

# AMIBU

America In Black And White The Magazine

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Free

Shawn A.  
Barksdale  
pg.18

AMIBU / Community



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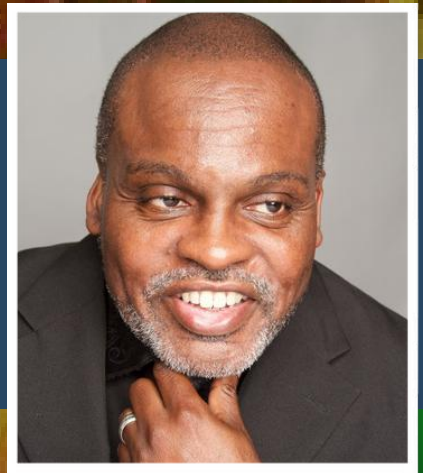
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# HAPPY HOST LETTER

| BY CHARLES ZACKARY KING |  
FOUNDER OF AMIBW



Dear Readers,

**Welcome to Issue #3 of AMIBW The Magazine, a space where legacy meets truth, and storytelling becomes a tool for transformation.**

Each page of this issue is a mirror and a map. A mirror reflecting the brilliance, resilience, and complexity of Black voices across generations. A map guiding us toward healing, equity, and communal power. As your host, I don't take this role lightly. I see it as a sacred responsibility, to hold space for raw honesty, to amplify stories that often go unheard, and to remind us that our lived experiences are not just valid, but vital.

This issue dives deep. We explore the intersections of artistry and advocacy, legacy and labor, pain and purpose. You'll meet contributors who are not just creators, they're architects of change. From grassroots organizers to visionary entrepreneurs, each feature is a testament to what happens when we refuse to be silenced and instead choose to build.

At AMIBW, we don't just publish, we provoke. We don't just highlight, we honor. And we don't just tell stories, we build bridges. Whether you're flipping through these pages in search of inspiration, affirmation, or activation, I hope you find all three.

Thank you for walking with us. Thank you for believing in the power of Black excellence, not as a trend, but as a truth. And thank you for being part of a movement that refuses to settle for survival when we were born to thrive.

In legacy and light,

Charles Zackary King  
Host, America in Black and White  
Founder, AMIBW The Magazine



# CZK Enterprise is where legacy meets strategy

"Empowerment isn't a moment. It's a movement."

"From struggle to strategy—from pain to power."



"Stories shape legacies. Legacies shape futures."

## CZK ENTERPRISE

**COME AND RECEIVE YOUR LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE**

"We don't inherit legacy—we build it."

We create systems, stories, and symbols that elevate Black excellence, preserve cultural heritage, and empower future generations. Through bold media, empowering merchandise, and transformational community initiatives, we don't just inspire—we build. CZK is more than a brand—it's a blueprint for impact.

# FALL EDITORIAL

THE PUBLISHERS DESK | & | CREATIVE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
BLAKE M. ANDREWS



**Welcome to the Fall 2025 issue of AMIBW The Magazine.**

When this magazine was conceived, it was never meant to be just ink on paper or pixels on a screen. It was created to be a living archive. A safe space where conversations, culture, and reflection are preserved with intention and voice. Each page carries the energy of the stories shared on air, now brought into the hands, homes, and hearts of readers who value depth and authenticity.

Inside these pages you won't simply find articles. You'll encounter voices that challenge convention, images that speak truth, and narratives that honor resilience and pride. Every feature, interview, and design choice is intentional: built not just to look good, but to leave an imprint that lasts well beyond the turn of a page.

Our promise remains clear: depth over distraction, context over clickbait, legacy over fleeting trends. Media, when rooted in integrity, can shape how we see ourselves and each other. That belief drives everything we do.

This publication is for the thinkers, listeners, builders, and dreamers. Those who expect more from media than noise and believe in imagining a better future together.

Thank you for reading. Thank you for thinking. And thank you for standing with us as we continue to turn pages, spark dialogue, and build a lasting legacy together.

With respect,

Blake M. Andrews

Chief Marketing Officer of IMTv360

Executive Publisher & Creative Editor-in-Chief of AMIBW The Magazine



# From Trenton To Statewide Impact: How a CTE kid became the person rewriting the playbook

INTERVIEW WITH

✦ TROY LONG:  
EDUCATOR

*Troy Long* is a county-level Director of Career & Technical Education (CTE), consultant, and author whose path began as a CTE student himself. Raised in Trenton, New Jersey, he was the first from his street to attend college, mentored by a tight-knit community that “looked out” for his potential. He first worked in North Jersey media (Star-Ledger) and came to education “by happenstance” through coaching; once in the classroom, he saw how hands-on, skills-based learning could redirect lives—and never looked back.

Across two decades, Troy advanced from business teacher to CTE department chair, vice principal, and now county CTE director, where he aligns programs with local labor demand using the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), builds advisory boards with industry, and hard-wires articulation agreements so high-schoolers earn college credit while securing industry-valued credentials. A signature of his programs: OSHA-10 certification in year one, work-based learning that often converts to jobs, and grant-funded credential fees to keep students debt-free.

***“AI won’t replace you;  
People who know how  
to use AI will.”***



## From Trenton To Statewide Impact: How a CTE kid became the person rewriting the playbook

Troy's hopes and aspirations are community-scale: restore a real middle class by ensuring graduates enter livable-wage careers without student-loan drag; grow equity by opening CTE doors to all learners (including girls and students with disabilities); and help districts schedule and resource CTE first—so the classes kids love are the reason they come to school on time. He's also spearheading AI innovation: his district is one of two awarded to develop the statewide AI curriculum for New Jersey, launching its first classes now. His stance is practical: "AI won't replace you; people who know how to use AI will."

As a consultant, Troy helps districts fix the "plumbing" of CTE—pathway design, credential selection, college alignment, compliance with Perkins V, and staff development—especially in underserved communities where turnover and certification hurdles stall progress. He's a frequent presenter with ACTE, recently keynoted in Washington, D.C., and publishes monthly essays on program design and policy pressures (from procurement to tariffs).

Troy is also an author. His book, *The CTE Experience* (Amazon), is a field guide for urban districts: each chapter "creates" a CTE pillar—Create the Energy, Enthusiasm, Engagement, Education, Entrepreneur, Excellence, and Future—blending strategy with lived stories from scheduling battles to system fixes. He hopes the book helps educators avoid common pitfalls, accelerate articulation wins, and keep students on track to complete pathways with meaningful credentials.

What he does today: leads countywide CTE initiatives; mentors emerging leaders; writes grants that fund student credentials and dual-enrollment seats; runs industry advisory boards; and consults nationally to stand up high-quality, labor-aligned pathways.

Family & personal context: Troy credits his neighborhood and early CTE mentors for pulling him forward; he shares that community protection, coaching, and a stint as a DECA student gave him purpose. After a recent health scare, he's doubled down on service, ownership, and giving back—values he ties to role models like Mansa Musa (possibility and stewardship) and Patrice Lumumba (sacrifice and sovereignty).

*Where to connect & find his work:*

- [LinkedIn: Troy Long \(primary hub; responsive to DMs\)](#)
- [Instagram: @coaching\\_todays\\_educators](#)
- [Book: \*The CTE Experience\* by Troy Long \(Amazon\)](#)

# Second Chances & Stronger Futures

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ CASEY GREGG: ENTREPERNEUR

*Casey Greg's story is one of transformation, resilience, and purpose. At just 17 years old, while still a junior in high school, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison. A life-altering moment that forced him to confront the realities of environment, choice, and systemic barriers. Instead of succumbing to despair, Casey began a journey of self-discovery and growth, leaning on mentors who encouraged him to read, reflect, and build the emotional intelligence needed to navigate adversity. Books like *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* became catalysts, inspiring him to view education, discipline, and truth as tools of liberation.*

*“Adversity is the architect of one’s purpose.”*



## Second Chances & Stronger Futures

After serving over 17 years, Casey emerged determined to turn his experiences into empowerment for others. He enrolled full-time at Fayetteville State University and founded More Visions Empowerment, a youth-centered initiative dedicated to social-emotional learning, restorative practice circles, and reentry programs for young people ages 13 to 25. Through workshops, coaching, and community partnerships, his work helps youth reclaim their narratives, regulate emotions, and build pathways to thriving futures. His entrepreneurial spirit grew out of necessity—bridging the gaps he saw in reentry and mentorship by creating the very resources he wished had been available to him.

Today, Casey is a sought-after speaker, consultant, and community advocate, bringing his lived experience to schools, detention centers, universities, and nonprofits. His consulting focuses on reentry program design, emotional intelligence training, and equity-based approaches that meet communities where they are. He challenges organizations to shift from equality (equal resources) to equity (accessible, personalized support) in serving marginalized populations. His voice resonates because it is both authentic and urgent—rooted in the lived reality of incarceration yet elevated by vision and purpose.

Looking forward, Casey's aspiration is to impact at a global scale, expanding More Visions Empowerment beyond local reach to influence policy, education, and community transformation across the country and beyond. He champions a blueprint of agitate » educate » organize » mobilize » liberate as the pathway to collective healing and liberation. Audiences leave his talks with more than inspiration—they walk away with tools, hope, and a reminder that adversity can be the architect of one's purpose.



**Defining success: impact over profit.**

Where to connect & find his work:

- [IG: @morevisions25](#)
- [LinkedIn: Casey Greg](#)
- [Website: caseygreg.com](#)

# A Chilling Week for Black Students—Racist Threats, Campus Lockdowns, and the Urgency of Action

## |Article By Charles Zackary King |

This week, Black students across the United States were forced to confront a terrifying reality: coordinated racist death threats targeting their campuses and communities. At least eight historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were placed under emergency lockdowns following a wave of terroristic threats that came just one day after the murder of far-right activist Charlie Kirk at Utah Valley University.

While the shooter, Tyler Robinson, a 22-year-old white man, was arrested and charged with aggravated murder, the aftermath has taken a disturbing turn. Instead of mourning Kirk's death or focusing on the facts of the case, extremist groups appear to be weaponizing the tragedy to target Black students, falsely linking them to the violence and unleashing a wave of racist threats.

The following institutions were forced into lockdowns due to credible threats of violence: **Alabama State University, Virginia State University, Hampton University, Spelman College, Southern University and A&M College, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Bethune-Cookman University.**

At Virginia State University, President Makola M. Abdullah stated, "Today, Virginia State University, along with several other Historically Black Colleges and Universities, received a threat intended to disrupt, intimidate and instill fear in our community."

Southern University enacted the most extensive lockdown, restricting access across the entire Baton Rouge landmass, including its law center, agricultural research and extension center, and laboratory school. Hampton University canceled all classes and activities through Friday, while Alabama State University suspended operations "out of an abundance of caution."

### **NYU and the Manifesto of Hate**

At New York University, Black students received a grotesque and violent manifesto that explicitly threatened gun violence against them. The document reportedly stated the author was "coming for only n\*\*\*\*\*," and claimed that Black students were "taking away from a safe space for white people."

The NYU Black Student Union condemned the university's response, noting that administrators waited over six hours before informing students that the manifesto specifically targeted Black students. This delay left many feeling vulnerable, betrayed, and unprotected.



# Building Businesses, Communities, and Legacies

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ DEREK J. WILSON: ENTREPERNEUR

*Derek J. Wilson, a proud Houston native, has carved a path defined by entrepreneurship, resilience, and service. After graduating from Westbury High School and studying political science at Abilene Christian University, Derek ventured into the janitorial industry, first as a franchise owner and then independently, learning the fundamentals of contracts, payroll, and client service. Over the years, he expanded his portfolio to include a U-Haul dealership, Guardian Financial Services, and leadership roles in facility management and business development. Licensed as an insurance adjuster, he brings a diverse and practical skill set to every endeavor.*

*“Community is everything.  
If it’s not uplifting people,  
I won’t engage in it.”*





# Building Businesses, Communities, and Legacies

Today, Derek serves as President of the Greater Eastside Chamber of Commerce, where he connects entrepreneurs with information, elected officials, and funding opportunities. He also works as Business Development Manager for True North Restoration, guiding families and business owners through water, fire, and storm recovery — often meeting them at their lowest points and helping them rebuild. His work reflects both business acumen and compassion, anchored in his personal philosophy that success is measured not by wealth alone but by the ability to provide, uplift, and serve.

Derek's entrepreneurial spirit is deeply rooted in family. From grandparents who were sharecroppers and business owners to a father who ran one of Houston's most popular glass-tint shops, Derek was raised in an environment where entrepreneurship was a way of life. That heritage informs his hustle and resilience: "Failure is not an option. By any legal means necessary, I'm going to ensure my family, my businesses, and my community thrive."

Community service is central to Derek's legacy. He launched a Back-to-School Block Party in Gwinnett County that continues to grow annually, now partnering with nonprofits, schools, and businesses to provide supplies, health screenings, and hope. He has also led holiday drives, food giveaways, and countless networking events through the chamber. His leadership is grounded in faith, family, and a belief in walking with integrity: "I don't love money — I love what I can do with money."

Looking ahead, Derek aspires to expand his impact by building more equitable opportunities for underserved communities, increasing Black entrepreneurship through chamber initiatives, and mentoring the next generation of leaders. He draws inspiration from Malcolm X's discipline and transformation, applying those lessons to modern business development and civic leadership. For Derek, legacy is not just about personal success but about leaving behind stronger communities and pathways for others to follow.

Where to connect & find his work:

- [LinkedIn](#): "Derek J Wilson"
- [Facebook](#): a public page under "Derek J Wilson"
- [Google](#) "Derek J Wilson Georgia" to find his PowerCore page and chamber page.
- [BOOK](#) on [Amazon](#) by searching "Derek J. Wilson author."

# From Perfusionist to Patient, Turning Trials into Testimony

INTERVIEW WITH

✦ MARK BRAZELLE:  
PERFUSIONIST

*Mark Brazelle is a nationally recognized speaker, health advocate, and consultant with more than two decades of experience in clinical and medical affairs. A graduate of the Johns Hopkins Hospital School of Perfusion Science, Mark trained under renowned mentors such as Dr. Ben Carson and Dr. Levi Watkins, connecting cutting-edge medicine with a deep legacy of advocacy and service. Over his career, he has authored scientific publications, mentored students, and advised industry leaders on bridging clinical science with community health.*

*“Diabetes is not a death sentence. It’s a condition you can live with.”*



# From Perfusionist to Patient, Turning Trials into Testimony

Mark's life took an unexpected turn when he transitioned from clinician to patient, being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. That personal journey reshaped his mission: to use his voice, story, and expertise to empower others navigating chronic illness. His transparency about frustration, resilience, and adaptation makes him a sought-after keynote speaker who leaves audiences inspired and equipped with strategies to live healthier lives.

As a thought leader, Mark emphasizes holistic wellness—balancing physical, mental, and spiritual health. He is passionate about prevention, health equity, and educating underserved communities on cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and lifestyle transformation. Whether in a hospital, classroom, or church, his message is consistent: “Your health is your greatest asset. If something isn't right, get it checked out.”

Today, Mark continues to consult in medical affairs, mentor future clinicians, and advocate for accessible healthcare. His book and public speaking engagements combine personal testimony with clinical insight, bridging science and humanity. His ultimate mission is simple yet profound: to help others live with purpose, thrive with wellness, and understand that chronic illness does not define destiny.



Where to connect & find his work:

- [Email: mark.brazelle@mdblifeconnects.com](mailto:mark.brazelle@mdblifeconnects.com).



# A Chilling Week for Black Students—Racist Threats, Campus Lockdowns, and the Urgency of Action

|Article By Charles Zackary King |

## The Kirk Shooting and the Dangerous Narrative

Charlie Kirk was shot by a white man who, according to court documents, believed Kirk “spread too much hate”. The shooter had no known ties to Black communities or HBCUs. Yet, in the wake of his death, racist extremists have twisted the narrative to justify targeting Black students, despite the fact that they were not involved.

## This is not just misinformation. It’s weaponized racism

The FBI has acknowledged that many of these threats may be hoaxes, but emphasized that they are still dangerous and disruptive. “The FBI takes these threats very seriously because it puts innocent people at risk,” the agency stated.

## The Emotional Toll on Students

For Black students, this week has been a nightmare. Many were forced to shelter in place, cancel classes, and live under the shadow of fear. The psychological impact is profound, students are reporting anxiety, trauma, and a deep sense of being unsafe in spaces that are supposed to nurture and protect them.

## Call to Action: Stand Up for Black Students

This is a moment for solidarity, truth, and action. We must demand transparency and accountability from university officials, support mental health resources for affected students, and pressure law enforcement to investigate these threats as hate crimes. At the same time, we should amplify the voices of Black student unions and advocacy groups, ensuring their concerns are heard and addressed. Most importantly, we must refuse to let racist narratives go unchecked, standing firmly against hate and injustice in all its forms.

Silence is complicity. Let’s be loud, clear, and united.

# Unlocking Potential Through Sales, Storytelling, and Caribbean Excellence

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ ADRIEN N. HAVLOCK: SALES ENTREPRENEUR

*Adrien N. Havlock is a sales trainer, speaker, and entrepreneur whose journey began in Trinidad with lessons learned from his father's electrical business. At just 19 years old, he broke into the luxury car industry despite lacking the formal qualifications, quickly rising to become a top BMW salesperson. His early success, fueled by resilience and an ability to build trust without pressure, gave him the confidence to pursue a deeper calling: training others to communicate, sell, and lead with authenticity.*

*“Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.”*



# Unlocking Potential Through Sales, Storytelling, and Caribbean Excellence

In 2012, Adrien founded his own sales training company, Unlock Your Potential, creating workshops and coaching programs that replace outdated sales tactics with people-first strategies. His sessions emphasize persuasion over manipulation, storytelling as a leadership tool, and authentic relationship-building as the heart of business. By 2018, he had authored two books—including a co-authored project with Brian Tracy that reached Amazon bestseller status—and developed online courses to reach a wider audience.

Adrien's influence spans industries and borders, with clients across the Caribbean, the U.S., and beyond. Yet his work remains rooted in community uplift, emphasizing culturally aligned business models that honor local values. He believes success comes from serving others with integrity and intention: "Do it with a good heart and good intentions, and the results will come."

Today, Adrien continues to expand his impact—balancing his role as a coach and speaker with new ventures like his HVAC company in Trinidad. Looking ahead, his vision is to build a global platform for Unlock Your Potential, take stages alongside mentors such as Andy Harrington, and inspire others to embrace resilience, authenticity, and bold risk-taking. For Adrien, legacy means creating a name that will be remembered for uplifting people and proving that Caribbean excellence can influence the world stage.



Where to connect & find his work:

- Primary Platform: [LinkedIn](#)
- Book: [How to Succeed in Sales and in Life](#) (available on [Amazon](#)).



# From Incarceration to Inspiration

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ★ SHAWN A. BARKSDALE: ENTREPRENEUR

*Shawn A. Barksdale is a community leader, entrepreneur, and advocate for returning citizens whose life journey embodies transformation. Raised in Halifax County, Virginia, by strong grandparents who instilled faith, education, and service, Shaun's life took a difficult turn during the crack epidemic. A series of run-ins with the justice system eventually led to a 75-year sentence, with 16 years to serve. Yet inside prison, Shawn found his true calling: education, leadership, and advocacy. He earned his GED, completed college coursework, became a tutor, and studied printing trades that would later anchor his entrepreneurial journey.*

*“If I was once the problem, then I must also be part of the solution.”*



# From Incarceration to Inspiration

Upon release, Shawn launched Press for Time Tees, a printing business that grew from humble beginnings into a company serving major events, nonprofits, and justice reform organizations nationwide. His entrepreneurial spirit reflected a larger mission—to provide second chances, resources, and hope to communities often left behind.

Shawn's community initiatives include Pens Not Pistols, a poetry-based anti-violence program in schools, and Planning with a Purpose, which teaches financial literacy, career readiness, and life skills to youth. His mentorship of individuals like "Jojo"—a gang-involved teen who graduated and found employment after Shaun's guidance—proves the ripple effect of consistent presence and compassion.

In addition to entrepreneurship, Shaun co-founded and hosts the podcast 10 Minutes of Truth, a platform for authentic storytelling, resource-sharing, and unfiltered dialogue. He also partners with Virginia Tech on programs teaching trauma-informed care, resilience, and reentry strategies. Shaun calls himself part of a "new Underground Railroad," committed to freeing minds and futures. Inspired by Harriet Tubman, he embraces the role of guide, showing returning citizens that redemption and leadership are possible.

Today, Shawn continues to balance purpose with profit, ensuring his ventures uplift others while sustaining his family. His legacy-in-progress is one of empowerment: "Crime does not pay—but redemption means change. If I was once the problem, I must also be part of the solution."



Where to connect & find his work:

- [Spotify Podcast](#): 10 Minutes of Truth with Shawn A. Barksdale
- [Business Website](#): [press4timetees.com](http://press4timetees.com) (custom printing services).
- [Speaking/MC Requests](#): [shaunabarksdale.com](http://shaunabarksdale.com)



# The Rise of Chagas: Why ‘Kissing Bug’ Disease May Be America’s Next Endemic

**[Article By Charles Zackary King | Inspired by reporting from Julia Gomez & Greta Cross, USA TODAY]**

For decades, Chagas disease, also known as “kissing bug” disease, was considered a threat confined to Latin America. But new research is challenging that assumption, urging the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to declare it endemic in the United States.

Since 2013, over 10,000 sightings of triatomine bugs (the blood-feeding insects that carry the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*) have been reported across 31 states. These bugs, nicknamed “kissing bugs” for their tendency to bite near the mouth, are more than a nuisance, they’re potential carriers of a deadly parasite. Alarming, 55% of the bugs tested in a nationwide Texas A&M University program were found to carry *T. cruzi*, the parasite responsible for Chagas disease.

What makes this moment urgent is the shift from imported cases to domestic transmission. In eight states, California, Texas, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee, humans have contracted Chagas disease locally, without international travel. That’s a seismic shift in how we understand vector-borne disease in America.

Chagas disease unfolds in two stages: acute and chronic. Early symptoms include fever, diarrhea, and swollen eyelids (known as Romana’s sign). But the chronic phase can be far more devastating, leading to heart failure, digestive complications, and even sudden death. The CDC estimates that 20–30% of infected individuals will develop serious complications.

Despite this, Chagas remains underreported. It’s not a nationally notifiable disease, meaning healthcare providers aren’t required to report cases. This lack of surveillance leaves vulnerable communities, especially in the rural South, at risk and under-informed.

Animals, particularly dogs, are also susceptible. Cases have been documented in 18 states, including Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and the Carolinas. The parasite’s reach is expanding, and so must our awareness.

This isn’t just a health story, it’s a justice story. It’s about who gets protected, who gets ignored, and how we respond when the invisible becomes undeniable. As we confront the realities of climate change, migration, and neglected diseases, Chagas is a wake-up call.

It’s time to ask: What else is hiding in plain sight?

Original reporting by Julia Gomez and Greta Cross, USA TODAY. Published September 25, 2025. Read the full article on NewsBreak.



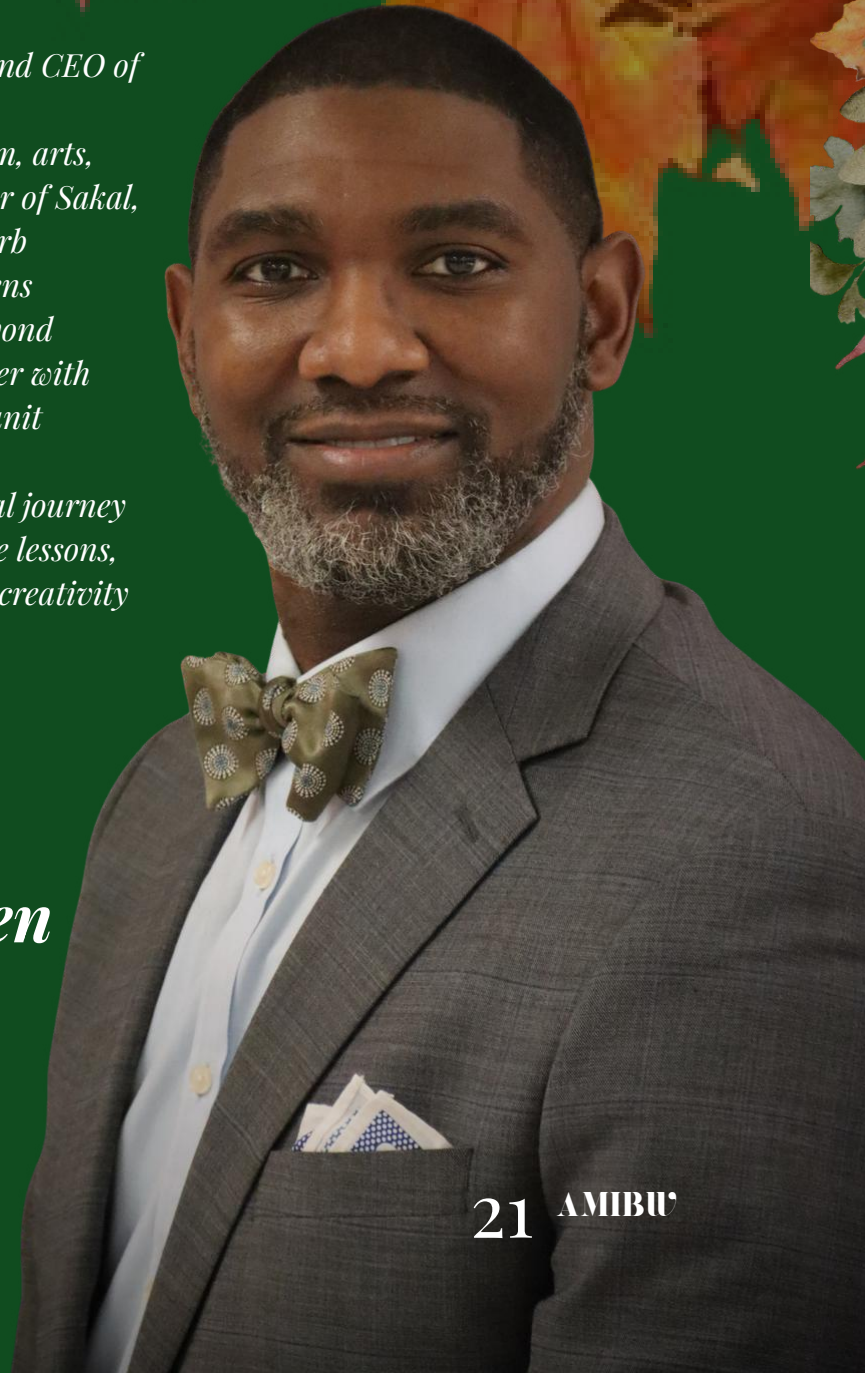
# Building Communities Through Music, Ministry, and Enterprise

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ★ BRANDON MARCUS FLANDERS

*Brandon Marcus Flanders is the founder and CEO of BMF Global LLC (BMFG), a multifaceted entertainment company spanning music, film, arts, and technology. He is also a founding partner of Sakal, a global streaming platform, co-owner of Narb Technologies, and board member of the Queens Underground Film Festival in New York. Beyond entertainment, Brandon is a project developer with major ventures underway, including a 168-unit affordable housing tower and international marketplace set for 2028. His entrepreneurial journey began as a teenager teaching piano and voice lessons, eventually evolving into projects that merge creativity with community empowerment.*

*“If your gift impacts even one person, you’ve succeeded.”*



# Building Communities Through Music, Ministry and Enterprise

Faith and family have shaped Brandon's mission from the start. Raised in a household of entrepreneurs and artists—his grandmother a shop owner, his father a tailor and pastor, his mother a seamstress and singer—Brandon absorbed both work ethic and artistry. Those values guided him through challenges, from funding struggles to navigating early business failures, always reinforcing his belief that perseverance and community support create sustainable success.

With over 35 years in music as a songwriter, producer, singer, and musician, Brandon has performed nationally and internationally, from NJPAC to London, Italy, and Mexico. For 19 years, he served as Minister of Worship & Arts at Fountain Baptist Church in New Jersey, leading choirs, mentoring young musicians, and bridging tradition with innovation in worship. His philosophy: music is a universal language that uplifts, heals, and builds spiritual and emotional bridges.

Today, Brandon is expanding his creative vision with documentaries like *From the Eyes of Many*, exploring freedom, and *Unlabeled*, a series dismantling limiting social constructs. Through his nonprofit Right House, founded with his sister, he is also preparing reentry and training programs for veterans, formerly incarcerated individuals, and underserved communities. Whether through arts, housing, or ministry, Brandon defines success as planting seeds that empower others to thrive: “If your gift impacts even one person, you’ve succeeded.”



Where to connect & find his work:

- [LinkedIn](#): Active for professional networking and ministry/arts leadership connections.
- [YouTube](#): Involved via documentary promotion (*From the Eyes of Many*, *Unlabeled*).

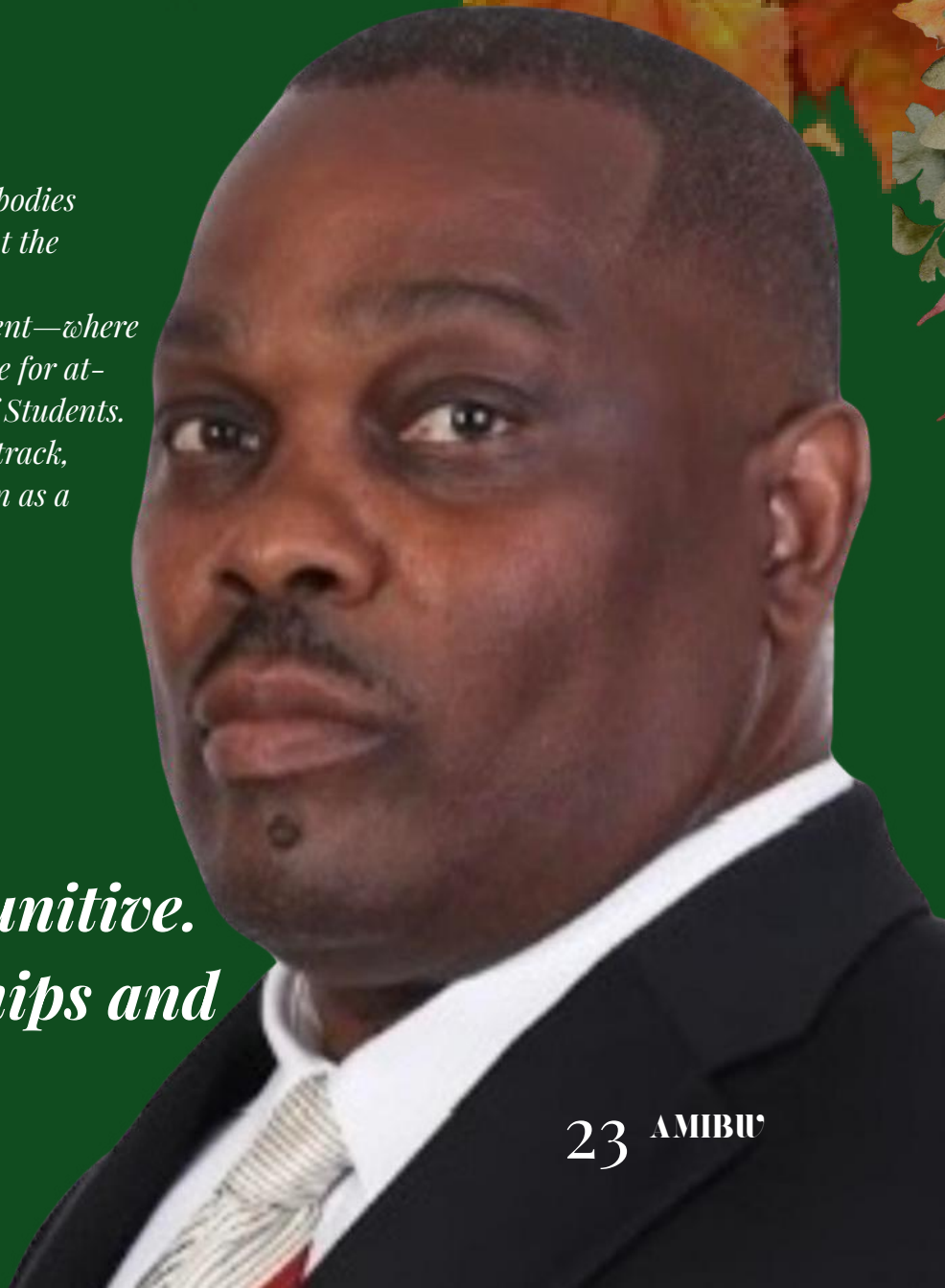
# Resilience, Service, and Legacy

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ★ DR. TIMOTHY FELTON: COMMUNITY LEADER

*Dr. Timothy Felton is a man whose life embodies resilience, faith, and service. With degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, he transitioned from a career in law enforcement—where he worked as a juvenile officer and advocate for at-risk youth—to his current role as a Dean of Students. Along the way, he has coached football and track, written over 15 books, and built a reputation as a dynamic motivational speaker, author, and community leader.*

*“Discipline is not punitive.  
It’s about relationships and  
transparency.”*





# Building Communities Through Music, Ministry and Enterprise

His early years were marked by determination. Though once labeled an average student, Dr. Felton pursued higher education relentlessly, earning his doctorate with distinction to prove to young people that “you don’t have to be drafted into the NFL to be a professional at life.” His memoir *Undrafted* details his athletic journey and the lessons he carried into every other arena of his life.

As a juvenile officer, Dr. Felton focused on restorative justice and mentorship. He built trust with young offenders through transparency and consistency, often reminding them that rehabilitation was possible if they had the will. His philosophy carried over into education, where as a dean he emphasizes “direct care”—being present with students in the hallways, at lunch, and in after-school activities, not just behind a desk.

Beyond his career, Dr. Felton is a prolific author and mentor. His works range from memoirs and marriage guides co-written with his wife of 31 years, to children’s books designed to inspire early learners. He believes everyone has a book inside them and often helps aspiring authors outline and begin their projects. His legacy, he says, is simple: “If you came to my funeral, I’d want you to say he was someone who helped anybody—no matter who they were.”



Where to connect & find his work:

- [LinkedIn: Dr. Timothy Felton](#)
- [Facebook: Timothy Felton](#)
- [Amazon Author Timothy Felton](#): 15+ other titles, including marriage guides and children’s books.

# Tap Into These 10 Black Tech Titans: Innovation, Legacy & Lessons for the Future

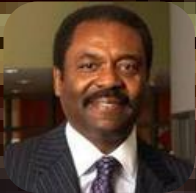
|Article By Charles Zackary King |

The U.S. tech industry has a diversity problem. Despite being the engine of global innovation, it remains staggeringly homogeneous. Black professionals make up just 7–9% of the workforce, and less than 5% of leadership roles at giants like Google, Microsoft, and Meta. But beyond the boardrooms and algorithms, a powerful movement is reshaping the narrative—Black tech entrepreneurs who are building billion-dollar companies, transforming industries, and mentoring the next generation.

These ten trailblazers didn't wait for permission. They built platforms, raised capital, and created space for others. If you're serious about learning from the best, these are the minds to follow, study, and connect with.



**Robert F. Smith, the Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Vista Equity Partners**, is a visionary leader who has overseen more than 600 transactions totaling \$330 billion. His investment philosophy focuses on operational excellence and long-term value creation, making him one of the most influential figures in private equity. Beyond business, Smith is a powerful philanthropic force. He famously eliminated student debt for an entire graduating class at Morehouse College and launched the Student Freedom Initiative to expand educational opportunities. His legacy teaches us how to scale with precision while giving back with purpose. He can be reached at [rsmith@vistaequitypartners.com](mailto:rsmith@vistaequitypartners.com) or [admin@robertfredericksmith.com](mailto:admin@robertfredericksmith.com).



**David Steward, the Founder and Chairman of World Wide Technology**, built the largest Black-owned tech company in the United States, now valued at \$11.4 billion. His leadership blends faith, strategic vision, and a commitment to uplifting communities, proving that values-driven leadership can scale globally. He can be reached by phone at (314) 569-7000.



**Tope Awotona, the Founder and CEO of Calendly**, bootstrapped the scheduling platform into a \$3 billion unicorn through grit, vision, and an unwavering refusal to settle for mediocrity. His journey shows how simplicity and a relentless focus on user experience can disrupt entire industries. While his direct contact information is not publicly listed, he can be reached through LinkedIn.



**Dr. Iman Abuzeid, the Co-founder and CEO of Incredible Health**, is a Sudanese-American physician turned tech entrepreneur who built a \$1.65 billion platform revolutionizing healthcare hiring. Her journey demonstrates how combining deep expertise with empathy can create scalable impact and transform an entire industry. While her direct contact information is not publicly listed, she can be reached through LinkedIn.

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# Growth, Mindfulness, and the Power of Storytelling

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ NETTA READS: MINDSET SPECIALIST

*Netta Reeds is a dynamic author, speaker, educator, and content creator who has built a reputation for fearless storytelling and unapologetic advocacy. Through her platform, Netta Vibes, she creates transformational content that empowers individuals to discover their potential, embrace growth, and take practical steps toward their goals.*

*“Representation on the page tells a child: you exist, you matter, and your story is worth telling.”*



# Growth, Mindfulness, and the Power of Storytelling

Her journey began with simple journaling, which helped her discover her voice and self-identity. That practice blossomed into writing, content creation, and eventually entrepreneurship, as she began producing digital tools, guides, and journals designed to uplift others. Today, she runs workshops, publishes articles on platforms like Medium and Substack, and offers free and paid resources that blend personal development, mindfulness, and empowerment.

For Netta, success is not measured by money but by mindfulness—living in awareness, gratitude, and service. Her work emphasizes that setbacks are not failures but opportunities to rise stronger: “The destination is not falling; it’s getting up.” From teaching art to children, to volunteering with the Red Cross, to building her online community, she models what it means to live authentically and serve others.

Netta’s vision is clear: to help individuals recognize their inner worth, nurture their growth, and embrace their spiritual and creative gifts. As she often reminds her audience, “Progress over perfection—and progress over profits.”



Where to connect & find her work:

- [Website: nettavibes.com](https://nettavibes.com) – newsletter signups, digital products, Glow Up Guide, intuitive advising sessions.
- [Medium.com](https://medium.com): Writes essays on mindfulness, empowerment, and growth.
- [Substack](https://substack.com) Netta Vibes: Publishes under Netta Vibes, building community through newsletters.
- [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nettavibes): Profile under Netta Vibes, sharing professional content.
- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/nettavibes): Active handle @nettavibes — includes “7-day Law of Attraction” video series.

# Legacy, Leadership, and Liberation Through Community Power

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ ABDUL P. TUBMAN: CULTURAL STRATEGIST



*Abdul Tubman is a Liberian-born activist, nonprofit executive, and cultural strategist based in New York. As Director of Operations at Corner's Community in Stamford, Connecticut, he leads transformative initiatives in education, advocacy, and youth empowerment. A proud descendant of President William V.S. Tubman of Liberia and Sir Shick Barack Henino of Kenya, Abdul channels his heritage into building bridges across the African diaspora while focusing on equity and empowerment at home.*

*“If you’re the only one succeeding, you’ve failed. True excellence is when we all win together.”*



# Legacy, Leadership, and Liberation Through Community Power

His journey into activism began with the influence of his mother, whose example of compassion and service shaped his drive to meet people where they are. For Abdul, activism is more than conversation—it's about turning talk into tangible action. That principle is seen in efforts like launching Stamford's first all-Black Little League baseball team, developing financial literacy workshops, and partnering with local institutions such as PAL, NAACP, and Stamford schools.

A passionate advocate for generational wealth, Abdul reframes financial literacy as an act of liberation. Through life insurance and planning, he teaches families to move beyond survival into long-term stability: "It's not life insurance—it's generational wealth building." His vision is that economic empowerment becomes inseparable from racial justice, giving communities both voice and leverage.

Abdul's activism also embraces storytelling, art, and cultural expression. From community murals to intergenerational dialogue, he emphasizes the importance of narrative in shaping identity and empathy. Guided by the examples of Harriet Tubman's resilience and Malcolm X's truth-telling, he carries the Tubman name forward with determination to curate communities where every individual's gift contributes to collective power. "If you're the only one succeeding, you've failed. True excellence is when we all win together."



Where to connect & find his work:

- [Instagram](#): @tubmansunderground
- [Substack](#): @tubmansunderground
- [Email](mailto:abdul@cornerscommunity.org): abdul@cornerscommunity.org
- [Organization Website](https://cornerscommunity.org): cornerscommunity.org



# Tap Into These 10 Black Tech Titans: Innovation, Legacy & Lessons for the Future

|Article By Charles Zackary King |



**Freddie Figgers, the Founder and CEO of Figgers Wireless**, is the youngest American to hold an FCC license and leads the only Black-owned telecom provider in the United States. His inventions are deeply rooted in personal care and community need, showing that innovation often begins with solving problems close to home. He can be reached at f\*\*\*@figgers.com or by phone at (800) 223-5435.



**Iddris Sandu, the Founder and CEO of Spatial Labs**, is redefining the intersection of technology and culture by blending fashion, blockchain, and digital innovation to create groundbreaking “phygital” experiences. Backed by Jay-Z’s Marcy Venture Partners, Sandu is reshaping how tech connects with cultural movements and creative industries. His journey proves that technology isn’t just about code — it’s about culture. While his direct contact information is not publicly listed, he can be reached through LinkedIn.



**Tristan Walker, the Founder and CEO of Walker & Company Brands**, created Bevel to solve real grooming challenges for Black men and later sold the company to Procter & Gamble. His entrepreneurial journey demonstrates how building authentically for your own community can create products that resonate globally. Walker now serves on the boards of major companies, including Foot Locker and Shake Shack. While his direct contact information is not publicly listed, he can be reached through LinkedIn.



**Jessica O. Matthews, the Founder and CEO of Uncharted Power**, transformed a simple idea — turning a soccer ball into a power source — into a groundbreaking company that now builds smart infrastructure to improve global energy access. Based in Harlem, her innovative work is redefining how communities think about sustainable power solutions. Her journey proves that play can power progress. While her direct contact information is not publicly listed, she can be reached through LinkedIn.

# Leading with Empathy, Excellence, and Community Pride

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ DR. TRENTON WATSON: EDUCATOR



*Dr. Trenton M. Watson, principal of Westwood High School in Memphis, Tennessee, has built a career on transforming challenges into opportunities. A graduate of Tennessee State University, Cumberland University, and the University of Arizona, Dr. Watson began his professional life in sales before answering a deeper calling, education. Inspired by his late mother, a lifelong educator, and guided by mentors Harold McCrae, Levi Pointer, and Dr. Rod Richmond, Watson discovered that teaching was more than employment; it was purpose.*

*“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”*



# Leading with Empathy, Excellence, and Community Pride

From his early years as a classroom teacher and coach to his current leadership role, Dr. Watson has developed a philosophy rooted in meeting students where they are. He emphasizes empathy, consistency, and active listening while pushing students toward academic rigor and critical thinking. His initiatives—such as scholarship Fridays, restorative “fight-free” conflict resolution, and intensive academic monitoring—reflect his belief that equity means ensuring no student is left behind.

For Dr. Watson, education is both personal and communal. He sees his work in Memphis as a homecoming of service, building on the city’s legacy of Black excellence and resilience. His book *Bridges and Breakthroughs: From Educated Employee to Effective Educator* expands on his philosophy, offering insight into shifting from compliance-driven teaching to transformational leadership.

Above all, Watson defines success not just by test scores, but by the lives changed: “When it’s all said and done, I hope my students remember that I loved them and cared more about their success as people than about the outcomes of a test.” His vision for the future is to elevate Westwood High into a Level 5 school, where academic achievement and cultural pride walk hand in hand.



Where to connect & find his work:

- **Website:** [effectiveeducators.com](http://effectiveeducators.com) – leadership and educator resources.
- **Facebook:** Effective Educators page for updates and community dialogue.
- **LinkedIn:** Dr. Trenton M. Watson – active professional profile.
- **Book:** *Bridges and Breakthroughs: From Educated Employee to Effective Educator* (available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)).

# Legacy, Leadership, and Liberation

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ **DR. LASHAWNTE MCCRAY-SARVIS:** **EDUCATOR**

*Dr. Lashawnte McCray-Sarvis is a visionary educator, consultant, author, and speaker whose career spans nearly three decades of service in the classroom and beyond. Born and raised in Conway, South Carolina, she overcame the challenges of being a single teenage mother to pursue higher education at Coastal Carolina University, earning degrees in psychology and secondary education. Her early years as a social studies teacher shaped her belief in the power of relationships, equity, and cultural responsiveness in education.*

*“Leadership wasn’t my plan, but others saw it in me before I saw it in myself.”*





# Legacy, Leadership, and Liberation

Her leadership journey grew from teaching to administration, where she has served as assistant principal and principal, mentoring educators and creating safe, inclusive learning environments. During the pandemic, she launched Lee Janes Consulting LLC, offering mentorship and professional development—especially for international teachers adapting to U.S. classrooms. She also hosts the Road to an Effective Classroom Environment podcast and speaks nationally on teacher support, equity, and leadership.

Beyond education, Dr. McCray-Sarvis is the author of *Embarking on a Journey Through the Eyes of a Poet* and *My Name is Lu-shawon-tu: From the Womb to the Woman* weaving her life experiences into poetry and memoir. She is also deeply committed to advocacy, giving back to the Kidney Foundation, Lupus Foundation, and MS organizations in honor of her daughter, sister, and her own health journey.

Her message is clear: “Be confident in who you are. Know your own worth. When you know your worth, no one can take that from you.” With resilience, faith, and service at the center of her work, Dr. McCray-Sarvis continues to inspire students, educators, and communities to rise above challenges and embrace their full potential.



Where to connect & find her work:

- [Website: DrLashant.org](http://DrLashant.org) – for book purchases and professional contact.
- [Apple Podcast: The Road to an Effective Classroom Environment \(Buzzsprout, Apple, Spreaker\).](#)
- [Books: Embarking on a Journey Through the Eyes of a Poet \(Amazon\)](#)
- [Facebook: Business – LeeJanes Consulting, LLC.](#)
- [Instagram: Business – @classysassyconsultant.](#)
- [Email: lashant6@gmail.com.](mailto:lashant6@gmail.com)

# Tap Into These 10 Black Tech Titans: Innovation, Legacy & Lessons for the Future

|Article By Charles Zackary King |



**Chris Bennett, the Founder and CEO of Wonderschool**, created a platform that helps educators launch and manage childcare programs, addressing a national childcare crisis while empowering entrepreneurs to build thriving businesses. His work shows that childhood education is an untapped tech frontier with the power to create meaningful social and economic impact. He can be reached at [chris@wonderschool.com](mailto:chris@wonderschool.com) or by phone at +1 (855) 554-7843.



**Kimberly Bryant, the Founder of Black Girls Code and the Black Innovation Lab**, has introduced more than 100,000 girls to coding and is now focused on building transformative tech ecosystems across the South. A trailblazer for diversity and inclusion in technology, she continues to create pathways for underrepresented communities to thrive in the industry. Her upcoming book, *Ascending*, is expected to be a must-read for those passionate about equity and innovation. Bryant's journey proves that inclusion isn't optional — it's revolutionary.

## Why These Titans Matter

These leaders aren't just building companies, they're building legacies. They've faced systemic barriers, yet created platforms that uplift communities, challenge norms, and redefine what's possible. Whether you're an aspiring founder, investor, educator, or storyteller, these are the minds to learn from.

They've built billion-dollar companies despite having limited access to capital, scaling ideas born from personal pain and community need. In doing so, they have created powerful ecosystems that center Black excellence and drive innovation forward.

## Final Word

In a world that often overlooks Black brilliance, these tech titans are impossible to ignore. They are the architects of a new future, one where innovation is inclusive, legacy is intentional, and impact is non-negotiable.

Want to build something that lasts? Start by studying those who already have.



# From Sierra Leone to Financial Leadership

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ★ ALFRED GBLA: AUDITOR

*Alfred Gbla is a rising leader in finance and auditing whose journey reflects determination, discipline, and an unwavering belief in self. Inspired at a young age by an uncle in Sierra Leone who embodied the professionalism of accounting, Alfred pursued the field with passion. Today, he is completing his MBA in Accounting at Clayton State University, graduating in May 2025 with a perfect 4.0 GPA. His academic achievements build on a foundation of practical experience in auditing, tax preparation, and advisory work, where he has grown from intern to Associate II auditor.*

*“Discipline starts with yourself. If you tell others to be on time, you must be early.”*

# Leading with Empathy, Excellence, and Community Pride

Known for his precision and integrity, Alfred thrives in environments that demand analytical thinking, teamwork, and ethical leadership. He describes auditing as “feeling like the FBI”—investigating records, verifying compliance, and ensuring transparency for both private and public clients. Beyond technical skill, Alfred embraces mentorship, serving as a Supplemental Instructor in college and continuing to coach younger auditors on constructive criticism, perseverance, and professionalism.

Equally committed to community, Alfred uses his platform to advance financial literacy and social equity. He speaks at Black colleges, mentors future accountants, and counsels peers on budgeting, risk management, and wealth-building strategies. His philosophy is simple yet profound: “Believe in yourself—belief is magical. If you don’t believe, how can others believe in you?”

Looking ahead, Alfred aims to become a CPA partner while remaining deeply engaged in social impact work. For him, success is not only measured by professional titles but by the number of lives he inspires and the communities he strengthens through knowledge-sharing and mentorship.



Where to connect & find his work:

- [Facebook](#): [Alfred Omaru Gbla](#).



# From Corporate America to Community Entrepreneurship

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦✦ MITCHELL RIVERS: ENTREPERNEUR

*Mitchell Rivers is the founder and CEO of the Career Education Learning Center, a division of MDR Enterprise LLC, where he blends over 20 years of corporate expertise with a passion for empowering the next generation. With a background in banking, finance, and retail management, and licenses in securities, health, and life insurance, Mitchell brings both technical know-how and people-centered leadership to his work. His academic foundation includes a bachelor's degree in business management from UNC Pembroke and an associate degree in liberal arts from Central Piedmont Community College.*

*“Fear and capital are the two biggest challenges but both can be overcome.”*



# Leading with Empathy, Excellence, and Community Pride

His journey into entrepreneurship was born out of service. Between 2006 and 2013, Mitchell ran his learning center as a nonprofit, connecting students with scholarships, grants, and career pathways. After years in corporate America, he took the leap of faith to relaunch it as a business, adding a podcast, radio segment, and television platform to expand his impact. Today, he offers both mentorship and master-class level insights on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and career readiness.

Mitchell is also deeply rooted in faith and community. Active in his church's men's ministry, he balances entrepreneurship with service, mentoring, and sports. His mother's resilience in raising four boys alone and his career counselor's guidance continue to shape his values of education, equity, and respect. "Everyone has something to contribute," he reminds his audiences, "and fear should never stop you from pursuing your passion."

Through his consulting and media platforms, Mitchell aims to help young people—and aspiring entrepreneurs of all ages—realize their potential. His call to action is simple: seek mentorship, ask questions, and don't be afraid to start.



Where to connect & find his work:

- **Podcast:** [Career Education Learning Center Podcast \(YouTube & streaming platforms\).](#)
- **Television:** Weekly on Infusion TV (Thursdays at 1 PM EST)..
- **Website:** [careereducationlearningcenter.com](http://careereducationlearningcenter.com).
- **LinkedIn:** [Mitchell Rivers \(active for networking & mentorship\).](#)
- **Email:** [mitchellrivers64yood@gmail.com](mailto:mitchellrivers64yood@gmail.com).



# Building Fitter Leaders Through Alignment and Adversity

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ MYCAL ANDERS: CORP. CONSULTING

*Mycal Anders is a Marine Corps veteran, husband, father of two, and founder of Next Level Performance Consulting, a firm dedicated to helping executives, entrepreneurs, and teams align their habits with their highest goals. With nearly 25 years of strategic leadership experience and graduate degrees from both Arizona State University and the Thunderbird School of Global Management, Anders understands the silent struggle of high-performing professionals who sacrifice personal well-being for success. His mission is simple yet profound: to empower leaders to thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.*

*“Your worst day is your worst day. Intentional adversity teaches you to chunk it down and move forward.”*



# Faith, Service, and Community in Action

His entrepreneurial journey began early, selling fruit from his family's yard and later entering network marketing, where a mentor taught him the importance of self-work in breaking through limitations. Service in the Marine Corps honed his resilience, introducing him to the principle of "intentional adversity"—the practice of seeking challenges to strengthen capacity. That discipline, combined with personal lessons from his attorney father and colonel mother, shaped Anders' philosophy of leadership rooted in courage, ownership, and integrity.

After leaving the military, he built one of the top CrossFit facilities in America, authored a best-selling book, launched podcasts, and spoke for organizations including Charles Schwab and Amazon. Today, through Next Level, he leverages fitness as the gateway to deeper transformation, helping leaders confront the misalignments in their lives that block joy, connection, and fulfillment.

Anders' mantra—"Progress always"—encapsulates his belief that leadership and personal growth are lifelong journeys. Whether through consulting, keynote speaking, or his Progress Always podcast, he inspires audiences to fall in love with the process of becoming their highest and best selves.



Where to connect & find his work:

- [Website \(Personal\): CoachDerz.com](https://CoachDerz.com) (nickname from Marine Corps).
- [Company Website: NextLevelPFC.com](https://NextLevelPFC.com) (Next Level Performance Consulting).
- [Podcast: Progress Always](#) (Spotify, LinkedIn, Facebook, live streams).



# The Government's Fog: Unmasking a Cold War Experiment on Black Communities in St. Louis

|Article By Charles Zackary King |

In the heart of St. Louis during the 1950s and 1960s, a mysterious fog drifted through the streets of predominantly Black neighborhoods. Children played in it. Families breathed it in. And for decades, no one knew the truth: this was not just fog, it was a government experiment.

## What Was Sprayed?

The U.S. Army admitted in 1994 to secretly spraying zinc cadmium sulfide, a compound containing cadmium, a known carcinogen, over areas like the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex. The tests were part of a Cold War program called "*Large Area Coverage*," designed to simulate biological warfare dispersal patterns.

St. Louis was chosen because its urban layout resembled Moscow, making it a proxy for Soviet cities in case of attack. Army documents described the targeted area as a "*densely populated slum district*," with about 75% of residents being Black.

**News Nation:** [https://youtu.be/L7\\_-G\\_q3wEc?si=2Oy7tlpcpRyzqUUn](https://youtu.be/L7_-G_q3wEc?si=2Oy7tlpcpRyzqUUn)

## How It Was Done

The chemical was dispersed using motorized blowers placed atop high-rise buildings, station wagons that drove slowly through neighborhoods, and from rooftops and schools, often released by men in hazmat suits posing as maintenance workers.

Residents recall a thick, sickening fog that clung to their skin and filled the air with a chemical tang. Some children ran through it, thinking it was harmless. Others fell ill immediately.

*"It was such a sickening, nauseating, it was horrible. You couldn't see through it."* ~Jacquelyn Russell

## Who Was Affected?

The long-term health consequences remain deeply troubling. Doris Spates lost her father just three months after her birth in 1955 and later witnessed four of her siblings die from cancer. Mary Helen Brindell, who grew up in a mixed-race neighborhood, battled four different types of cancer — breast, thyroid, skin, and uterine. Ben Phillips attended ten funerals, with seven to eight of those deaths linked to cancer among his friends and neighbors. Dr. Michael Starks also suffered severe health effects, having part of his kidney removed due to cancer.

CONTINUE PG. 48



# Faith, Service, and Community in Action

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ PASTOR WILLIE J. LIGHTFOOT, SR.: MINISTER

*Pastor Willie J. Lightfoot, Sr. embodies the rare blend of faith leader, public servant, entrepreneur, and activist. Appointed in 2021 to lead the Prayer House Church of God by Faith in Rochester, NY, he shepherded his congregation through the challenges of the pandemic by embracing digital ministry and holistic outreach. From launching senior meal programs and community nonprofits to equipping members with interactive tools of faith, Pastor Lightfoot has consistently prioritized mind, body, and spirit.*

*“Don’t let anybody put you in a box. We are all that, and then some.”*



# Building Fitter Leaders Through Alignment and Adversity

His journey into ministry was forged through tragedy, when the loss of his stepfather in 1995 led him to faith. Called to the pulpit by 2000, he has since served as elder, pastor, and mentor, rooted in Psalm 1 and committed to bearing lasting fruit in the community. Beyond the church, Lightfoot is a U.S. Air Force veteran, retired firefighter, entrepreneur, and five-term elected official on the Monroe County Legislature and Rochester City Council. His leadership reflects a consistent philosophy: faith guides vision, and service transforms lives.

A published author of *The Intersection Between Pain and Purpose*, Pastor Lightfoot challenges readers to see loss and struggle as catalysts for growth. His initiatives—from the Cut the Violence haircut program for youth, to the Rock Against Gun Violence Coalition—demonstrate a lifelong commitment to practical, grassroots change. Whether tackling systemic poverty, education reform, or public safety, his mantra remains consistent: hard work, faith, and determination.

As he prepares to retire from politics in December, Pastor Lightfoot continues to inspire through his church, his podcast (*Love & Light*), and his writing. Grounded by 29 years of marriage to Prophetess Verdina Lightfoot, four adult children, four grandchildren, and their English bulldog Sapphire, he looks toward the future convinced that “the best is yet to come.”



Where to connect & find his work:

- **Church Website:** [prayerhousecogbf.org](http://prayerhousecogbf.org)
- **Book:** *The Intersection Between Pain and Purpose* — available on [Amazon](#) & Barnes & Noble.
- **Podcast:** *Love & Light* (with former mayor Lovely Warren), available on YouTube, Spotify, and [WDKX podcast network](#).

# AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community

## Your Invitation to Connect, Collaborate, and Grow

FEATURE ARTICLE | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

At **America In Black and White (AMIBW)**, every episode, article, and feature tells a story, stories of resilience, innovation, and empowerment within our community. But we believe the conversation shouldn't end when the page is turned or the show wraps. That's why we created the **AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community**, a vibrant space where readers, supporters, and past guests can meet, share, and build meaningful connections.

Inside **AMIBW The Community**, you'll find more than just familiar faces. You'll discover a powerful network of entrepreneurs, thought leaders, artists, and change-makers who have walked the same paths, faced similar challenges, and celebrated hard-earned victories. Here, you can connect directly with inspiring individuals you've read about or seen on the show, continue conversations, ask questions, and explore new opportunities for collaboration. You'll be able to share your own journey, whether you're launching a business, promoting a cause, or offering your expertise, all within a supportive space where your voice matters.

Members enjoy access to exclusive resources such as early event invitations, private workshops, and insider updates before they are made public. The community also serves as a place to form partnerships, seek mentorship, and build projects together. Many members find that the right conversation at the right time can open doors to exciting ventures. When you reach milestones, big or small, you'll find people ready to celebrate your wins alongside you.

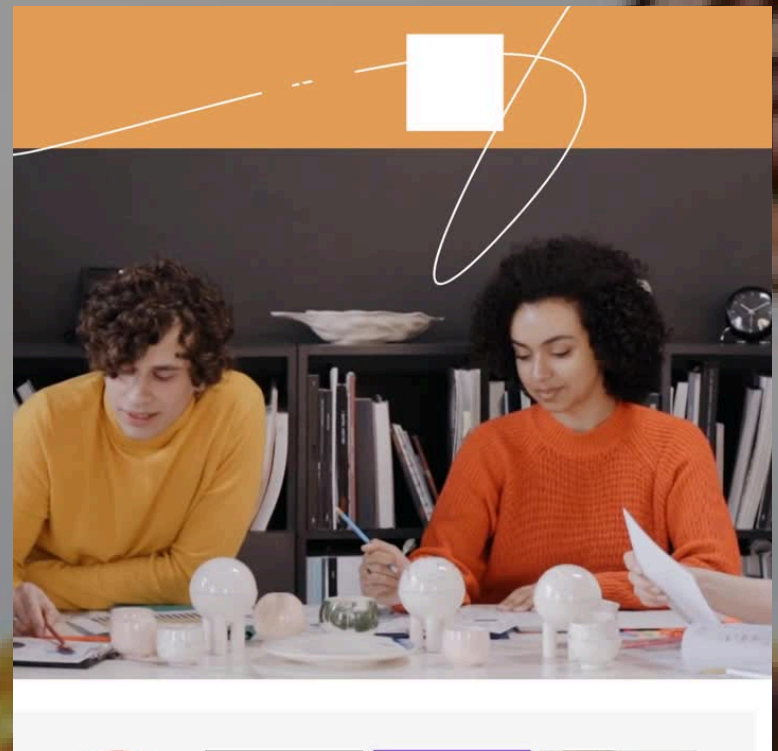
The **AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community** is open to past and future guests, readers, and supporters of America In Black and White.

It's also a welcoming safe space for entrepreneurs, professionals, creatives, and community advocates who value authentic and purpose-driven connections.

Joining is simple. **Visit the AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community below** and create your free profile. Once inside, introduce yourself, explore the member list, and start engaging with others.

This is your invitation to be part of something bigger, not just reading the stories, but living them alongside those who inspire you. Let's grow together, support one another, and build a network as powerful as the voices we amplify.

Click here: [👉AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community](#) where connection becomes opportunity.



- **Interested in having a community of your own to fully customize, contact Blake Andrews in the AMIBW community.**



# From Struggle to Scholarship, Unapologetically Disruptive

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ DR. V. BOYKIN: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

*Dr. V. Boykin is a force of transformation. A former stripper and felon who reinvented herself as a scholar, author, equity leader, and fearless truth-teller. With four academic degrees earned in her 40s, she defies stereotypes while championing resilience, transparency, and unapologetic disruption. Today, she is a keynote speaker, organizational equity leader, and thought leader who bridges the gap between lived experience and workplace transformation.*

*“With disruption comes consequence. Be ready to lose your job, your friends, your comfort and still tell the truth.”*



# From Struggle to Scholarship, Unapologetically Disruptive

Raised by a strong grandmother who valued education and equity, Dr. V. learned early the importance of truth and resistance. Her journey through incarceration and survival shaped a deep empathy for the overlooked, while radical acceptance in her personal life empowered her to reclaim her narrative. She speaks openly about bias, systemic inequity, and the cost of silence. Choosing instead to disrupt systems and foster authentic change.

As the author of *Fix Your Face and Watch Your Tone* and *Unapologetically Disruptive: Hard Lessons, Simple Truths*, Dr. V. provides a roadmap for women, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, to claim agency, navigate inequity, and harness the power of disruption for growth. Her works are both testimony and toolkit. Part memoir, part survival guide, and part manifesto for systemic change.

Through her consulting, mentoring, and writing, Dr. V challenges leaders and organizations to move beyond performative equity to authentic transformation. With raw honesty and sharp wit, she embodies the radical act of being real and invites others to do the same.



Where to connect & find her work:

- **Website:** [drvboykin.com](http://drvboykin.com)
- **LinkedIn:** [Dr. V. Boykin](#) (active, responsive to messages)
- **YouTube:** [Dr. V. Boykin](#) (talks, keynote segments, interviews)
- **Books:** *Fix Your Face and Watch Your Tone* and *Unapologetically Disruptive: Hard Lessons, Simple Truths* — available on [Amazon](#) (digital + print).



# The Government's Fog: Unmasking a Cold War Experiment on Black Communities in St. Louis

|Article By Charles Zackary King |

Many residents believe their illnesses, including kidney, brain, and eye cancers, stem from exposure to the fog.

## When Did Complaints Begin?

The truth began to surface in 1994, when the government declassified documents revealing the tests. Sociologist Lisa Martino-Taylor later published research in 2012 suggesting radioactive particles may have been mixed into the compound, though direct proof remains elusive.

Community leaders like Ben Phillips and Chester Deanes formed PHACTS (Pruitt-Igoe Historical Accounting, Compensation, and Truth Seeking) to demand justice.

## What Was the Resolution?

In 1997, the National Research Council concluded that the tests did not expose residents to harmful levels, though this finding was based on limited animal data. No follow-up studies were ever confirmed, and to this day, no compensation or formal apology has been issued to the affected residents. In 2023, Senator Josh Hawley introduced legislation to expand Cold War-era compensation programs, and advocates are now pushing to include the victims from Pruitt-Igoe in this effort.

“We were experimented on. That was a plan. And it wasn’t an accident.” ~Ben Phillips

## Why This Matters Today.

This story is not just a historical footnote, it’s a call to action. It underscores the systemic disregard for Black lives, the legacy of environmental racism, and the urgent need for accountability. For Charles and others building platforms rooted in justice and legacy, this is a moment to amplify truth, honor resilience, and demand reparative action.

*Let's keep the fog from settling again.*

## Researchable Resource:

[CBS News: Secret Cold War test in St. Louis Cause Worry](#) | Oct. 3, 2012



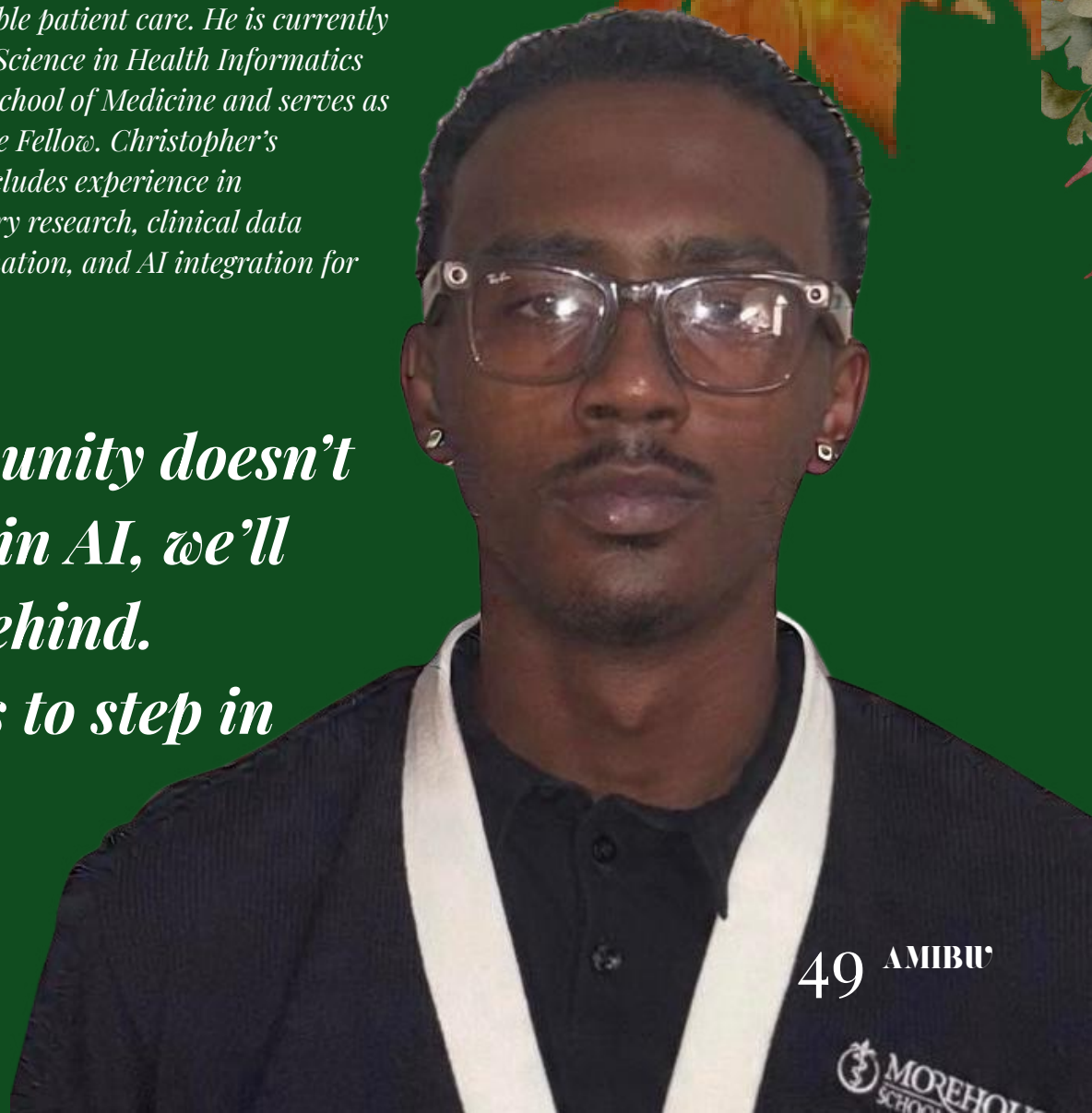
# Rising Innovator in AI-Driven, Equitable Healthcare

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ CHRISTOPHER MCCOY: AI SPECIALIST

*Christopher McCoy is an emerging thought leader at the crossroads of health informatics, artificial intelligence, and equitable patient care. He is currently pursuing his Master of Science in Health Informatics (MSHI) at Morehouse School of Medicine and serves as an Emory AI Experience Fellow. Christopher's professional journey includes experience in biotechnology, laboratory research, clinical data systems, project coordination, and AI integration for healthcare workflows.*

*“If my community doesn’t get involved in AI, we’ll just be left behind. Someone has to step in and lead.”*





# Rising Innovator in AI-Driven, Equitable Healthcare

He is the founder of Intelligent Medicine, a digital content and education platform designed to demystify AI in healthcare, improve transparency, and empower both providers and patients—particularly those in underserved communities—to understand and trust emerging medical technologies.

Christopher began his career in laboratory genetics, biotechnology, and applied research, working on projects that ranged from soil microbiome analysis to digital twin modeling for personalized medicine. His exposure to the technical side of healthcare—and the mistrust many communities feel toward new technology—motivated him to build Intelligent Medicine, a hub for ethical, accessible, and human-centered AI in healthcare.

He hopes to become a Chief Information Officer (CIO) for a forward-thinking healthcare system, guiding digital transformation while prioritizing bias reduction, data privacy, and patient empowerment. His work reflects a deep passion for bridging health equity gaps and educating clinicians and patients alike about the benefits and safe integration of AI.



Where to connect & find his work:

- [LinkedIn: Christopher McCoy](#)
- [Website/Portfolio: www.meetchrismccoy.com](http://www.meetchrismccoy.com)

# Agile Leader & Founder of Irongate Project Management

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦ DR. JOHN E. GOINS: SCRUM MASTER

*Dr. John E. Goins is a Certified Scrum Master and Lean Six Sigma practitioner (Yellow, Green, Black Belt) with 18+ years in operations and process improvement. He began his career at the United States Postal Service, where he drove efficiency, accuracy, and team performance across high-volume processing environments and later served in acting supervisory roles.*

*“A Scrum Master keeps the team management-free 15 minutes to sync, then protect the work.”*



## Agile Leader, & Founder of Irongate Project Management

Academically, Dr. Goins holds a Doctor of Business Administration, an MBA (Project Management), and a BS in Business Management, plus graduate certificates in Business and Project Management. He is actively pursuing the PMP, reflecting a bias toward lifelong learning and structured execution.

Originally from Columbus, Ohio and now based in Atlanta, he founded Irongate Project Management LLC, focused on secure, steadfast, successful delivery. Beyond consulting, he's a debut author of *Sands of Time* (romantic fantasy) and is developing additional titles, while targeting executive-level program and project leadership in technology and supply-chain arenas.

Grounded in service-centric leadership, emotional intelligence, and continuous improvement, he champions change adoption, team empowerment, and transforming challenges into opportunities—principles he applies inside organizations and in the broader community.



Where to connect & find his work:

- Company: Irongate Project Management LLC (consulting inquiries, executive PM/Agile engagements)
- **Author:** *Sands of Time* available on [Amazon Kindle](#)
- Professional Networking: Connect via LinkedIn





# GOODE®

## Foods

### A Family's Mission to Put “Good” Back in the Can

**Goode Foods** began in 2003 with a simple idea: make nutritious, honestly labeled pantry staples accessible to everyday families. **Founder Emile Johnson**, a former Abbott Labs sales director, left corporate life and—with his son Andrew—built a Chicago-rooted, **Black-owned brand** that would grow from trunk-of-the-car deliveries into national grocery aisles. [The TRiBE](#)

Early on, the Johnsons aimed their impact where it mattered most. In 2009, Goode Foods became the sole supplier to Chicago's WIC centers, providing fresh produce, canned fruit and vegetables, beans, frozen vegetables, and even infant formula—an anchor contract that put healthier options directly into the hands of women, infants, and children across the city. The following year they won a cereal contract for Chicago Public Schools, reinforcing their community-first DNA. [Goode Foods](#)

As the brand matured, Goode Foods kept its labels—and its values—clean: non-GMO ingredients, no added sugar, BPA-free recyclable cans, and close work with Upper Midwest farmer co-ops to prioritize soil health and thoughtful crop rotation. It's a canning philosophy built on stewardship as much as shelf life. [Goode Foods](#)

Goode's community footprint extends beyond procurement lists. The company regularly re-engages with WIC centers and works alongside Catholic Charities to bring high-quality staples to families who need them—an on-the-ground commitment that mirrors how the brand started. Their own store locator still highlights WIC touchpoints, a quiet reminder of where the mission took root. [Instagram+1](#)

**Leadership passed to Andrew E. Johnson**, who helped drive a 700% distribution expansion, landing Goode Foods in major retailers such as Kroger, Meijer, Walmart, Food Lion, Shaw's, Associated Wholesale Grocers, Target, and more. That scale has enabled new categories—like Pic Select Fresh, the first Black-owned baby-food brand available in major retailers—while keeping ownership 100% family-held, without outside investors. [FIREBELLY+2The TRiBE+2](#)

Through all the growth, Goode Foods has stayed close to its starting line: serving families with dignity. From WIC clinics and school breakfast lines to everyday carts in national chains, the brand proves a canned vegetable can carry a lot—nutrition, trust, and opportunity—when a company treats community as its bottom line. [Goode Foods](#)

In short: Goode Foods isn't just stocking shelves; it's circulating good—in households, in supply chains, and in the communities that raised it. [Goode Foods](#)



# Entrepreneur, & Wellness Advocate

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦✦ REGGIE D. STEWART: ENTREPRENEUR

*Reggie Dion Stewart was born and raised in Alpharetta, Georgia, and is a proud graduate of Kennesaw State University. A natural competitor, he grew up playing football, baseball, basketball, and soccer — sports that instilled discipline, adaptability, and teamwork from an early age. Today, Reggie keeps his athletic spirit alive through pickleball and kickball, leading multiple recreational teams and fostering a competitive yet supportive environment.*

*“Your network is your net worth — Uber and Lyft became my best networking tools.”*



## Entrepreneur, & Wellness Advocate

Reggie is a brand partner with LifeWave, helping people discover natural wellness solutions and new financial opportunities through stem cell reactivation technology. Passionate about health, growth, and personal development, he leverages his connections — often built organically while driving Uber and Lyft — to share innovative products and empower others to live well physically, mentally, and financially. His passion for entrepreneurship started early, from selling Mardi Gras beads in high school to exploring network marketing models that offered time freedom and legacy-building potential

He is also the founder of Reggie Dion Creations, a brand that blends creativity and business strategy to design apparel and accessories for entrepreneurs and organizations looking to stand out. Beyond business, Reggie invests deeply in his community, serving as a middle school flag football coach at Annunciation Day School and volunteering at after-school programs to mentor kids through sports and leadership lessons.

Guided by the examples of his educator mother and entrepreneurial father, Reggie has built a career focused on independence, impact, and inspiration. He hopes to continue expanding his business ventures, empowering others to pursue their own entrepreneurial paths, and mentoring the next generation to stay disciplined, avoid limiting stereotypes, and embrace their full potential.



Where to connect & find his work:

- [Instagram: @stewart.reggie.rs \(shares entrepreneurship tips, sports, and wellness\)](#)
- [Facebook: Active for LifeWave updates and community connections](#)
- Networking Strategy: Leverages Uber/Lyft to build real-world connections with potential partners and customers



# AI Concierge: A Game Changer for Small Business Owners

FEATURE ARTICLE & OVERVIEW VIDEO | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

In today's competitive marketplace, the way businesses handle customer interactions can be the difference between growth and stagnation. That's exactly what came through in a recent discussion between **Blake Andrews** and **Charles King** on The Basement Crew podcast, where they explored the transformative potential of an AI Concierge powered by Prime AI and offered by IMTv360.

From the start, Charles didn't mince words calling the AI Concierge a game changer. His enthusiasm wasn't just hype; it was rooted in firsthand experience. What stood out most was how humanlike the AI sounded. Gone were the robotic tones and awkward pauses we've all endured with automated systems. Instead, conversations flowed smoothly, creating an interaction that felt natural and engaging.

But sounding human is only half the equation. The AI's real strength lies in its deep customization of its services. Whether the inquiry was about marketing, social media management, CRM tools, or reputation management, the AI delivered accurate, context-aware answers in seconds. Even nuanced topics like customer engagement were handled with ease demonstrating a level of sophistication well beyond basic scripts.

The business implications are profound. This AI isn't just answering calls; it's generating leads, scheduling appointments, and maintaining customer relationships all while working 24/7. That means no missed calls, no lost opportunities, and no employee fatigue. For small and medium-sized businesses, it's like having the perfect receptionist who never takes a break.

Cost is another factor in its appeal. Compared to hiring a full-time receptionist or outsourcing customer service, the AI Concierge offers top-tier performance at a fraction of the price. Even startups can access the same high-quality customer interaction tools once reserved for large companies.

With IMTv360's live AI Concierge available right on the website, you can experience firsthand what it's like to have a natural, humanlike conversation with your own 24/7 virtual assistant. Simply call **(253) 316-8526** or visit: (<https://app.imtv360.io/4bots>), ask questions about IMTv360's services, book an appointment, and watch as **Olivia** the Ai Concierge responds instantly, just like it would for your customers.

Ultimately, Blake and Charles's conversation underscored a powerful reality: in an era where every customer interaction matters, having an AI Concierge ensures consistent, professional communication without fail. For business owners, that translates into more time, more efficiency, and more growth.



[Click Here](#) ➡ To See IMTv360's Ai Concierge Olivia in action for yourself.

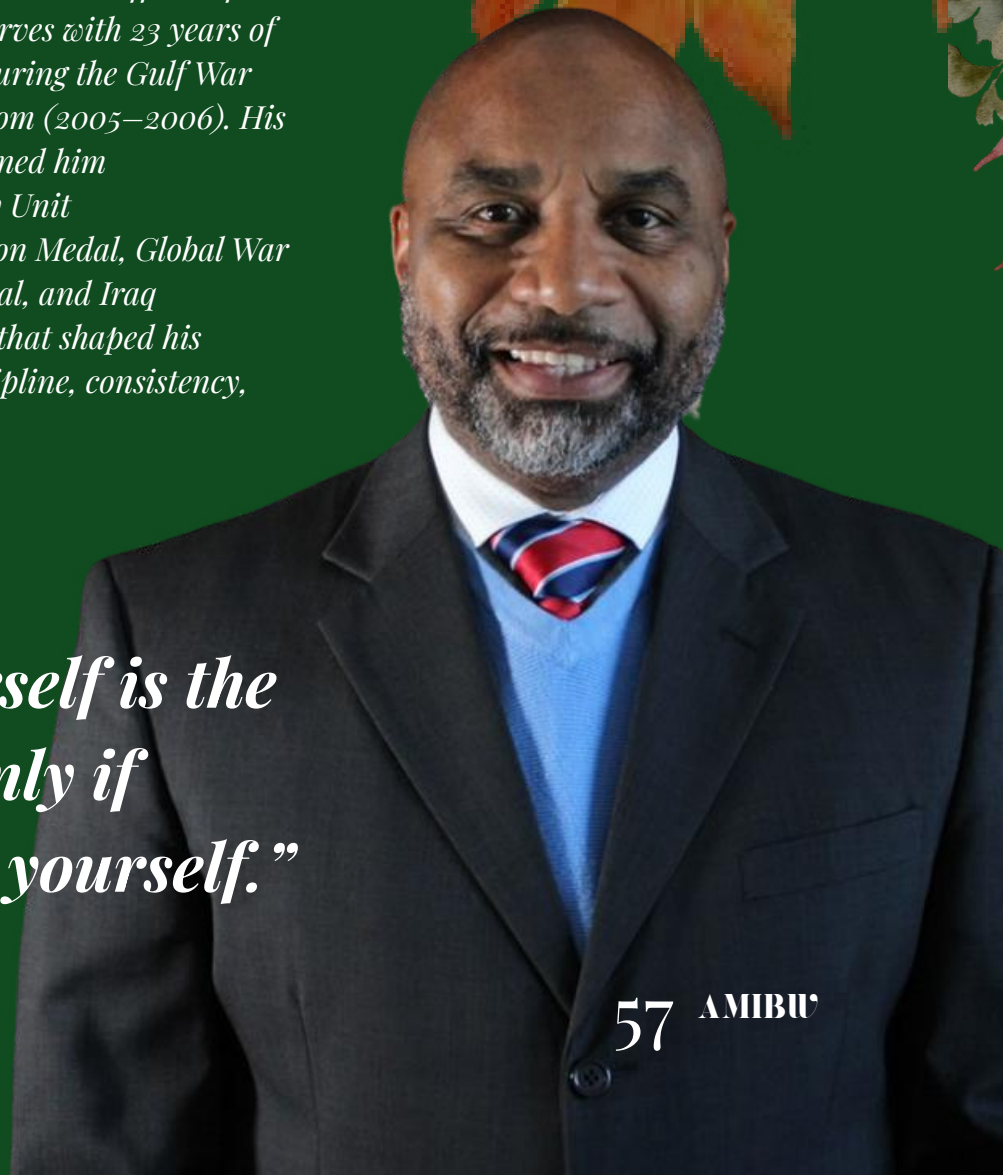
# Financial Coach, Career & Technical Education Leader

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ✦✦ WENDALL FANT: EDUCATOR

*Wendell Fant is a retired Chief Warrant Officer of the United States Marine Corps Reserves with 23 years of service, including deployments during the Gulf War (1991) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (2005–2006). His distinguished military career earned him commendations such as the Navy Unit Commendation, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and Iraq Campaign Medal — experiences that shaped his signature leadership style of discipline, consistency, and service.*

*“Betting on yourself is the best bet — but only if you’ve prepared yourself.”*





# Financial Coach, Career & Technical Education Leader

After transitioning from the military and corporate America, Wendell discovered his true calling: empowering young people through education and financial literacy. Today, he serves as a Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructor at Central Cabarrus High School in North Carolina, where he teaches business, personal finance, and entrepreneurship with a real-world, culturally relevant approach. Drawing on his background as a financial coach, he guides students and families to build generational wealth and escape the cycle of survival mode.

Wendell's journey spans public service as a Deputy District Director for North Carolina's 8th Congressional District, as well as leadership in civic and nonprofit spaces. He has served on boards including the Mecklenburg County Human Relations Board, the Community Relations Committee, and the Fireman's Relief Board, and currently chairs the board of the Salisbury Rowan Community Action Agency while also serving on the Logan Community Daycare board.

At the heart of Wendell's mission is legacy building — helping Black families break free from financial trauma, shift from short-term survival to long-term wealth, and empower the next generation with tools and knowledge he wishes he'd had as a young man. A proud husband to his high school sweetheart, Jennifer, and father to his son Donovan, Wendell's work is fueled by love for his family and a desire to leave a legacy of economic empowerment, community leadership, and disciplined growth.



Where to connect & find his work:

- [Facebook: Active for financial tips, community updates, and event announcements.](#)
- [LinkedIn: Shares professional insights on financial coaching, education, and leadership.](#)

# True Detergent: A Clean Revolution Rooted in Community

FEATURE ARTICLE | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

In a market crowded with flashy labels and chemical-heavy formulas, True Detergent stands out by keeping things simple: powerful cleaning, eco-friendly ingredients, and a mission bigger than laundry.

Founded in 2012, True Detergent was built to challenge the notion that effective cleaning requires harsh additives. Its 4× concentrated formula delivers a deep clean while remaining phosphate-free, biodegradable, and hypoallergenic. That means it's safe for sensitive skin, children's clothing, and even delicate fabrics, all without sacrificing stain-fighting power. A single bottle handles more loads than many leading brands, making it cost-effective as well as eco-conscious.

But True is more than soap in a bottle—it's a movement. As one of the first widely available Black-owned household brands, it gained momentum not only for performance but also for what it represents: economic empowerment and community pride. For many consumers, choosing True is about circulating dollars where they can make a difference.

The company has also evolved with the times, expanding into laundry sheets that are plant-powered, biodegradable, and perfect for travel. These lightweight sheets dissolve completely in water, reducing plastic waste and appealing to eco-conscious households looking for greener alternatives.

True's packaging reflects its practical philosophy: sleek, no-nonsense, and designed to make measuring easy. Whether purchased as a 50-load bottle, a 101-load pouch, or a box of dissolvable sheets, every option delivers the same promise—clean clothes without compromise.

Retailers like Amazon, We Buy Black, and BlackOwned365 have helped expand access nationwide, while the brand's own site, TheTrueProducts.com, offers direct-to-consumer bundles, subscriptions, and multi-packs. Customers consistently praise its ability to tackle odors, sweat, and stubborn stains while remaining gentle enough for the most sensitive users.

At a time when shoppers are seeking products that align with both their values and lifestyles, True Detergent checks every box: affordable, effective, environmentally responsible, and community-driven. For households looking to switch from conventional brands, it's more than a detergent—it's a vote for cleaner clothes, cleaner living, and cleaner business practices.

In short: True Detergent isn't just doing laundry. It's doing good.

[Click Here](#)

👉 [Try TRUE Detergent Today And See The Difference For Yourself](#)



# COO Columbus Metropolitan Library & At-Large City Councilman

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ★ DR. ANTHONY WILSON: EDUCATOR

*Dr. Anthony Wilson is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML), one of the nation's leading public library systems, where he champions a people-first approach to operational excellence and equity. In his role, he oversees human resources, property management, security operations, and diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI) initiatives across 23 branches serving Franklin and Fairfield counties. He leads with a commitment to trust, accountability, and community-focused service — values shaped by an extraordinary journey.*

*“Strong leadership is built on trust, accountability, and the courage to listen.”*



## COO, Columbus Metropolitan Library & At-Large City Councilman

Before entering library leadership, Dr. Wilson dedicated more than 28 years to law enforcement, culminating as an Assistant Chief of Police after serving four years in the United States Air Force. His career has been guided by the belief that strong leadership is built on courage, empathy, and the ability to truly listen. These values not only define his operational decisions but also the safe spaces he's built for library staff and community members.

A lifelong learner, Dr. Wilson earned a B.A. in Leadership & Ministry from Ohio Christian University, an M.A. in Human Services from Liberty University, and a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. In 2019, he was recognized as Ohio Christian University's Alumnus of the Year for his servant leadership and deep community impact.

Beyond the library, Dr. Wilson serves as an at-large city councilman for Grove City, Ohio, where he works to create smarter infrastructure growth, support small businesses, and ensure public safety while advocating for underserved communities. A former pastor of 12 years, he remains deeply committed to service, mentorship, and legacy-building. His life mission is simple yet powerful: to give help, hope, and encouragement every day.



Where to connect & find his work:

- [LinkedIn: Anthony Wilson — professional updates & leadership insights](#)



# Empowering Women to Lead Boldly

## INTERVIEW WITH

### ★ MICHELLE CLARKSON: ENTREPRENEUR

*Michelle Clarkson is a speaker, women's empowerment coach, and the CEO & founder of Meaningful Moments of Power, a movement dedicated to helping people unlock confidence, communicate powerfully, and lead boldly. She brings 25+ years of corporate leadership across sales, project management, global customer experience, and continuous improvement—experience she now blends with coaching to deliver practical, results-driven transformation.*

*“Excuses are tools of incompetence; those who specialize in them rarely excel at anything else.”*



## Empowering Women to Lead Boldly

Her story is anchored in resilience and reinvention. After surviving domestic abuse and later navigating divorce, Michelle rebuilt her self-esteem through faith, therapy, and disciplined mindset work. That journey fuels her mission to pour back into others the way others poured into her—especially women who are reclaiming their voices and rewriting their futures.

On stage and in coaching rooms, Michelle is known for raw storytelling, practical tools, and a magnetic presence. Her signature focus areas include building unshakable confidence, setting and enforcing boundaries, and leading with authenticity and boldness in both business and life. She pairs inspiration with structure—helping clients craft clear strategies, execute with intention, and “fail forward” when plans need a reset.

Beyond entrepreneurship, Michelle serves as a Director of Continuous Improvement in the nutraceutical industry. She’s a proud single mom of two adult children and grandmother of two, and she signs off her daily motivational messages with a simple charge that doubles as her ethos: “Go be great—because the world needs you.”



Where to connect & find her work:

- [LinkedIn](#): Michelle Clarkson (motivational posts, professional updates)
- [Facebook](#): Michelle Clarkson (daily motivational videos ending with “Go be great — the world needs you.”)
- [Instagram](#): @MichelleClarkson (empowerment, affirmations, coaching updates)
- [Website](#): Meaningful Moments of Power (coaching, speaking, resources)



# America In Black And White

AMIBW is more than a magazine—it's a movement. Founded by visionary advocate Charles Zackary King, AMIBW stands at the intersection of storytelling, justice, and cultural legacy.

Through powerful narratives, dynamic interviews, and unapologetic commentary, the magazine illuminates the lived experiences, triumphs, and challenges faced by Black communities across America.

## CLICK: Social Media Handles

- [BlueSky: AMIBW](#)
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- [Website: AMIBW](#)
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- [Spotify: AMIBW](#)
- [👉AMIBW The Community](#)

AMIBW champions the athletes, leaders, educators, and everyday heroes whose voices have too often been marginalized in mainstream media. With each edition, the magazine not only challenges bias—it rewrites the playbook on how media can empower, educate, and inspire.

From historical legacies to contemporary advocacy, AMIBW bridges generations with content that's intellectually rich, emotionally resonant, and rooted in truth.

Whether amplifying the talent of Justin Fields, spotlighting changemakers like Dr. Patrick Graham and Dr. Lila Elliott, or celebrating community impact through initiatives like Integrated Community Education Consultants, AMIBW is the platform where culture meets purpose.



# Unlocking Your Business Potential With CRM & AI TECH

FEATURE ARTICLE | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

Let's talk business, your business. Whether you're juggling a side hustle, taking client calls from your car, or stuck in the "I-have-an-idea-but-where-do-I-start" phase, one thing's clear: technology isn't a luxury anymore it's the playing field. And right now, CRM and AI tools are the MVPs.

If CRM sounds too corporate, don't worry it simply means Customer Relationship Management. Think of it as your digital brain and personal assistant in one. Add AI automation, and suddenly you've got a 24/7 system that tracks leads, sends texts, books appointments, follows up, and even responds to missed calls while you focus on what you do best.

Here's how it works in real life:

## 1. The Solo Entrepreneur:

La Shawnda, a fitness coach, used to spend hours texting clients and missing leads. Now, her system handles FAQs, sends reminders, and even upsells sessions automatically giving her more time to train and grow.

## 2. The Side Hustler with a Dream:

Marcus works a 9-to-5 but wanted to launch a mobile detailing service. With just a booking calendar, a simple form, and a few automations, he built weekend business that soon became full-time.

## 3. The Not-So-Tech-Savvy Beginner

Catrena runs a small cleaning service and isn't very techy. But with a basic CRM setup, she tracks clients, confirms appointments, and follows up for reviews making her service look pro and grow faster.

If tech feels overwhelming, you're not alone. Plenty of successful business owners started not even knowing what a CRM was. Today's tools are made for people just like you no coding, no tech skills, just smart systems that help you start strong and scale fast.

Best of all, you don't need a big budget. You can start investing in yourself and your business for less than \$100/month and get a Free 14-Day Trial to explore, test, and see the difference for yourself.

So whether you're building something new, upgrading what you've got, or just exploring ideas it's your time. Don't wait for "someday." Get in. Look around. You might just surprise yourself.



[Click Here](#)

 Business doesn't have to be complicated. Take a look at what's possible.





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