student in Biomedical Informatics at Vanderbilt University, and powerhouse advocate for STEM education, health equity, and women's professional advancement. A proud mother of two young children, she balances family life with doctoral research tackling HIV syndemics. Creea has worked pioneering psychosocial HIV/syphilis research among transgender women across three continents and develops frameworks to mitigate healthcare surveillance vulnerabilities. Her work harmonizes international data from Argentina, Brazil, and Thailand while also addressing social determinants of health in rural U.S. communities. Holding an M.S. in Data Science, M.S. in Biochemistry, and B.S. in Biochemistry, Creea exemplifies academic excellence and applied impact.

Selected as one of only seven White House interns for the Office of Science and Technology Policy serving on the Energy team and cross training with the Artificial Intelligence team. She analyzed clean energy data to champion environmental justice, earning national acclaim for bridging policy, data science, and health equity. Her leadership portfolio shines: Vice Chair of the American Medical Informatics Association Education Working Group; Vice President of Community Service, Vanderbilt Graduate Student Council; Subcommittee co-lead of Economic Empowerment for the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Metro Nashville, where she leads youth financial literacy workshops for young girls; Chair of the Legacy Scholarship Committee for the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Metro Nashville; and Board Director for Home of Potential and Excellence (H.O.P.E. Nashville).

Creea's accolades form an impressive constellation: 2024 Susan Short Jones Emerging Leader in Education Award from the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Metro Nashville; 2025 Black Literary Excellence Award; 2026 ATHENA Young Professional Award nominee; 2026 Adventure Science Center TWISTER Keynote Speaker; 2024 Meharry Medical College Girls in STEAM Summit Keynote; InspiHER; Code Like a Girl Keynote Speaker for high schools in Georgia; MTSU Girls in STEM and Women of Color in Healthcare panels. She secured the National Library of Medicine Training Grant, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Grant, Vanderbilt Ethel M. Wilson Scholarship, Udacity Nokia and Blacks In Technology Scholarship, and Globant Women That Build nomination.

As a self-published STEM children's author ("STEM Inspires Me"), Creea serves as STEM Community Partner and education literacy advocate for schools and colleges. She has donated over 5,000 books to Nashville youth and helped write grants securing funding from the Department of Justice for girls' wellness and empowerment programs. Her "food is medicine" initiatives deliver produce to youth and seniors, and her domestic violence campaigns provide blessing bags to SafeHaven Shelter families. She's also a special needs advocate.

At Vanderbilt University, she drives change as Community Chair for the Organization for Black Graduate and Professional Students (OBGAPS), creating networking pipelines and combating underrepresentation.

Creea embodies GRIT: Growth, Resilience, Integrity, Tenacity. From harmonizing global health data to mentoring future C-suite leaders, she shatters barriers, ignites representation, and forges legacies that will shape generations. One determined voice is transforming Nashville to the world stage, proving women of vision build futures where all can rise.



Catherine Street is a CPA and CFA Charterholder with a decade of experience serving ultra high net worth individuals, family offices, and private equity firms. From her time as a Big Four Audit Manager to a Portfolio Manager at a Wealth Management Firm and now a Single Family Office, Catherine is a trusted, strategic advisor with a strong background in accounting, investments, finance, trusts & estates, and board governance. Ms. Street is a pragmatic, highly analytical, and collaborative business adviser with a demonstrated record of helping companies meet their strategic objectives while ensuring financial reporting integrity. In her current role, Ms. Street manages and executes financial diligence for new investments and portfolio company add-on acquisitions and leads strategy efforts for new acquisitions for the portfolio companies. She works with portfolio company management teams, primarily the CFO and the accounting teams, in the forecasting and financial reporting – improving KPIs, processes and systems.

Ms. Street currently serves as the Fiduciary Chair for the Junior League of Nashville Board of Trust and on the board of Young Leaders Council, Economic Club of Nashville, and the Auburn University Accounting Advisory Council. In 2021 she received the Nashville Emerging Leader Award (NELA) in the Financial Services category presented by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce.



CATHERINE STREET

Junior League of Nashville

FUN FACT

My favorite thing to do in Nashville is to spend a lazy Saturday at Parnassus Books with friends.





JUANITA TRAUGHER

Jack and Jill of America, Inc.,
Nashville Chapter

FUN FACT

I enjoy the daily interaction with native Nashvillians and visitors, as well. They each have engaging stories about their origin, and why they love Nashville.

Juanita Irene Cousins Traugher is an award-winning public relations professional and Pulitzer finalist journalist with a passion for counseling the next generation of storytellers. As director of marketing and communications at University School of Nashville, a K-12 independent school, she leads an in-house PR agency to tell the school's story, shape its brand, produce print and digital publications, manage marketing and advertising, and guide crisis preparedness and response. Her work has earned national and regional recognition from the National School Public Relations Association and the Public Relations Society of America. A frequent presenter on crisis communications, Juanita shares her expertise, speaking at national conferences annually.

In 2023, she earned Accreditation in Public Relations, completing the rigorous process in less than four months. She has been named among NSPRA's "Top 35 Under 35," the Nashville Business Journal's "Women of Influence," and the University of Georgia Alumni Association's "40 Under 40."

Juanita served as president of PRSA Nashville in 2022, leading professional development and networking for more than 200 members. Over the years, she has held nearly every leadership role in the chapter, created its mentoring program in 2016, earned the Mercury Award for emerging leaders in 2018, chaired the Parthenon Awards in 2020, and received the Olympus Award for service in 2023. Since 2024, she has led the Accreditation Committee and guided two dozen professionals through the APR process.

She began her career in journalism with The Associated Press and as a reporter for several daily newspapers, including The Tennessean, where she was the first to cover the most devastating flood in Middle Tennessee, which became a 2011 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting. Her transition to public relations includes work in government and higher education. At the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, she contributed to the Mayor's Office "Ideas to Reality" incubator, helping develop what became hubNashville.

She earned her Master of Business Administration at Belmont University's Jack C. Massey Graduate School of Business, where she was inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma international business honor society for being in the top 20 percent of her class. An alumna of the University of Georgia, Juanita holds bachelor's degrees in Newspaper Journalism and International Affairs. While at UGA, she was the first woman African American editor of The Red & Black — then a five-day printed, independent student-run paper with a circulation of 17,000. During her tenure, the newspaper won 16 Society of Professional Journalists awards and broke national stories, and Juanita earned several journalism excellence awards for her work. Now serving on UGA's Grady College Board of Trust and The Red & Black Publishing Co.'s Board of Directors, she is a loyal adviser and philanthropist to her alma mater and the publication, recently endowing two scholarships to support students of color pursuing journalism and news coverage of issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

She is active at her children's school as a room parent and a member of Jack and Jill of America and Alpha Kappa Alpha.



Angela Denise Williams is a dynamic legal executive, community leader, and servant-leader whose personal and professional journey reflects a deep commitment to excellence, family, and service. She currently serves as Vice President and General Counsel for Sunrise Medical (US) LLC, where she provides strategic legal leadership across North America. In this role, Angela advises executive leadership on governance, regulatory compliance, risk management, and complex business initiatives, while also leading litigation strategy and high-level negotiations.

Angela's legal career spans both the public and private sectors, including her service as an Assistant Metropolitan Attorney for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County, as well as roles in private practice, state government, and the Tennessee Court of Appeals. These experiences have shaped her strong analytical foundation, sound judgment, and commitment to principled leadership.

Beyond her legal career, Angela is deeply committed to service. She is an active member of Mount Gilead Missionary Baptist Church, where she serves in the children's ministry teaching first and second grade students. She is also actively involved in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Kappa Lambda Omega Chapter, as well as the Napier Looby Bar Association, Napier Looby Bar Foundation, Nashville Bar Association, and Tennessee Bar Association. Through these organizations, she supports leadership development, mentorship, scholarship initiatives, and community outreach efforts that create meaningful and lasting impact.

Angela has been honored for her leadership and service, including admission to practice before the United States Supreme Court; recognition by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® South Eastern Region through the inaugural Dr. Glenda Glover Leadership Institute and the 2026 40 Under 40 Class; selection as a Fellow of the Nashville Bar Foundation; Fellow and Star of the Quarter with the Tennessee Bar Association Young Lawyers Division; and nominee for the Susan Short-Jones Emerging Leader Award by the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metro Nashville Chapter. She is also a graduate of the Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Law Program.

Above all, Angela considers her greatest accomplishments to be her roles as a wife and mother. A Tennessee native and graduate of Middle Tennessee State University and the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, she and her husband, Taurean, have chosen Middle Tennessee to raise their two daughters, Tinsley and Teagan. Together, they enjoy serving at their church, traveling, and supporting their daughters' activities, including Girl Scouts, soccer, and taekwondo.

Through her leadership, service, and dedication to family and community, Angela Denise Williams exemplifies what it means to lead with purpose, integrity, and heart.



ANGELA WILLIAMS

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,
Kappa Lambda Omega Chapter

FUN FACT

I enjoy attending performances at the Nashville Children's Theatre with my husband and two daughters, creating special family memories through storytelling and the arts.





LAVINIA TRIBBLE JOHNSON

Pinnacle Financial Partners

Lavinia Tribble Johnson is from Ossining, NY, but was raised in Nashville, TN. Lavinia has worked in the banking industry for 22 years. She has experience in loan operations, quality control, processing, retail banking, mortgage, process delivery, sales and more. Lavinia has a MA in Communication Management from Webster University. She is passionate about serving the Nashville community, particularly with her church, Mount Zion Baptist Church and her beloved sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She also has volunteered with Positioned for Purpose, Book'em, Preston Taylor Ministries, and The Wesley Foundation at Fisk University. In her spare time, she spends time with her loving husband (Jarrod), family, friends, Sorors and church family. Lavinia also enjoys writing and reciting poetry.

FUN FACT

Lavinia loves listening to live music in Nashville.



CONGRATULATIONS

NOMINATING ORGANIZATIONS

- YWCA Nashville & Middle TN
- Jack & Jill of America, Inc. – Nashville Chapter
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Kappa Lambda Omega Chapter
- Lawyers' Association for Women, Marion Griffin Chapter
- Davidson County Democratic Women (DCDW)
- HCA Healthcare
- Office of the Metropolitan Trustee
- The Music City (TN) Chapter of the Links, Inc,
- The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metropolitan Nashville Chapter
- Metro Nashville Public Schools
- Hendersonville Area (TN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated
- Urban League Guild of Middle Tennessee
- Nashville Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter (NMAC) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Parthenon (TN) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated
- NaSah's Nurture Nature
- Global Suicide Prevention Alliance
- American Marketing Association (AMA) Nashville
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Delta Omega Chapter
- Family & Children's Service
- NAWBO Nashville Chapter
- Junior League of Nashville
- Turner Construction Company
- Nashville Cable
- Napier-Looby Bar Association
- Young Nonprofit Professionals Network
- The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc., Metropolitan Nashville Chapter
- Pinnacle Financial Partners

JUDGES

Natalie Cooper

Brenda Gadd

Jerri Hasselbring

Alecia Harmon

Lee Jolivette

Novonda Lilly

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Saisha Kumar

Ravenwood High School

University of Michigan – Ann Arbor.

Madeline Carrico

Franklin High School

**University of North Carolina at Chapel
Hill.**

PATRONS

PREMIER PATRON SOCIETY MEMBERS

MARY BEARD

DR. KATHERINE Y. BROWN

JANET JERIGAN

JOYCE SEARCY

DR. LAQUITA STERLING

LUEATRICE GREEN LOVETT

DR. LADONNA WILLIAMS

PATRICIA PIERCE

PATRON SOCIETY MEMBERS

JULIA BAKER

VANESSA HICKMAN

KELLY HOLMES

BARBARA MOSS

SHARON ROBERSON

ATHENA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Maya Faison, Co-Chair

Dr. Michelle Steele, Co-Chair

Jahna Riley

Debra Berry

Coco Rogers

Yolanda Cox-Bey

Patricia Malone

SPONSORS



Cable



ERICA S. GILMORE

Metropolitan Trustee

Accountability. Transparency. Efficiency.

700 President Ronald Reagan Way, Suite 220

P.O. Box 196358

Nashville, TN 37219-6358



BrainTrust



STUDIO
A BOUTIQUE BANK®

Pinnacle
FINANCIAL PARTNERS

Turner

SPONSORS



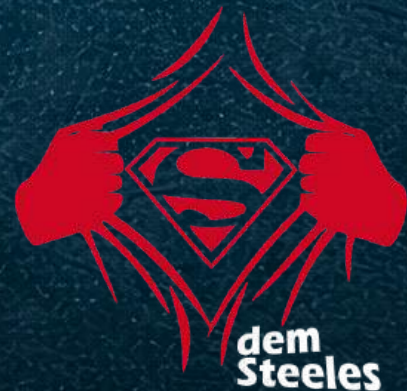
Linked in Friendship, Connected in Service
Parthenon (TN) Chapter



NASHVILLE • TENNESSEE



RESTORING
WOMEN.
RECLAIMING
LIVES.



SPONSORS

ALEXIS CLARK
LEXX TALK ABOUT IT

BRITTANY COLE
CAREER THRIVERS

MIGNON FRANCOIS
THE CUPCAKE COLLECTION

EVETTE WHITE
LEADERSHIP NASHVILLE



UPSHOT NASHVILLE
NASHVILLE'S NEW HOME TEAM

CONGRATULATES SHEILA GIBSON

*"Thank you, Sheila, for showing leadership
in bringing professional women's basketball
to Nashville."*

Nancy VanReece, President/CEO



SHEILA GIBSON

2026 NASHVILLE ATHENA AWARDS TRADITIONAL NOMINEE

*Congratulations on being named a 2026 Nashville
ATHENA Awards Traditional Nominee! This
recognition is a testament to your hard work,
dedication, and the difference you make every day.
So well deserved!*





CONGRATULATIONS SHEILA GIBSON



Playmakers Nashville, a local non-profit dedicated to elevating women in the sports industry, proudly celebrates Sheila Gibson — A member of our Board of Directors and an inspiration to us all.

www.playmakersnashville.org



***SHEILA.....CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
ATHENA NOMINATION !!***



***From a young age Sheila has always possessed a
unique drive. Watching her grow as a leader who
paves the way for the next generation of leaders
has been one of the greatest joys of my life. She
doesn't just strive for personal success; she
intentionally creates space for others to succeed!!
Love you.....Moma!***



**MY TWIN AND I
ADVENTURES: THE
KINGDOM OF LOST TOYS**

**CONGRATULATES
SHEILA GIBSON**

Big news and big celebrations from the Crave Discovery team! First, a massive congratulations to Sheila Gibson! We are also incredibly excited to announce that our brand-new children's book has officially launched and is available on Amazon today.



<https://linktr.ee/MyTwinandIAdventures>



CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Marcia Millet

2026 ATHENA AWARD NOMINEE



Dr. Millet, you gave us more than an education. You gave us your time, your patience, and your belief in who we could become. Every lesson you poured into us still lives in the work we do today. We are endlessly grateful, and we celebrate this well-deserved honor with you.

— Your Former TSU Students



Congratulations

Dr. Marcia Millet

2026 Athena Award Nominee



Congratulations on your well-deserved nomination! Your hard work, dedication, and impact deserves to be celebrated. Wishing you all the best and so happy for you!

-Dr. William "Bill" Bowen

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Marcia Millet

2026 ATHENA AWARD NOMINEE



You have always led with grace, served with heart, and lifted everyone around you. This nomination simply confirms what we've always known. We are so proud of you, and we celebrate this beautiful honor together, with all our love.

-The Millet Family



Congratulations

Dr. Keilani Goggins

From your Memphis roots to Nashville

We love you,

The Wine Down Crew and
the Wives of Black Excellence



Congratulations

to my *Sorors* of the Nashville Metropolitan
Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta
Sorority, Incorporated on your nomination
and your outstanding leadership in support of
the 36th Annual Athena Awards.
Wishing you continued success and a
memorable celebration of your
achievements!



Your Soror,
TAHIRAH A. KING



Memorie White-Johnson
2026 Nashville Athena Awards Traditional Nominee



R.H. BOYDTM
EST. 1896



Five Generations of Leadership in Printing, Publishing, Distribution, and Training.

We invite you to partner with us for all of your printing and publishing needs and access end-to-end solutions, from content creation and production, to distribution and community impact.



Partnership Opportunities

Publishing | Author Services | Printing Solutions
Retail and Distribution | Community Engagement and Events

Contact us via email at connect@rhboyd.com to learn more!



Scan the QR code to
visit rhboyd.com!

Congratulations,

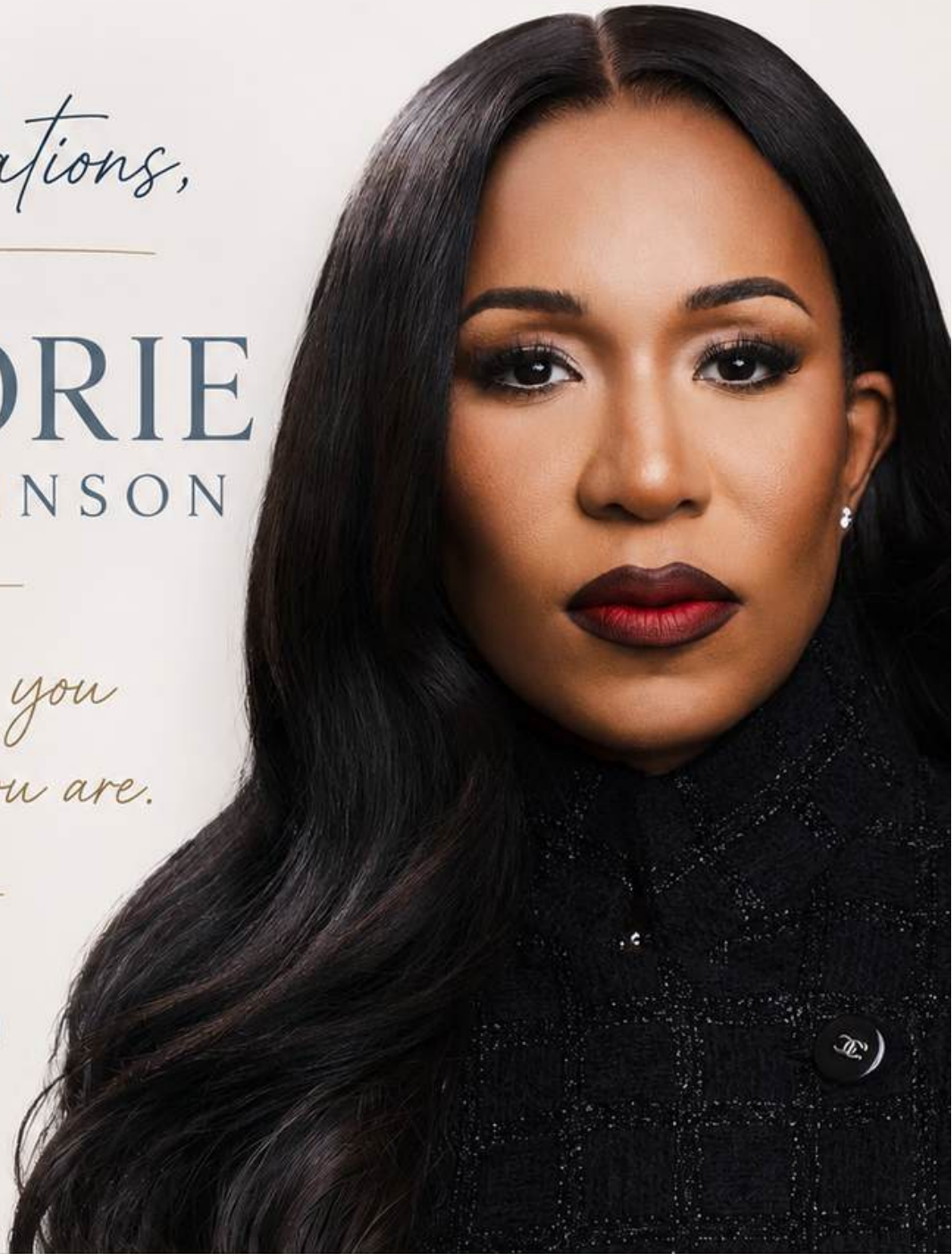
MEMORIE
WHITE-JOHNSON

*We celebrate you
and all that you are.*

WE ARE SO
PROUD OF YOU!

WITH ALL OUR LOVE,

Mom, Donnell and Donovan





NASH REAL ESTATE GROUP

CONGRATULATES MEMORIE WHITE

Thank you for all that you do for my clients.

-(BROKER/OWNER) SHANELLE BURTON

Office/Cell: 615-592-1042
Website: NASHRealEstateGroupllc.com



ERICA S. GILMORE

Metropolitan Trustee



*On behalf of your administration,
congratulations to Trustee Erica S.
Gilmore on your well-deserved
recognition as an ATH&NA
Awards Nominee.*

*Thank you for preserving long-term
housing stability, giving Nashville
homeowners the dignity to age in place.*



We proudly recognize
DAFFANY BAKER
as a 2026 ATHENA Traditional Nominee!



Daffany's unwavering leadership, compassion, and vision have transformed the lives of countless survivors of domestic violence across Middle Tennessee. As Senior Vice President of Domestic Violence Services at YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee and leader of the Weaver Domestic Violence Center, she has dedicated her career to ensuring that individuals and families experiencing abuse find not only safety, but also dignity, hope, and a path toward healing.

Through her tireless advocacy, strategic leadership, and deep commitment to empowering survivors, Daffany has strengthened critical services, inspired her colleagues, and advanced the community's response to domestic violence. Her legacy is reflected in the resilience of those she serves and in the lasting impact she continues to make throughout our region.

Congratulations to all of the outstanding 2026 ATHENA nominees. We celebrate your leadership, dedication, and impact!



Congratulations

Congratulations, CeeCee, on being nominated for the ATHENA Young Professional Award!

Your passion for service, commitment to excellence, and heart for others inspire everyone who knows you. This recognition is a testament to the difference you make every day. We love you and are so proud of you!



CYNTHIA T. LEE





JACK AND JILL
OF AMERICA, INC.
NASHVILLE CHAPTER
1947



2026 NASHVILLE ATHENA *Awards*

THE NASHVILLE CHAPTER
celebrates
NOMINEES



Mother
**DANIELLE
BARNES**



Mother
**JUANITA
TRAUGHER**

SHE LEADS. SHE SERVES. SHE INSPIRES.
SHE IS ATHENA.

Joslyn L. McGaughey
CHAPTER PRESIDENT



2026 NASHVILLE
ATHENA
AWARDS PROGRAM

powered by Cable



DR. MICHELLE D. STEELE

2026 Nashville Athena Co-Chair

Congratulations

— from —

Marci and Tony Holt



THE
CUMMINGS & STEELE
FAMILY

Congratulates
DR. MICHELLE STEELE

on being this year's

CO-CHAIR *of the*
36TH ANNUAL ATHENA AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIP GALA

We celebrate

your extraordinary
leadership, your
commitment to
excellence, and
your unwavering
dedication to
uplifting our
community.

Your selection as
Co-Chair of the
36th Annual Athena
Awards & Scholarship
Gala is a testament
to your vision
and service.



60TH
ANNIVERSARY

A FAMILY ON THE FRONT LINES OF JUSTICE—

Pictured at the 60th Anniversary of the
Selma to Montgomery March (Bloody Sunday),
honoring the legacy of courage, sacrifice
and continuing the work of faith, love and justice.



With love, admiration, and immense pride,

THE CUMMINGS & STEELE FAMILY

FAITH. COURAGE. JUSTICE. LEGACY.



Congratulations
DR. MICHELLE D. STEELE

2026 Nashville Athena Co-Chair

on an Amazing Athena Awards Program!

LEAD UNMUTED.™

Executive Coaching
Strategic Planning
Leadership Development
Board Governance
Executive Retreats
Keynotes & Workshops

Helping High-Capacity Women

Lead with confidence
Set healthier boundaries
Stop shrinking
Take up space
Reclaim their voice
Choose themselves
Live & Lead UNMUTED

Helping Organizations

Develop stronger leaders
Build healthier cultures
Navigate change
Align teams around strategy

DR. MAYA
FAISON



Live & Lead UNMUTED.™

Dr. Maya Faison

Leadership Consultant | Executive Coach | Speaker
MayaFaison.com | @mayabfaison

#liveunmuted

Congratulations

DR. MAYA FAISON

Congratulations to our favorite
woman!

To thousands of women, you're the
one reminding them to live & lead
UNMUTED.

To us, you're simply Mom. Wife.
Friend... Our biggest encourager.

Congratulations on serving as Co-
Chair of the 36th Annual Nashville
ATHENA Awards. Thank you for
reminding women everywhere that
they don't have to shrink to lead.

We love you.

We'll always be your biggest fans.

Love,
John, Addie, Morgan, Ellie & Family ❤️

#liveunmuted

Handwritten signature





TENNESSEE
PERFORMING
ARTS CENTER

WHERE THE ARTS + COMMUNITY LIVE

For more than 45 years, Tennessee Performing Arts Center has been where our community comes together through the power of the performing arts. From unforgettable performances and transformative arts education to experiences that expand access, TPAC creates moments that inspire, connect, and strengthen our community.

Together, we've built more than a stage.
We've built a home for the arts.

Congratulations to TPAC Board Member Sheila Gibson on your ATHENA Award nomination. Thank you for your service and commitment to strengthening our community through the arts.





Proudly Congratulating the Nominees of the *36th Annual Nashville ATHENA Awards & Scholarship Gala*

We celebrate the extraordinary women who lead with purpose, inspire with vision, and transform our community. Your courage and commitment makes Middle Tennessee a better place for all of us.

ABOUT THE FIRM

Who We Are

DSCPA, LLC is an accounting and consulting firm dedicated to ensuring effective development of organizations. We provide accounting and management consulting services to healthcare, education, and non-profit entities, including government funded institutions.

For over 15 years, we have consulted with organizations to provide customized services designed to achieve organizational goals and comply with industry standards. Our vision is to elevate our clients through continuous growth and innovation, enabling them to unlock potential and achieve sustainable success.

OUR SERVICES

What We Offer

- Strategic Business Planning, Processes & Procedures
- Management Training and Support Services
- Internal Control Design and Implementation
- Financial Accounting & Advisory
- Tax Preparation & Compliance

Industries We Serve

Healthcare

Supporting healthcare organizations with financial systems, compliance, and operational consulting built for the unique demands of the industry.

Education

Partnering with educational institutions to build sound financial practices, reporting systems, and strategies for long-term sustainability.

Non-Profit Entities

Dedicated to helping nonprofits thrive with accounting and consulting solutions aligned with their mission and compliance needs.

Why Partner With Us

FOCUSED ON CLIENT SUCCESS

Our success is driven by our clients' ability to accomplish goals and build systems for continuous growth. We are committed to being long-term partners offering transformational solutions.

EXPERIENCED CONSULTANTS

Our team of professionals brings deep technical knowledge across every industry we serve, producing immediate results and lasting efficiency for our clients.

COMMUNITY COMMITTED

We are passionate about giving back and mentoring the next generation of leaders - particularly women and minorities building careers in finance.



Your Home. *My Priority.*

Local expertise. Trusted guidance. Real results.

kw MT. JULIET
KELLERWILLIAMS.



C: 615.305.2258

O: 615.758.8886



ggoodall@comcast.net

ggoodall.kw.com



2031 N Mount Juliet Rd
Suite 101
Mt Juliet, TN 37122

Gayle
Goodall



REALTOR® | R.E. Expert



Real Estate Solutions
for Every Chapter of Your Life.



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS®



**Buying a home shouldn't be
a stressful experience!**

*"I would love to assist you with
your home financing journey!"*

Connie Eddy

Mortgage Lender

NMLS #657622

615-474-0858



STEADFAST
MORTGAGE



Celebrating Excellence. Celebrating You.

Congratulations Nominees!

You've led with excellence. Poured your energy into this community. Lifted other women as you rose. That's the true spirit of ATHENA.



REAL CONVERSATIONS.
BOLD PERSPECTIVES.
EMPOWERING CHANGE.



YOUR VOICE. YOUR STORY. **YOUR PLATFORM.**

Lexx Talk About It is a platform dedicated to amplifying influential voices, meaningful stories, and lasting impact.

✉ lexxtalkbookings@gmail.com

Alexis Clark
FOUNDER & HOST



WATCH & SUBSCRIBE ON

YOUTUBE

@_LexxTalkAboutIt



SCAN TO
SUBSCRIBE!



*Congratulations
2026 Nashville Athena Nominees*

Book DJ 50Cyn
423-567-4407
dj50cynt@gmail.com



CREATING *Vibes*

YOU FEEL, NOT JUST HEAR.

SIGNATURE SOUND

OLD SCHOOL R&B • HIP-HOP
SOUL • LOUNGE VIBES • FEEL-GOOD CLASSICS

SERVICES



LIVE DJ PERFORMANCES
(3-HOUR MINIMUM)



CORPORATE EVENTS & CONFERENCES



PRIVATE PARTIES & CELEBRATIONS



THEMED EVENTS
(OLD SCHOOL, R&B NIGHTS, & MORE)

WHY DJ 50CYN?

- ✓ CURATED, CROWD-AWARE PLAYLISTS
- ✓ SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS
- ✓ CLEAN, PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE
- ✓ RELIABLE, PUNCTUAL & EASY TO WORK WITH
- ✓ CREATES A FULL VIBE — NOT JUST MUSIC

IN THE MIX



I BRING THE ENERGY.
YOU BRING THE PEOPLE.

BEHIND THE BOOTH



SMOOTH MIXES.
UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS.

PROFESSIONAL. CONFIDENT. READY.



POLISHED LOOK.
POWERFUL PRESENCE.



One Stop. Endless Memories.

Limitless Captures Music City delivers high-quality photo and video booth experiences across Nashville. Family-owned and rooted in professionalism, we bring creativity, reliability and unforgettable moments to every event.

Scan to
Book A Booth





PROTECTION. PRECISION. PEACE OF MIND.

PROVIDENCE TITLE IS AN ATTORNEY-OWNED
TITLE AND ESCROW COMPANY COMMITTED TO
EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE, CLEAR COMMUNICATION,
AND FLAWLESS CLOSINGS.

EXPERIENCE. INTEGRITY. RESULTS.
THAT'S THE PROVIDENCE STANDARD.



ATTORNEY OWNED

Legal expertise.
Personal commitment.
Stronger protection
for your investment.



PROTECTING WHAT MATTERS

Thorough title searches.
Comprehensive title
insurance. Peace of mind
you can trust.



EFFICIENT & RELIABLE

Responsive service.
On-time closings.
Every time.



PERSONALIZED SERVICE

Tailored solutions.
Clear communication.
A team that treats
you like our only client.



RESIDENTIAL. COMMERCIAL. INVESTMENT.

Experience across
every type of
real estate transaction.

CLOSINGS DONE RIGHT. RELATIONSHIPS BUILT TO LAST.



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



WWW.PROVIDENCETITLELLC.COM



615-889-8306



YOLANDA COX-BEY, REALTOR®

CONGRATULATES THE 36TH ATHENA AWARD NOMINEES

Ready to Buy, Sell, Invest or Relocate?
Let me help
Move You Home!

Yolanda Cox-Bey | yolanda.cox-bey@compass.com | 615.585.7710



TRE' LUXE & CO.

REAL ESTATE

Tre' Luxe & Co. is a boutique real estate team dedicated to delivering elevated service. Whether you're buying your first home, selling a luxury property, or building your investment portfolio, our team will guide you every step of the way.



Buy



Sell



Invest

SCAN HERE



615-475-5616

 [treluxeandcorealestate](https://www.instagram.com/treluxeandcorealestate)



36TH ANNUAL NASHVILLE
ATHENA
AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP
GALA

POWERED BY **Cable**

THANK YOU!

JULY 21, 2026
GAYLORD SPRINGS GOLD LINKS