



# The George C. Miller Scholarship Luncheon

Lifetime Learning
Is The Standard

Saturday, May 3rd, 2025 Sheraton Suites Cuyahoga Falls, OH



"Upon try to achieve one small success with a child and you build from there to the next small success"

George C. Miller

### TABLE OF CONTENTS



WELCOME/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4	
LEGACY OF GEORGE C. MILLER	8 10 19 21	
GCM 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS  GCM 2025 GUEST SPEAKER BIO  HONORABLE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS  SPONSORSHIP ACKNOWLEGEMENTS		
		26

# George www.kappafoundationakron.com 2025



Letter from the President,

What a great occasion! On behalf of the Kappa Foundation of Akron, Ohio, I congratulate our 2025 George C. Miller Scholarship Recipients on their honorable achievements!

Our theme this year is "Lifetime Learning Is The Standard". As we award \$6,000 in scholarships, we are grateful to each of our sponsors, our families and friends who purchased tickets to attend, those who could not attend and donated, the mentors and teachers, the administrators, and all those who nurture our scholarship recipients. You are the difference makers for these scholars and for all the students in our communities! It takes a team effort to help our students positively shape the communities we serve!

We wish our 2025 George C. Miller Scholarship recipients the very best in all they endeavor to achieve in college this fall, the following years, and beyond! We encourage them to grow in their academic achievements, to grow personally and spiritually, and to have their educational pursuits set a standard for a lifetime of learning!

Appreciatively,

George F. Fields, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

President

Kappa Foundation of Akron



# TEATLOOKS ON THE PROPERTY OF T

#### Greetings!

We have embarked on another George C. Miller Scholarship season where the Kappa Foundation of Akron, Ohio will award some very deserving students an award based on academic performance, community service and overall character to name a few. I'm Mark Barnes the Polemarch of the Akron Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi, Fraternity, Inc.

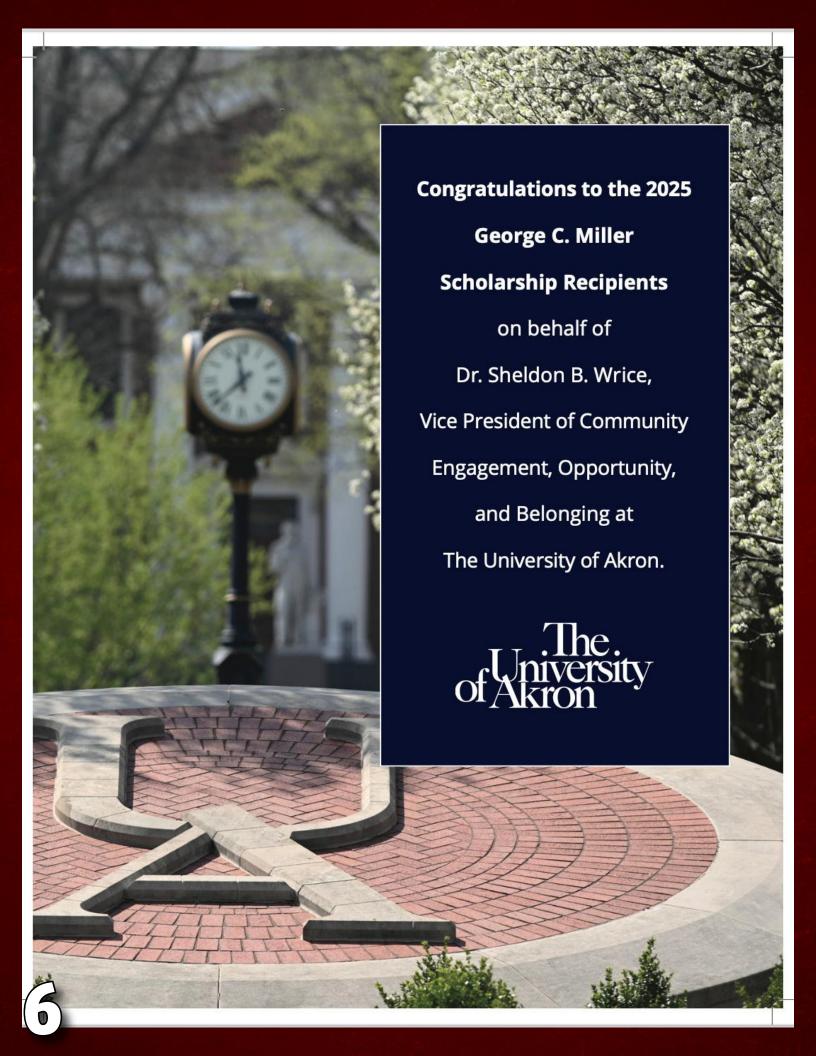
This year is critical in the success of this program because we are into unchartered water politically, socially and academically. We need to be mindful in every aspect of our lives today, paying attention to detail in these landscapes as it is critical to survival and ultimately success.

The Akron Alumni Chapter and the Kappa Foundation of Akron are critical pieces to the overall success of this community as the men of this prestigious organization give of their time, and their money to ensure the success of the next generation. Partnerships across the collective D9 organizations ensure that we are in lock-step so that students like these being honored today receive what's necessary to help them and their families along the post-secondary educational journey. Specific to Kappa, we are committed to achievement in every field of human endeavor.

So please join me in congratulating this year's recipients as they embark on achieving new milestones! They are certainly deserving!

Mark E. Barnes,
Polemarch, Akron Alumni Chapter





### LUNCHEON AGENDA

#### 2025 George C. Miller Scholarship Luncheon

"Lifetime Learning Is the Standard"

Master of Ceremonies

Larry Johnson Jr. Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Akron Alumni Chapter

**Opening Remarks** 

George Fields, President Kappa Foundation of Akron, Ohio Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Akron Alumni Chapter

Recognition of the Miller Family, Sponsors/Guests Mark Barnes, Polemarch Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Akron Alumni Chapter

**Guest Speaker** 

Dr. Marcus Wooten Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Akron Alumni Chapter

Scholarship Recipient Recognition

Danny Young
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.
Akron Alumni Chapter

Invocation

Kevin Tinsley Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Akron Alumni Chapter

-- Lunch Served -- KRON OH, INC

**Honorable Achievement Awards** 

Kevin Smith, Mark Curtis Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Akron Alumni Chapter

**Community Engagement** 

The Honorable Veronica Sims Ohio State House of Representatives – District 33

**Education Achievement** 

Jacqueline Silas Butler, Esq. Executive Director Project GRAD Akron

**Benediction & Closing Prayer** 

Kevin Tinsley Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Akron Alumni Chapter



## Honoring The Legacy of George C. Miller

Mr. George C. Miller had a simple philosophy in teaching:

"You try to achieve one small success with a child and you build from there to the next small success."

Mr. Miller made history as the first Black principal in Akron Public Schools while touching countless lives as a teacher, counselor, director and mentor — not to mention husband and father.

George Charles Miller, the son of George and Nellie Miller, was born Feb. 23, 1921, at 366 N. Howard St. in the home of his grandparents Charles and Ella Miller. He grew up with his sisters Daisy Mae and Lottie Mae, attended Bryan School and Jennings Junior High School, and graduated in 1938 from North High School, where he studied Latin for four years. He briefly attended the University of Akron, worked for a short time as a porter and landed a job at Goodyear Aircraft. Then Uncle Sam came calling. Miller was drafted into the U.S. Army in November 1942, trained at Camp Rucker, Alabama, and served in New Guinea and the Philippines during World War II.

Afterward, he came home and worked at Firestone. With the aid of the G.I. Bill, Miller returned to UA, where he studied education and became a founding member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. "I really wasn't prepared for anything but going to college," he told the Beacon Journal years later. In 1948, he married secretary Dorris Williams, a graduate of Garfield High School and Hammel Business College.

After Miller earned a bachelor of science degree in 1951, the Akron Board of Education hired him to teach at Robinson School. It wasn't about the money. "It was only \$2,400 a year and I had been making maybe \$3,600 in Firestone production," he said. Miller enriched the lives of students. He believed that all children had the ability to learn. It was just up to teachers to find a way to reach them. One small success led to the next small success. Miller and his wife welcomed daughters Marilyn and Carol in the 1950s. George C. Miller earned his master's degree in education at UA and worked as a counselor at Goodrich and Thornton junior highs before being named principal at Lane School in 1962, the first African American to hold the title in the Akron district. Miller was active with the Akron Community Service Center and Urban League for over 30 years, providing free tutoring and helping students achieve breakthroughs in learning. Director Vernon Odom once called Miller "the greatest teacher that's ever been in the Akron school system." He could handle many subjects from English to history to calculus to Latin. Miller transferred to Findley School to serve as principal in 1966. Three years later, the district named him director of a career skills center at South High School on East Avenue. The program, financed with a federal grant, taught auto service, engine repair, commercial painting, welding and other trades. More than 200 juniors and seniors enrolled in the first year at South.

In 1972, Miller was promoted to director of supplemental services for Akron Public Schools, which made him responsible for planning and administering programs involving \$5 million in federal and state aid. The district provided extra resources, books and attention to disadvantaged children. As a consequence, reading and math skills jumped in schools. Akron lost a dedicated educator in 1983 when Miller retired after 32 years with the school district. Two months later, he passed away after a brief illness. He was 62. The fraternity set up a memorial scholarship in Miller's name and urged Akron Public Schools to establish a lasting tribute. After South High School closed in 1980, the district turned the building at 1055 East Ave. into the South Education Center, a community school for adult and preschool programs. In 1991, the Akron Board of Education dedicated the building as the George C. Miller South Education Center and welcomed his proud family at the ceremony.

Within two years, the school transformed into Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts. It opened in 1993 with 279 students in fourth through eighth grade. The program allowed youths to develop their talents in visual art, dance, theater, singing and instrumental music.

## SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMERS:



Mr. Douglas A. Bayda
Director of Orchestras
Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts

Miller South String Quartet

Rowan Dennis-Violin Wesley Vaughn-Violin Douglas Bayda-Viola Samuel Potts-Cello



# The 2025 GEORGE C. MILLER ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP AWARDES





#### **SAVION WRIGHT**

Savion Wright is the son of Mr. Vincent and Ms.

Dildred Wright. Savion currently attends John R. Buchtel
Community Learning Center. Savion is the Senior Class
President, as well as the National Honor Society
President. Savion has achieved the award of Scholar of the
Year for Buchtel CLC 2024-2025. Savion will be attending
Kent State University, in the fall to major in Elementary
Middle Education, Mathematics, and Social Studies.





#### **JADA GILMORE**

Jada Gilmore is the daughter of Dr. Luciana Gilmore and Harvey Lewis. She currently attends Twinsburg High School; While attending, Jada received her varsity academic letter, varsity letter in basketball, varsity letter in gymnastics, and varsity letter in cheerleading. Jada made the dean's list at Cuyahoga Community College while attending classes through the College Credit Plus program. She studied this past summer at Harvard University for their summer pre-med student academies, and in addition, she received national African American recognition this year from College Board. Jada will attend Florida A&M University in the fall, majoring in biology and on a pre-med track.







#### **BLAKE HARRIS**

Blake Harris is the son of Gerald and Rosita Harris. He currently attends Firestone CLC. While attending, Blake has received several special honors, including Academic Honor Roll, Cotillion Escort, 1st Team All-Academic in both Football and Baseball, 1st Team All City in Football, All-District Honorable Mention in Football, and is a 4-Year Letter Awardee, also in Football. Blake plans to attend Walsh University with his major currently being undecided.

## HARPER BROOKS





Harper Brooks, son of Germaine and Angela Carter, and Darrell Brooks, is a senior at Copley High School. He has always been inspired by the structures that shape our world. With a passion for math and problem-solving, he is pursuing a degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Akron, where he aims to design innovative and impactful infrastructure. A dedicated student-athlete, Harper is a four-year letterman in football, earning

recognition for his resilience, teamwork, and discipline. He has also been awarded letters for academics and band, reflecting his commitment to both his studies and creative pursuits.

Beyond his academic and athletic achievements, Harper has honed his leadership skills in band and gained hands-on experience in engineering through the Four Cities Compact Engineering Program. Each summer of his high school years, he has volunteered with the Copley Youth Football Association. He has also participated in the I Can Bike program, teaching an autistic boy how to ride a bike, joined his football team in spreading mulch to support a fundraiser, and volunteered at the North Hill Community House.

Harper's journey reflects hard work, determination, and a commitment to building a brighter future for his community.







#### PAUL BOLDER III

Paul Bolder, III is a senior at Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, and is the son of Dr. Tami and Mr. Paul Bolder II. Paul was inducted into the National Honor Society and recognized as a Royal Scholar by achieving a GPA higher than 4.0 for all seven semesters of high school. Paul was accepted to the University of Wisconsin - Madison as a Mercile J. Lee (MJL) Scholar, and plans to major in Electrical Engineering.





#### **MADISON HEREFORD**

Madison Hereford is a senior at NIHF Stem High School in Akron Ohio. She was a dedicated member of the Leadership and Diversity Club. Currently, she serves as a key member of her Student Council and the Senior Cabinet, showcasing her commitment to fostering a positive school environment.

Madison plans to attend Kent State University, where she plans to study Architecture and Interior Design.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Positively impacting
— the lives of
students and families



Learn more at:

www.projectgradakron.org



Graduation Really Achieves Dreams

10 North Main Street, Suite 503 Akron, OH 44308-1958

Phone: 330.761.3113 Fax: 330.761.3246

**Connect With Us!** 













#### BROTHER JOHN F. STAFFORD, JR.

Back in the spring of 2012, some good things fell in place for me. First, I was running an errand in Summit Mall and heard someone playing a piano in the concourse area. Unfortunately, I was in a hurry and didn't have the time to go back and see who it was. Hold that thought. I will come back to it later. Second, I was the President of the Kappa Foundation of Akron, Ohio, and had an idea. I followed through on the idea and called the downtown office of Akron Public Schools and asked if they would have a few students from Miller South School for the Performing Arts perform at our George C. Miller Scholarship Luncheon. I thought it would be nice to have them perform at our luncheon, as the school and luncheon are named in honor of our late brother, George C. Miller. They "volunteered" three young students – Jasmine Moore, Earnest Johnson, and Kofi Boakye. Ms. Dawn Wilson and Ms. Gwen Hayes, a piano teacher, accompanied them.

All good parents and educators know that we must till, fertilize, and water the hearts and minds of our children with love, guidance, and some discipline. If we teach them well, they will rise to the occasion, spread their wings, and soar to new heights we never would have imagined! Those three students from Miller South made Akron Public Schools, the Miller family, as well as their own families, and all of us proud that day! I also learned that it was Kofi who was playing that day at Summit Mall.

Unfortunately, I haven't been able to get any updated information on Ms. Moore or Earnest Johnson. I am quite confident, however, that they have continued to do well and that our young people from Akron, Ohio, are about their business!

Allow me to say a few things about Kofi and what he has done: Kofi became the youngest admitted student to The University of Akron's School of Music Jazz program at the age of 15. He is a two-time Emmy nominee. Kofi was an Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater Grand Prize Winner. He is also a Silver Medal winner at the NAACP ACT-50 National Competition. There are additional accomplishments that haven't been mentioned. The point is that he is continuing to make his family and all of us in Akron proud!

Fly on – Kofi – Fly On!

Thank you all for your continued support of the Kappa Foundation of Akron and the Akron Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Best Regards,

John F. Stafford, Jr.

Brother John F. Stafford, Jr. Beta Chi '74 Hampton University Akron Alumni Chapter ΚΑΨ





#### **MEET OUR GCM 2025 GUEST SPEAKER:**

### DR. MARCUS WOOTEN, M.D.

Dr. Marcus Wooten is originally a Maryland native and grew up in Texas. He received his BA in Biology at the University of North Texas in 2014 where he also competed in Track and Field. Before medical school, Dr. Wooten found his passion for teaching as a High School Science Teacher working with students on attending Howard University College of Medicine. His interests in education continued to grow as he enjoyed working with pipeline programs to expose students of color to medicine in Washington D.C. Dr. Wooten graduated with his Doctor of Medicine in 2020.

The next step in his journey was Akron, Ohio to become an Emergency Medicine Physician at Summa Health during the heart of the COVID-19 Pandemic. During his residency training, he was the Academic Chief Resident

19

in charge of improving teaching. His experiences involve improving the resident curriculum, medical student learning experiences, and involvement in the recruitment and interview process of qualified candidates. Dr. Wooten graduated from Emergency Medicine Residency in 2023. During this time outside of work, he continued the educational mission volunteering at local high schools and the University of Akron to expose students of color to Medicine. One of Dr. Wooten's greatest joys was being a part of "Black Men in White Coats Youth Summit," working with Akron Public School District to get students more interested in Medicine.

Dr. Wooten is currently residing as the Medical Education Fellow and Interim Assistant Program Director at Emergency Medicine Residency Program at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. During this time, he's learning how to be an effective educator in higher education while teaching new doctors how to be Emergency Medicine physicians. He also Co-Chairs the Social Medica Committee and Resident Recruitment efforts for Diverse Candidates with the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee. Dr. Wooten holds a National Position in the American College of Emergency Physicians Academic Affairs Committee, awards for being a reviewer for the Western Journal of Emergency Medicine. Between his administrative duties, he's also working on receiving a Master of Arts in Educational Studies, with a focus on Biomedical Education. His goal is to become a director of his own residency program, which would ensure a safe space for Black and Brown physicians to train and inspire the next generation.

In July of 2025 Dr. Wooten will be transitioning to the Assistant Program Director of Harvard Affiliated Emergency Medicine Residency Program in Boston, Massachusetts. His goal is to increase diversity and interest in the physician workforce and inspire the next generation of physicians through pipeline programs, networking, and mentorship.

Outside of working, Dr. Wooten enjoy reading Manga, Role-Playing video games, trail-walking, and spending time with loved ones.



#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD



#### State Representative Veronica R. Sims Ohio House District 33

A passionate servant leader who understands the power of the people, Veronica Sims has dedicated her journey to the transformative power of empowering others with the tools needed to effect the changes that they desire to see in the communities in which they live, work, play, and educate.

Appointed to the Ohio House of Representative in February 2024 and subsequently elected in November 2024, Representative Sims has the unique distinction of being the first elected official in Summit County to serve on the Akron Public School Board, the Akron City Council, Summit County Council (elected first black female vice president and president twice) and the Ohio House of Representative.

A lifelong resident of Akron and a proud product of Akron Public Schools, Veronica earned her Masters of Public Administration and Bachelors in Criminal Justice/Political Science from the University of Akron. She has held a variety of leadership positions over her storied professional career including: Executive Director of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus; Director of Outreach and Community Development for Community Action Akron Summit; Regional Facility Manager for Adult Services for Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board and today in addition to serving as House District 33 Representative in the Ohio House of Representatives, Veronica leads the community outreach/partnership effort at Stewart & Calhoun Funeral Home and Cremations Services.

During her legislative career, Sims worked to help devise the City of Akron's Body Worn Camera Policy; championed the violence interruption plan to help address youth violence – especially gun violence; championed legislation to ensure that tasers were standard issuance for APD officers and introduced legislation to ensure that infant changing tables were installed in men's restrooms in all City parks and recreation centers as an additional safety protocol in the continued work to reduce infant mortality. On Summit County Council, Veronica introduced historic legislation declaring racism a public health crisis, supported the earmarking of resources during the pandemic to support struggling small businesses, and support struggling families with basic needs such as rent, mortgage and utility assistance, lead the charge to expand the jury source list to help ensure greater representation of Blacks and other minorities in the jury selection process, and co-sponsored legislation to make Juneteenth a paid holiday.

Representative Sims' legislative, community, and advocacy work has earned her many recognitions of honor — Harold K. Stubbs Humanitarian in Government Award, Elected Official of the Year (National Association of Social Worker — Ohio Region 2), Liam Murray Local Food Hero Award (Summit County Food Leadership Coalition), and the Community Building Award (Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Commemorative Commission) to name a few. Veronica currently serves as the Ranking Member of the Ohio House Local Government Committee and is a member of the Finance, Government Oversight, Agriculture, and Sunset Review Committees. In addition, Representative Sims is a member of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) and the Ohio Democratic Women's Legislative Caucus serving at Vice Chair of Policy and member of the Engagement/Service Committee. Veronica and her husband Quintin are the proud parents of adult daughter Qyra.

22

## EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Biographical Sketch of Jacqueline A. Silas-Butler, Esq. Executive Director, Project GRAD Akron

Attorney Jacqueline A. Silas-Butler has served as the Executive Director of Project GRAD Akron since July 31, 2006. Project GRAD Akron is part of a national educational reform program which was established in 2002 to increase the high school and college graduation rates of students in selected schools of the Akron Public Schools. Project GRAD Akron provides services and programs for students from kindergarten through college. The program areas include academic support, social services, college access, college awareness and readiness, mentoring, and scholarships. Since 2006, the organization has awarded over \$2.5 million in scholarships to students from the Akron Public Schools, who are pursuing a variety of post-secondary options, and they have assisted the students in leveraging thousands of dollars in additional scholarships. Under her leadership, Project GRAD Akron's team members implemented the Bridge to Kindergarten program for incoming kindergarten students and their parents; enhanced programs to increase high school and college graduation rates of students; implemented the Achieving Dreams Celebration fundraising event; the March GRADness fundraising event for scholarships and college access programs; Turning Tassels Leadership Society for donors; and provided an array of educational programs to increase student and parent engagement and involvement, including College and Career Central classes for middle school and high school students, the GRAD Mentors program for high school students, and the GRADS Persists Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) to benefit students in the Akron Public Schools and she serves as the co-Director of the AIM High Akron GEAR UP grant. Project GRAD Akron currently provides services to students and families in four (4) clusters of the Akron Public Schools, namely, Buchtel, East, Garfield, and North.

A native of Middletown, Ohio, Jackie received her Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Political Science from The Ohio State University and her Juris Doctorate degree from The University of Akron School of Law. A licensed attorney in the State of Ohio since 1984, her legal career includes serving as a Magistrate with both the Summit County Juvenile Court and the Summit County Domestic Relations Court; an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the Summit County Prosecutor's Office; an Adjunct Professor at The University of Akron School of Law, where she taught Juvenile Law; and an Adjunct Professor at the University's undergraduate school, where she taught Legal Research and Writing. She served as the Executive Director of Caring Communities of Summit County, where she instituted the Leona W. Farris Caring Awards, created and enhanced many programs for youth and families, and was the author of numerous grants, including a multi-year grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for grandparents raising their grandchildren.

It was during her work at the Summit County Juvenile Court where she developed many creative and compassionate ways to support children and their families. As a Magistrate with the primary responsibility of handling children who were the victims of abuse, neglect, and dependency, as well as handling parentage and custody matters, and delinquency cases, she implemented many firsts for the organization. She continues to encounter students and families who remark about how she made a positive difference in their lives.

Jackie is a Golden Life member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., a life member of the NAACP, and her current involvement includes the following: member of the Arlington Church of God; Chairperson of the Summit County Human Resources Commission; Akron Branch NAACP; Historian for the Akron-Canton Barristers Association; a member of the Judicial Commission for the Akron Bar Association; member of the Executive Board and several committees of the Akron Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; member of the Leadership Akron Alumni Association; member of the Advancement Council for the University of Akron's School of Law; member of the Akron Silhouettes, to name a few.

A recognized leader in the community, she has received numerous awards, including the Bradford "Buck" M. Gearinger Professionalism Award from the Akron Bar Association; Judith A. Read Tribute Award (JARTA) from the Women's Endowment Fund of the Akron Community Foundation; Outstanding Law Alumni Award from the

University of Akron School of Law; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. award from the Feeding the Hungry Dream Center; Community Service Alumni Award from the Black Law Students Association of the University of Akron's Law School; ATHENA Award; Distinguished Alumni Award from The University of Akron's Office of Multicultural Development; Woman of Power Award from the Akron Urban League; the Women's Network Woman of Achievement Award; County of Summit's Making A Difference Award; Harold K. Stubbs Award for Humanitarian Service; Black Pages Honoring Excellence Award; Middletown Branch NAACP Image Award; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Sisterhood, Delta Service, and Community Service Awards; YWCA's 100 Outstanding Women In Summit County; and Jack and Jill Caring Mother of the Year Award. She was featured in Inside Business magazine in 2001 for her outstanding leadership in the non-profit community and in 2009 for the ATHENA award recognition.

She has been married nearly 39 years to Lawrence B. Butler, Jr., a retired music teacher from the Akron Public Schools, and they are the parents of one adult son, Christopher Butler. Jackie grew up in a loving home surrounded by her parents (Elizabeth & Frank Silas), older brother (Frank Silas, Jr.), and two younger cousins (Darryl & F. Tyrone Wilkins). The four children were all graduates of Madison High School. She enjoys spending time with her immediate and extended family, genealogy, scrapbooking, history, and reading.





Tiretown Golf Club & Tiretown Golf Charities Congratulates the 2025 George C. Miller scholarship recipients

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!



#### **CRIMSON LEVEL SPONSORS**



#### **CREAM LEVEL SPONSORS**





The Miller Family

Daood & Trish
Thornton





# Thank you to our friends, family, community, and the city of Akron for your continued support!

