



KEYNOTE | SPONSOR | AWARD RECIPIENTS



KEYNOTE SPEAKER » Shauna Williams **President, Warren County Community Center**

Shauna Singletary Williams is an award winning, broadcast journalist. She is retired now, but her first job was at WTVD, Channel 11 in Durham, where she worked as a reporter, weather anchor and news anchor. Ms. Williams went on to NBC Network News, starting as a correspondent (on air reporter), ending as a producer.

At WTVD, Williams covered politics from city and county government in Durham, as well as other news of the day. Most notable assignment in the '70's, the week she traveled to Warren County every night to cover the illegal dumping of the polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs.

At NBC, Williams started in the Miami Bureau where she worked and traveled to the Caribbean and the entire state of Florida. She covered the space shuttle program at Cape Canaveral, including the 1986 Challenger disaster. When given the opportunity to relocate to New York, her birthplace, Ms. Williams was eager to go.

She traveled the world, working for the *Today Show*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Dateline* and *MSNBC*. Assignments included three major plane crashes, Princess Diana's funeral in London, natural disasters like floods and tornados in the Midwest. Her favorite assignment was covering the President of the United States of America, which allowed her to travel in Presidential motorcades and ride on Air Force One.

Interviews with celebrities, sidelines on the basketball court or football field, trials, funerals, political conventions, and so much more kept Williams busy and on the go.

She is married to Yarbrough Williams. Together, they have five children, 10 grandchildren and one great granddaughter! Spending time with her husband and family, reading, writing and travel keep Williams happy. Currently she is writing several books, eager to add the word author to her accomplishments.

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SPONSOR REMARKS » Harrison Wallace Program Officer, Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund

Harrison Wallace (he/him) is a Program Officer with the Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund. He was formerly the Virginia Director for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) where he led both lobbying and grassroots organizing campaigns focused on climate action in the southern coal state. Harrison Wallace is a lifelong Virginian, born in the Shenandoah Valley and then spending the rest of his childhood in Richmond. Harrison earned his Bachelor of English Degree from James Madison University (Go Dukes). Harrison has previously served as the co-chair for the Virginia contingent of the 2017 People's climate march and on the steering committee of the Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative. He currently serves on the boards of the Virginia Civic Engagement Table, the Virginia Public Access Project, and the Community Climate Collaborative. Harrison is also a graduate and advisory board member of the Virginia Progressive Leadership Project. In his spare time, Harrison enjoys watching/playing basketball, reading on his porch, and hiking.



AWARD RECIPIENT » Ms. Dollie Burwell Environmental Justice Trailblazer Award*

Dollie B. Burwell was born, raised, and attended public schools in Vance County North Carolina. In 1982 Dollie led her community in a protest against the state of North Carolina in what the *Washington Post* called the greatest civil rights movement since the 1960's. Arrested and jailed five times and spent nights in jail when she blocked trucks carrying PCB laced soil that was to be put in a dump in her community by lying down in front of the trucks. This was the beginning of the "Environmental Justice Movement." Stories of her life and work have been published in several books including, "***Crazy for Democracy, Women in Grassroots Movements***," Temma Kaplin, "***The Politics of Motherhood, Activist Voices from the Left to Right***," Alexis Jetter, Annelise Orleck and Diana Taylor, and "***Women Reshaping Human Rights, How Extraordinary Activists Are Changing the World***," Marguerite Guzman Bouvard and many other documentaries, tv shows and newspapers including the *Soledad O'Brien Show* and the *Washington Post*. She served as Chair of the Joint Warren County/State PCB Landfill Working Group, a task force that worked to secure more than 25 million dollars from the state of North Carolina to detoxify the Warren County PCB Landfill which was successfully completed in 2004.



AWARD RECIPIENT » Ms. Naeema Muhammad Environmental Justice Trailblazer Award

Naeema Muhammad is the Senior Advisor of the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network. The Network promotes health and environmental equality for all people of North Carolina through community action for clean industry, safe workplaces, and fair access to all human and natural resources. Naeema has worked tirelessly to hold the hog industry accountable for the pollution it produces that disproportionately impacts the lives of African Americans living in rural North Carolina counties.

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AWARD RECIPIENT » Dr. Benjamin Chavis Environmental Justice Trailblazer Award

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is an African American Civil Rights Movement 64-year veteran leader and icon. He is an author, chemist, United Church of Christ ordained minister, and PBS TV Executive Producer of The Chavis Chronicles. He is currently President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association. He also Chairs the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, We Are Digital and the Energy Action Alliance. At the request of his longtime friend Nelson Mandela, Dr. Chavis co-founded Diamonds Do Good. In 1982, he was the first person to coin the term “environmental racism” during civil rights protests of racial and environmental injustice in Warren County, North Carolina.

In 1993, Dr. Chavis was the youngest person to be elected as Executive Director and CEO of the NAACP. He was featured in the movie Belly alongside Nas and DMX. As a teen, he worked side by side with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as Youth Coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Dr. Chavis has earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of North Carolina, Duke University and Howard University and is a proud member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated.



AWARD RECIPIENT » Warren County Environmental Action Team Environmental Justice Legacy Pioneer Award

The Warren County Environmental Action Team (EAT) is a network of organizations & individuals working together to record, celebrate, and share Warren County's environmental justice legacy, natural resources, and diverse culture. Led by Reverend Bill Kearney, the EAT shares news, resources, and events on its [Facebook page](#). On September 17th-18th they will be commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Warren County PCB Protest, the “Birth of the Environmental Justice Movement” at the Coley Springs Missionary Baptist Church in Warrenton, NC.

The EAT engages with other community leaders on various initiatives, including:

- Offering environmental justice-focused tours of Warren County
- Supporting local farms and community gardens
- Connecting Warren County with ongoing environmental justice movements
- Building community among residents and grassroots organizers in Warren County

KEYNOTE | SPONSOR | AWARD RECIPIENTS



AWARD RECIPIENT » Democracy Green Environmental Justice Hero Award

Democracy Green is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2018 in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Florence in an effort to connect frontline communities with immediate rapid response, rapid relief, mutual aid, voter education for displaced voters, and the building of long-term political power in the wake of disasters. Democracy Green, is an Environmental Justice and Democracy organization, one of the first in the state to build its mission around the intentional coupling of the two.

It was created and is run by native North Carolinians of color to address the systemic impacts of pollution on disenfranchised communities across North Carolina and look more closely at the pro-democracy reforms that influence the operations and accountability of dirty corporations.

The communities we serve have experienced the damage caused by PCBs, CAFOs, wood pellets, coal ash, lead, radon, GenX, and PFAS, just to name a few. Democracy Green is committed to holding dirty corporations responsible for the pollution it creates.

At Democracy Green, we believe that to heal the people, is to heal the land. There is no democracy without Environmental Justice. The two cannot be disentangled. Democracy Green lives at the intersection of Democracy and Environmental Justice. Democracy Green focuses on the reformation of our democracy through the 4 Justices: Environmental & Climate; Land & Food; Economic; and Political.

As a collective, DG has demanded that the State and Federal governments take action to protect the livelihood of residents and the cleanliness of the natural resources we depend upon. In accordance with these demands, Democracy Green alongside other co-petitioners, filed a legal petition and emerging lawsuit to the US EPA, against the chemical contaminant PFAS the company responsible: Chemours.

Democracy Green is responding to the PFAS contamination issue in the Cape Fear River basin as the crisis that it is, a man-made disaster for which Chemours must be held accountable. Democracy Green has been working with Black, Indigenous, Tribal, and People of Color ("BIPOC") North Carolina communities to educate them on PFAS and advocate on their behalf to address the damage that has been caused by PFAS contamination. DG is invested in educating marginalized communities about the threat and potential health disparity impacts of other contaminants, such as radon and lead through regional tours, and workshops. While also addressing the impact of toxic waste disposal at landfills located within close proximity to Black and Brown communities, and the threat of lead contamination in our homes and school's water infrastructure. DG's current campaign Fresh Water Fresh Start is in collaboration with partnering organizations throughout NC.

KEYNOTE | SPONSOR | AWARD RECIPIENTS



AWARD RECIPIENT » Ms. JéWana Grier-McEachin **Healthcare Trailblazer Award**

JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director of the Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement (ABIPA), has been with the organization since 2008. ABIPA holistically focuses on physical, mental, social, and economic health to successfully establish parity.

Realizing the importance of using her voice, she hosts the Body & Soul Radio Show and is a monthly content contributor to the Urban News. JéWana is a visionary, a servant leader and an inspirational speaker and champion of people using their powers for good. She enjoys seeing her team and community grow and thrive transforming dreams into reality.

Under her leadership, ABIPA works to proactively shape formal and informal policies to eliminate disparities and create an equitable economic, educational, and enriching ecosystem intentionally promoting a culture of health. ABIPA's successfully serves over 6500 community members annually by collaborating and utilizing its Community Health Worker team to go to people where they are with passion and commitment.



AWARD RECIPIENT » Bluestone Missionary Baptist Church **Healthcare Hero Award**

The spiritual foundation was set during the 1870's when several Christian pioneers from Mt. Lebanon Baptist church in Virginia began conducting prayer meetings in various homes "across the river" in North Carolina. It was during one of these meetings that the idea of a church was born. In the year 1880 those pioneers, Rev. Edmund C. Noble, Sr.; Peter Hamlin; Armstead Swann; Pharaoh Adams; and Jordan Adams, helped purchase land on which to build a church. Found on the purchased land was a stone commonly referred to as a "bluestone." Those men decided that the church should bear the name of that stone. Thus, the first seeds were planted, and Bluestone Baptist Church began its first journey.

The first services were held in a log cabin and in a schoolhouse; The Rev. William Harrison became the first pastor. When his tenure as pastor ended, Rev. Alfred Motley served as interim minister. In 1905, Rev. James (Jim) Adams was elected pastor. Rev. Adams began construction of the first church building. Prior to completion of the building services were conducted in a tent. The completed structure was a large white building with a gallery that would be filled on Second Sunday.

Following Rev. Adams death, Rev. W. Abbott was elected the pastor in July 1919. The congregation grew and a new organization, the home mission circle, was established with Lula Wade as its first president. After Rev. Abbott's resignation, Rev. W. Warner became pastor in 1938.

After the death of Rev. Warner 1964, Rev. E. Abbott, son of a former pastor, served as interim minister and was later elected to the pastorate in 1965. During his tenure as pastor, two youth choirs were organized, and seven deacons were ordained.

In 1978, Rev. Abbott resigned in 1980, the pastorate was assumed by Rev. John B. Doe. Pastor Doe retired after 21 years of dedicated services and leadership. In June 2002, Rev. Timothy Warren was installed as the 7th pastor.

On the 1st Sunday in August 2005, Rev. Roy Dennis was installed as the 8th pastor. In November 2019, Rev. Dennis resigned as pastor. Reverend H. Kamara was called as the 9th pastor on June 05, 2022.

PROGRAM SPEAKER BIOS



Lamair Bryan **Regional Coordinator (Triangle), Advance North Carolina**

Lamair Bryan, native of Vanceboro, North Carolina, leads with optimism and integrity as an effective change agent in the community. As a former Policy Advisor and Strategist, Lamair integrates diversity and inclusion in all aspects of public service and humanitarianism, to vocalize the importance of equity for students, BIPOC, and under-served demographics.

Also, as a Master of Public Administration graduate of North Carolina Central University, he studied Socioeconomic determinants of nutritional food options and shared proposals with local officials to mitigate infrastructure and housing challenges within the Durham area. During his two-year role as a Durham County elected Precinct Chair, he assisted with state voting efforts, represented the Durham Association on the Affairs of Black People, implemented HBCU outreach initiatives, facilitated community fundraising campaigns, and voiced concerns of Durham's residents.

With a focus on social advocacy, political reform, local and national challenges, Lamair brings together diverse perspectives to cultivate a community of change.



The Honorable Valerie Foushee **North Carolina Senate District 23** **Chair, North Carolina Black Alliance**

Senator Foushee first joined the legislature after her 2012 House campaign in District 50. She began her tenure in the Senate following Senator Ellie Kinnaird's retirement from District 23 and now serves Orange and Chatham Counties. In the Senate, Valerie has advocated for bipartisan reform of education-funding policy to ensure transparency and appropriate funding for all school districts.

She was elected to the Board of Education for the Chapel Hill–Carrboro City Schools in 1997 and re-elected to a second term in 2001. She served as Chair from 2001-2003. In November 2004, Valerie was one of eight School Board members selected to the All-State School Board by the North Carolina School Boards Association. In November of 2004, she became the first African-American female elected to the Orange County Board of Commissioners. She was re-elected in November of 2008 and served as Chair from 2008 – 2010.

Senator Foushee is a life-long resident of Orange County and a 1974 graduate of Chapel Hill High School. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she received Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and African and Afro-American Studies. She is also a 2005 Leadership Triangle Goodman Fellow. She is married to Stan Foushee, retired Fire Marshal for the Town of Carrboro and a Deacon at First Baptist Church. They have two sons.

PROGRAM SPEAKER BIOS



Karida Giddings

Access to Healthcare Program Coordinator, North Carolina Black Alliance

Karida Giddings received a Master of Science degree in Global Affairs from New York University and earned her Bachelor of Arts degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Political Science and Communication Studies. Her graduate thesis focused on Violence and Voter Suppression as Barriers to an Inclusive Democracy in Brazil and the United States. Karida's interest in social justice and reducing barriers that impede access to opportunities for communities of color influenced was heightened through her work with AmeriCorps and Blue-Ribbon Mentor-Advocate, where she coordinated programs for high school students of color to enhance their achievement and awareness of higher education opportunities.

Karida interned with the Congressional Black Caucus and the North Carolina General Assembly, where she conducted research to support policy development related to equitable housing and access to health care and higher education. Karida also served as Social Media Coordinator and Fundraising Manager for the Committee to Re-Elect Gladys A. Robinson.



Kristen Pearson

Environmental Justice Associate, North Carolina Black Alliance

Kristen Pearson is a native of Western North Carolina. She has organized in her community for many years. As a vegan, holistic chef, and a trained Environmental Justice Organizer, she is committed to a clean and healthy environment for communities across the state.



The Honorable Keith Sutton

Superintendent, Warren County Schools Vice Chair, North Carolina Black Alliance

Keith Sutton is the Superintendent for Warren County Schools. Prior to his appointment, Sutton served for over a decade as a member of the Wake County School. He is the founder of FocusED LLC, a firm designed to support organizations in the improvement and transformation of education. Sutton currently serves as an education innovation consultant where he specializes in providing clients with consultative services focused on developing innovative, high-quality solutions to complex challenges in the education sector.

Sutton earned his bachelor's in industrial relations from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his master's in education entrepreneurship at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a member of Unity Lodge #64, Prince Hall Masons, the Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., and the proud father of two beautiful daughters, Alexia and Makayla.



Robert Whittington

Environmental Justice Associate, North Carolina Black Alliance

Robert Whittington, Jr. is an Afro-Indigenous native of the NC Blue Ridge Mountains. Through his work, Robert has coordinated statewide disaster relief rescue drops in over 20 Eastern NC counties and worked with BIPOC Environmental Justice and government organizations to provide written policy directives to the NC Office of Recovery & Resiliency.

PANELIST BIOS » FAITH



Pastor Tembila Covington

**President, Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem & Vicinity, NC
Pastor, Exodus United Baptist Church**

Pastor Tembila Christine Covington earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religion & Philosophy from Shaw University and a Master of Science in Agricultural Education from NC. Agricultural & Technical State University. Elder Tembila Covington is the new pastor at Exodus United Baptist Church in Winston Salem, NC. She is a certified Christian Life Coach, Pastoral Care counselor.

Pastor Tembila Covington's background comes with an African culture flavor from Burkina Faso, West Africa, where she was reared. She is the proud mother of one daughter, Shani Nicholson. She is a bi-vocational pastor working at Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods as the Strengthening Neighborhoods and Families Program Director. Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods is a grassroots nonprofit organization that equips and supports residents to build stronger neighborhoods. Community neighbors resolve to be Good Neighbors to each other by focusing on Civic Engagement, Equitable Development, and Economic Mobility.

Pastor Covington is completing a four-year term this year as the president of the Ministers' Conference of WS and Vicinity. The MCWSV is an ecumenical faith-based nonprofit organization positioned at the intersection of the faith community, social justice, and action. Elder Tembila Covington takes community transformation seriously and is not afraid of challenging mindsets and belief systems that affect our people. Her work is entrenched in community organizing, development, leadership development, and she also serves on several boards. Pastor Tembila Covington is a servant leader dedicated to serving all people.



Dr. Travest Hunter

CEO and Founder, Travest Hunter Global Ministries

Elder Dr. Travest Hunter, 42; is a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina is the 3rd of 4 children and was educated in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System. After which, he went to Winston-Salem State University where he graduated in 2003 with a BA in History with a Minor in English. Upon finishing WSSU he taught in the WS/FC School system, Forsyth Technical Community College, Carolina Christian School, and currently he teaches at Quality Education Academy.

He furthered his education at UNCG, then on to Shaw University Divinity School where he obtained his Masters of Christian Education in 2007. Then he went to Capella University in 2008 where he obtained a Masters in School Administration, then in 2021 he received his PhD in Ministry from North Central Theological Seminary.

Spiritually, he was called into the ministry when he was 10 years old and started in ministry at Cappadocia Holiness Church of God of Deliverance, Inc. He served there as the Youth Pastor. Later he served as an associate at United Progressive Baptist Church as Youth Pastor and then Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

Currently, Dr. Hunter is the CEO and Founder of Travest Hunter Global Ministries, where the Motto is "Educating People Through the Word of God" where he spreads the gospel of Christ through his writings and preaching, YouTube page, and book. In 2014 Dr. Hunter published his first book "A Preaching and Teaching Legacy: An Anthology of Selected Sermons and Bible Lessons of Rev. Travest Hunter. Through Travest Hunter Global Ministries he conducts marriages, runs revivals, and has written multiple character references for African-American men in the Rison and Jai systems. He has produced 2 prayer CDs and has a host of Sermon CDs for purchase.

PANELIST BIOS » FAITH



Dr. Telika McCoy
Youth Pastor, Mount Peace Baptist Church
Faith Fellow, North Carolina Black Alliance

Dr. Telika McCoy is a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She earned a sociology degree from Shaw University and a Master of Divinity degree from Shaw Divinity School. In 2011, she earned a Ph.D., in Human Services in The School of Public Service Leadership, from Capella University in Minneapolis, MN. Dr. McCoy served as youth advocate through programs for at-risk youth at the University of North Carolina; mentored and taught Doctor of Ministry students at Apex School of Theology; and worked as a full-time clinical chaplain across the state. She has served as facilitator at Louisville Institute, in Louisville, Kentucky, to guide pastors in study projects to better their churches and communities across the country. In 2020, Dr. McCoy was featured on 'Voices of Change' for *Spectrum News* where she discussed research concerning race and kids in America. In 2021, Dr. McCoy served as Supply Pastor for The Tualatin Presbyterian Church in Tualatin, Oregon.

Currently, Dr. McCoy serves as youth pastor of Mount Peace Baptist Church, a seminary professor at Shaw Divinity School, a Louisville Institute Advisory Board Member, and a Faith-Based Team Fellow for The North Carolina Black Alliance. She facilitates interactive workshops and discussion forums regularly. Dr. McCoy has published three books: *That Child! Preparing for Challenging Moments with Youth*, *That Day! Enjoy the One You Have – Improve the One to Come*, and *God Makes Me Smile*. In her leisure, she enjoys the outdoors, reading, writing and motorcycle riding.



Pastor Dennis Leach
Senior Pastor, Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church
Treasurer, Ministers' Conference of Winston Salem & Vicinity, NC

Dr. Leach was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He received his early Education in the public schools of the city of Philadelphia. After receiving his GED, he entered the United States Army where he served for twenty years, retiring in 1993 as a member of the 82nd Airborne Division.

After retiring he became a full-time student, and received his bachelor's degree from Fayetteville State University, in Criminal justice graduating Cum Laude. He went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree from the Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse School of Religion in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a graduate of Drew University where he received his Doctor of Ministry Degree (class of 2012). After his seminary studies he went on to serve as the Assistant to the Pastor for Congregational Care, and Pastoral Counseling at the Lewis Chapel Baptist church in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He subsequently served as the Assistant to the President & Executive Secretary Treasurer of The General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Inc. He is a lifetime member of the NAACP, a member of the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the CEO of Spirit, Body & Soul Inc. a non-profit 501c3. He formally served on the board of Habitat for Humanity.

In April of 2003 he was called to serve as the Interim Pastor of First Baptist Church of High Point, North Carolina, and was formerly elected to serve as its senior pastor. He was Co-Chairman of the Ordination Council of the Rowan Baptist Association, and he now serves as its Treasurer. In October of 2009 he was called as the Senior Pastor of the Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Winston Salem, NC. Under his leadership the church started a renewable Scholarship Fund awarding up to \$4,000.00 to undergraduates, a community garden, partnered with Kimberly Park Elementary school, and Forest Park Elementary school in the backpack feeding program. At Forrest Park Elementary School he supported Book Worms reading program. Dr. Leach currently serves as the treasurer for the Ministers' Conference of Winston Salem & Vicinity, and the chairman of the finance committee of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Inc.

PANELIST BIOS » FAITH



Rev. Donna Vanhook **Faith Fellow, North Carolina Black Alliance**

A former certified law enforcement officer, lifelong learner Reverend Donna Vanhook holds two associate degrees in Criminal Justice from Alamance Community College and a B.A. degree from Elon University, where she majored in Religious Studies (minored in Human Services). She earned a Master of Divinity degree from Shaw University Divinity School and has been named one of its Distinguished Alumni Preachers. She earned a Master of Arts degree in Nonprofit Management from High Point University. Most recently, Rev. Vanhook has participated in Voices of Change Political Institute; a national coalition's campaign, Communities for Sheriff Accountability, for strategic planning to address right-wing sheriff's campaigns in 2022; Howard University Divinity School's Theology & Racialized Policing; Alamance County Racial Equity CoLab; and Princeton Theological Seminary's Black Theology and Leadership Institute (Food Justice).

Reverend Vanhook uses a womanist lens-perspective of Black women's experiences in this nation-to do nationwide social justice work as she makes connections and builds coalitions to affect social change. She is currently a City of Burlington Minimum Housing Commissioner, local school system Superintendent's Equity, Diversity and Opportunity Committee member, and North Central Carolina Faith Engagement Coordinator with NC Black Alliance. She ran a historic campaign as a Black woman mayoral candidate for City of Burlington in the 2021 municipal elections and is currently a candidate for Alamance County Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor in the 2022 general elections. In her founding officer position of 3rd Vice President (now 1st Vice President) for a new nonprofit in Alamance County, Alamance for Good Government, she helps strategize for public policy change in local government for disadvantaged populations. During the 48th annual Shaw University Divinity School Alexander/Pegues Minister's Conference in April 2022, she lectured on the topic, "A Practicum of Political Readiness and Activism for Churches."

A trailblazer, Reverend Vanhook was one of the first four women ordained by the Guilford Educational & Missionary Baptist Association. She now serves as an ordained associate pastor at Union Chapel United Church of Christ (UCC) and a planning team member with the Southern Conference of the UCC Racial Justice Project.

PANELIST BIOS » POLICY PANEL



Jovita Lee **Program Director, North Carolina Black Alliance** **Policy Director, Advance North Carolina**

Jovita Lee is the Program and Policy Director for NC Black Alliance and Advance North Carolina. Jovita is a founding member of our Black Brown Policy Network. Prior to coming to NC Black Alliance and Advance Carolina, Jovita served as Senior EJ Campaigner for Center for Biological Diversity Headquartered in Arizona.

Jovita holds a bachelor's degree from Meredith College and an master's degree from North Carolina Central University.

PANELIST BIOS » POLICY PANEL



Josh McClenney
NC Legislative and Policy Coordinator, Appalachian Voices

A resident of Chapel Hill, Josh is the North Carolina Legislative and Policy Coordinator for Appalachian Voices, where he fights for utility policies that work for all North Carolinians. When not working, you can probably find him at the nearest outdoor concert.



Scot McCray
CEO, Advance Community Health

Scot McCray joined Advance Community Health as its next Chief Executive Officer, effective April 10, 2021. Scot began his career in Camden, NJ, leading strategic initiatives that have paved the way for Camden's economic, healthcare, and public safety reforms and national best practices. For 20 years, he has led and impacted the growth of FQHC's, integrated networks, and Accountable Care Organizations. Scot earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Clemson University in Public Health and Health Science and completed his Master of Public Health (Health Systems, Policy and Administration) from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's School of Public Health. A visionary and calculated market disruptor, Scot infuses a high level of business acumen, advocacy, and collaboration to the organizations and communities he serves.



The Honorable Natalie Murdock
North Carolina Senate District 20

As a native North Carolinian, UNC alumna, and local elected official, Natalie has spent a lifetime learning about the strengths and challenges of North Carolina. With over a decade of work experience in transportation, economic development and government affairs, Natalie entered the public realm as a locally elected official. Now, she is the NC State Senator for District 20, which encompasses Durham County, following an appointment from Governor Cooper in April 2019. She is the first woman of color under 40 to be elected to the NCGA and was elected in 2020 earning over 100 thousand votes. She is dedicated to pursuing a progressive agenda that will transform the lives of hardworking North Carolinians.

Senator Murdock has over 10 years of experience in government affairs, transportation, agriculture, environmental affairs, and economic development. She has served in a multitude of positions within the North Carolina government, with her most recent roles being as Deputy Director of Communication for the NC Department of Justice and served on the NC Biden-Harris 2020 campaign. Not only that, but she has been very involved in the Durham Democratic Party, most recently serving as the 1st Vice Chair. She also is the Principal and Owner of Murdock Anderson Consulting, where she helps companies and nonprofits shape their voice and brand.

Senator Murdock is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

PANELIST BIOS » POLICY PANEL



The Honorable Deandrea Salvador **North Carolina Senate District 39**

DeAndrea Newman Salvador is a fifth generation Charlottean dedicated to serving her community. The founder of a groundbreaking Charlotte-based organization focused on energy efficiency and sustainability, DeAndrea works to improve the community's most pressing issues including climate, clean air, and energy affordability. She believes in strengthening our infrastructure, supporting schools, and ensuring teachers are paid a fair, living wage.

Currently raising two young boys with her husband, Kirk, DeAndrea is a graduate of UNC Charlotte, where she earned her Economics degree.

While earning her degree in Economics, DeAndrea worked in economic development and government affairs for organizations like the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce and the Electric Power Research Institute. When she saw her Charlotte neighbors spending more than 20% of their income on energy expenses, DeAndrea took action and founded RETI, a non-profit focused on helping families sustainably reduce energy costs using smart technology, solar energy, efficiency, and education. RETI also consulted on the City of Charlotte's Sustainable Energy Action Plan.

DeAndrea serves on the boards of Clean Air Carolina, and she was on the Mecklenburg County Air Quality Commission for three years. She is a TED 2018 Fellow and recipient of the UNC Charlotte Young Alumna of the Year Award. DeAndrea was recognized as one of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Black Chamber of Commerce's "30 under 30" and honored as a 2019 AACSB Influential Leader. She previously served on the board of the American Association of Blacks in Energy.

DeAndrea currently works for Data Privacy company, DataGrail, where she leads DataGrail's content strategy, optimization, and creation. She's devoted to building a brighter future for North Carolina and fighting for the issues that matter most to her district.



La'Meshia Whittington **Deputy Programs Director, North Carolina Black Alliance** **Deputy Director, Advance North Carolina**

La'Meshia Whittington serves as the Deputy Director of Programs for NC Black Alliance and Deputy Director for Advance Carolina. La'Meshia is the co-convener of the NC Black & Brown Policy Network, former National Democracy Campaigner for Friends of the Earth, former Chairwoman of the FRENC Fund Administration, Founding member of Democracy Green, member of the Burke Women's Fund in Western NC, member of the Board of Directors for Cape Fear River Watch, the former N.C. spokesperson on fair courts for The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and a community liaison for the National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine for the Guidance on PFAS Testing and Health Outcomes national study. Professor Whittington leads work on intersectional democracy and environmental justice.

La'Meshia serves as an adjunct professor in the Division of Sociology at Meredith College and a Lecturer of Diversity and Environmental Justice in the College of Natural Resources at N.C. State University. Her work has been seen on PBS NC, CSPAN, Bloomberg, Bloomberg Law, and a host of other publications. She is a petitioner in two active petitions to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, challenging major contaminants PFAS and 1,4 Dioxane (PFAS and 1,4 Dioxane). She is an Afro-Indigenous woman from North Carolina, a royal descendant of the former Afro-Indigenous settlement: The Kingdom of the Happy Land.

PANELIST BIOS » POLICY PANEL



Dr. Courtney Woods

Associate Professor, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

Courtney Woods is an Associate Professor of Environmental Sciences and Engineering at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at UNC Chapel Hill. As an environmental health scientist, she employs community-driven, mixed methods research approaches. Specific areas of interest include waste management facilities, industrial animal agriculture, water quality, access to water infrastructure and risk perception. Woods leads the Environmental Justice Action Research Clinic (EJ Clinic), which provides action-oriented research and technical assistance to communities facing existing and imminent environmental hazards. Woods also directs the Environmental Health Solutions MPH concentration at Gillings and serves as one of four co-leads for the Health Equity, Social Justice and Human Rights MPH concentration.

FEATURED ENTERTAINMENT



Eugene Taylor

The Drum Prophet

Eugene Taylor, known as the Drum Prophet, is an independent recording artist who has entertained audiences with his musical talents for over 20 years. Born and raised in Memphis, TN, he now lives in Wake Forest, North Carolina and he's increasingly becoming one of North Carolina's most sought-after local performers. Eugene is known as the Drum Prophet, because the verb "prophesize" means to edify, encourage, and to lift-up. Eugene's soulful vocals combined with the rich tunes of the African djembe drum does exactly that in the hearts of those his music touches. Eugene also uses his talents and gifting in music to touch the lives of the patients he routinely transports at UNC Rex Health.

Anointed, healing, soothing, touching, genius, are just a few of the ways patients, fans, and fellow artists have come to regard Eugene Taylor. Therefore, he's also been nicknamed the "Wellness Ambassador," by co-workers, family, and friends. The name just seems to fit and other healthcare providers and health organizations have requested the "Wellness Ambassador's" services. Eugene has also played for nonprofits centering health and wellness in their mission like the NC Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Susan G. Komen Foundation, Relay for Life, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. He also routinely provides music and movement for seniors, and wellness services to nursing homes, assistant living facilities, substance abuse and recovery centers, and health rehabilitation centers.

Taylor's musical talents are fit for all venues, but he's also a sought-after motivational speaker. US Foods, America's second largest food distributor, booked Eugene to encourage and motivate its sales team. Some of Eugene's most notable performances include the Carolina Theater in Durham, NC, the Durham Hayti Heritage Culture Center, Artfields in Lake City, SC, the African American Cultural Festival of Raleigh and Wake County, and the N.C. Museum of History's annual African American Cultural Celebration. Eugene has released two albums and several singles in collaboration with fellow artist and producer, Diogenes Ruiz. His first album is titled *The Rhythm of Life*, followed by his sophomore album, *Rainfall*. Fans can listen to samples of both albums at www.drumprophet.com and purchase his music at www.drumprophet.bandcamp.com.