

Montpelier Descendants Committee Announces a Slate of Twenty Incredible Board Candidates

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MDC-Nominated Board Candidates

Leslie Alexander, PhD

Scholar



Dr. Leslie M. Alexander is Associate Professor in the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies and the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University. She is also currently a Fellow in the Society for the Humanities at Cornell University, and as of July 2022 she will become the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor of History at Rutgers University.

A specialist in early African American and African Diaspora history, she is the author of *African or American?: Black Identity and Political Activism in New York City, 1784-1861* (University of Illinois Press, 2011) and the co-editor of three additional volumes. Her forthcoming book, *Fear of a Black Republic: Haiti and the Birth of Black Internationalism in the United States* (University of Illinois Press, forthcoming Fall 2022), examines how the Haitian Revolution and the emergence of Haiti as a sovereign Black nation inspired the birth of Black internationalist consciousness in the United States.

Her newest project, “How We Got Here: Slavery and the Making of the Modern Police State,” examines how surveillance of free and enslaved Black communities in the colonial and antebellum eras laid the foundation for modern-day policing. A portion of that research appears in *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*. A recipient of several prestigious fellowships, including the Ford Foundation Senior Fellowship, Alexander is the Immediate Past President of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD), and is an Executive Council member of the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS). She also serves on the Advisory Councils for the *Journal of African American History* and *The Black Scholar*. During her career, she has won several significant awards, including the coveted University Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching at The Ohio State University.

###

Daina Ramey Berry, PhD

Scholar / Consultant



Daina Ramey Berry (pronounced DIE-NAH like Dinah Washington) is the Chair of the Department of History at The University of Texas at Austin. She holds the Oliver H. Radkey Regents Professorship of History and is a Fellow of Walter Prescott Webb Chair in History, and the George W. Littlefield Professorship in American History at the University of Texas at Austin. Formerly the Associate Dean of The Graduate School, Dr. Berry led a campus-wide initiative to transform funding, student outcomes, and career pathways at the university.

In addition to her work at the university as an administrator and an internationally recognized scholar of slavery, Berry is one of the most sought-after consultants for public-facing projects offered by museums, historical sites, K-12 educational initiatives, syndicated radio programs, online podcasts, and public television.

Berry is “a scholar of the enslaved” and a specialist on gender and slavery and Black women’s history in the United States. Berry is the award-winning author and editor of six books and several scholarly articles. One of her recent books, *The Price for their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved, from Womb to the Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Beacon Press, 2017), received the Phyllis Wheatley Award for Scholarly Research from the Sons and Daughters of the US Middle Passage; the 2018 Best Book Prize from the Society for the History of the Early American Republic (SHEAR); and the 2018 Hamilton Book Prize from the University Co-op for the best book among UT Austin faculty. Berry has received prestigious fellowships for her research from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Association of University Women, and the Ford Foundation.

Berry has appeared on several syndicated radio and television networks, including NBC/ TLC (“Who Do You Think You Are?”), CNN, C-SPAN, National Geographic Explorer, and NPR. In 2016, she served as a historical consultant and technical advisor for the remake of ROOTS by Alex Haley (HISTORY/ A+E). She currently serves as a consultant for museums and historical societies throughout the United States, including the restoration and interpretation at historical sites such as the Owens-Thomas House (Savannah, GA), Phillipsburg Manor (Sleepy Hollow, NY), and the Neill-Cochran House (Austin, TX).

###

Michael L. Blakey, PhD

Scholar / Anthropologist



Michael L. Blakey is National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Anthropology, Africana Studies, and American Studies, and Founding Director of the Institute for Historical Biology at William & Mary.

Dr. Blakey received the B.A. at Howard University, the M. A. and Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and completed specialized studies at Oxford and London Universities.

Blakey held professorships at Spelman College, Columbia, Brown, La Sapienza, and Howard University, where he founded the W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropology Laboratory.

Blakey has served as president of the Association of Black Anthropologists (1987-1989), and member of the editorial boards of *American Anthropologist* (2012-2016) and *American Antiquity* (2021-). He represented the United States on the Council of the 4th World Archaeological Congress in Cape Town, South Africa (1999). He is a member of the Scholarly Advisory Committee of the National Museum of African American History and Culture of the Smithsonian Institution (2006-), where he previously held the position of Research Associate in Physical Anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History (1985-1994). He was a Key Advisor to the Race: Are We So Different exhibition and website (understandingrace.org) of the American Anthropological Association (from 2008).

Blakey was Scientific Director of the New York African Burial Ground Project (1992-2009), the most sophisticated bioarchaeological project in the United States. His team began ethical bioarchaeology, the term ‘descendant community,’ and its use in an empowered public engagement intended for the democratization of knowledge. The Manhattan site became a U.S. National Monument in 2007. In 2021, Blakey was presented the President’s Award of the American Anthropological Association, the Legacy Award of the Association of Black Anthropologists, and the Plumeri Award for Faculty Excellence at William and Mary. He has been appointed Co-Chair of the American Anthropological Association’s Commission for the Ethical Treatment of Human Remains mandated to consolidate and advance the highest ethical standards for the treatment of all human skeletons and tissue samples at archaeological sites, museums, and laboratories in the United States (2022-2024). He is currently completing a 1,500-page monograph on race and racism in science and society, adding to his approximately 90 reports, refereed articles, and edited volumes.

###

Reverend Cornell William Brooks, JD

Attorney / Public Servant / Social Justice Activist / Scholar



Cornell William Brooks is Hauser Professor of the Practice of Nonprofit Organizations and Professor of the Practice of Public Leadership and Social Justice at Harvard Kennedy School. Brooks leads as Director of The William Monroe Trotter Collaborative for Social Justice at the School’s Center for Public Leadership and serves as Visiting Professor of the Practice of Prophetic Religion and Public Leadership at Harvard Divinity School. Brooks is the former president and CEO of the NAACP, a civil rights attorney, ordained minister, orator, writer, and the executive producer of two films.

Under his leadership, the NAACP secured 12 significant legal victories, including laying the groundwork for the first statewide legal challenge to prison-based gerrymandering. He also reinvigorated the activist social justice heritage of the NAACP, dramatically increasing membership. He conceived and led “America’s Journey for Justice” march from Selma, Alabama to Washington, D.C., over 40 days and 1000 miles, among many other demonstrations. Prior to leading the NAACP, Brooks was president and CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. He previously served as senior counsel and acting director of the Office of Communications Business Opportunities at the Federal Communications Commission, executive director of the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, and a trial attorney at both the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the U.S. Department of Justice. He was the executive producer of the CNN docuseries *The People v. the Klan*. Brooks holds a J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was a senior editor of the *Yale Law Journal* and member of the *Yale Law & Policy Review*, and a Master of Divinity from Boston University’s School of Theology, where he was a Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholar. He also holds a B.A. from Jackson State University. He is a fourth-generation ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Brooks and his family have made Virginia their home for more than 25 years.

###

Dorian Burton, Ed LD

Education Advocate / Author / Consultant



Dr. Dorian Burton is the Co-Founder and Managing Partner of ParaQuel Capital. He was formerly the Co-Director of The TandemED Initiative for Black Male Achievement and Community Improvement at Harvard University Law School's Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, and was the Wasserman Foundation Fellow in the Doctor of Education Leadership Program at Harvard. Prior to Harvard, Dr. Burton worked as an independent consultant with non-profits and school districts between Harlem, NY; Houston, TX; and Newark, NJ. In addition, he worked in a special projects role to develop external partnerships for the Harlem Children's Zone College Success Office.

Burton started his professional career working for the National Football League and also served in various educational leadership roles. In addition to his doctorate degree from Harvard, Burton holds a Master's degree in higher education from the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University and a Bachelor's Degree in sociology from Pennsylvania State University, where he also was a member of the varsity football team. During Burton's tenure at Harvard as a Wasserman Family Fellow, he was selected to the Dean's Committee on equity and diversity, served as a Teaching Fellow for Lani Guinier at Harvard Law School and was awarded the International Marshall Memorial Fellowship from the German Marshall Fund. Additionally, Burton was a Gordon Ambach Fellow with the National Governors Association Education Division and The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, as well as a non-Resident Fellow at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University.

###

Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, PhD

Scholar / Public Historian



Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis is Professor of History and Public History Program Director at Howard University. She completed her B.A. and M.A. at Howard University and holds a doctorate from the University of Maryland. The former Director of Graduate Studies was awarded a Ford Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and a Smithsonian Institution Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. Her academic appointments before joining the faculty at Howard University include Banneker Professor, George Washington University; Visiting Professor, Pennsylvania State University; and Professor, Northern Virginia Community College.

Professor Clark-Lewis is an active member of the academic and Public History community, serving on many boards that work to encourage the general public's interest in history. Service to the academic community includes election to the Executive Board – Organization of American Historians, Board of Directors–National Council on Public History and National President–Association of Black Women Historians. Other service includes membership on the: Executive Board, African American Experience Fund of the National Park Foundation; Landmarks Committee–National Park Service; and Executive Council–Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

A founder of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Association, Clark-Lewis has published extensively in the areas of African American and Public History. Her publications include *Keep It Locked: 106 Tributes to A J Calloway From the Mecca* (2015); *Synergy: Public History At Howard University* (2011); *First Freed: Emancipation in the District of Columbia* (2003); *Living In, Living Out: African American Women and Migration to Washington, DC* (1994); and, *This Work Had A End: The Transition From Live-in to Day Work* (1985). She co-authored *Emerging Voices and Paradigms: Black Women Scholarship Today* (2007) and *Northern Virginia Community College: An Oral History* (1987). With Stanley Nelson she co-produced the PBS documentary *Freedom Bags*, a documentary recently featured at the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, which won the Oscar Micheaux Award from the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.

Clark-Lewis has served as the primary investigator (PI) for research grants from government agencies (the National Park Service, the District of Columbia government, National Endowment for the Humanities and the State of Virginia); educational organizations (the Smithsonian Institution, WETA-Channel 26, the DC Community Humanities Council, and the DC Arts and Humanities Council); non-profit organizations (the Peoples Involvement Corporation, the Hattie Strong Foundation, and the Hechinger Foundation); private grantors (the American Express Company, *Washington Post* and the Martin Marietta Corporations); and, educational institutions (Clark University [Massachusetts] and two Howard University Faculty Research Grants).

###

Alexcia “Lexi” Cleveland, MA

Technology Executive / Public Historian



Lexi Cleveland is the Executive Vice President at ARtGlass, a software technology company based in Richmond, Virginia and Milan, Italy. ARtGlass is the world leader at bringing augmented reality tours to iconic cultural and historic sites like ancient Pompeii, thrilling and educating millions of visitors who don transparent smartglasses and experience digitally recreated buildings, landscapes, art, and historical characters layered over their real-world views. She works with numerous leading cultural institutions tackling the challenge of enhancing the visitor experience with the aid of immersive storytelling.

A public historian who focuses on early American history and interactive programming, Cleveland received her B.A. in History from the College of William & Mary, a certificate in Early American History, Material Culture, and Museum Studies from the National Institute of American History and Democracy at William and Mary, and her M.A. in American Studies from Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Cleveland has participated in innovative projects interpreting the lives of enslaved Virginians at Colonial Williamsburg, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, James Monroe’s Highland, and on Richmond’s Monument Avenue.

Cleveland serves on the Board of Directors of Historic Richmond, including on its Property and Strategic Planning committees. She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Railway Historical Society’s Old Dominion Chapter. Presently, Cleveland is creating a database of burials in Black cemeteries in Richmond, which will launch in winter 2022. She volunteers at the Library of Virginia transcribing documents on Virginia history to make them more accessible and has worked with the Strong Men and Women in Virginia History Program.

###

Vedet Coleman-Robinson, PhD

Museum Association Leader / Grants Specialist



Dr. Vedet Coleman-Robinson serves as Executive Director of Association of African American Museums (AAAM). She came to AAAM in 2019, on the heels of AAAM's 40th Anniversary, where under her leadership and with the help of the 2018 Andrew W. Mellon Grant, AAAM membership increased by 200% and has raised over \$3 million for the association.

Dr. Coleman-Robinson served for eleven years under the National Park Service (NPS) as a Grants Management Specialist within the State, Tribal, Local, Plans & Grants Division (STLPG). During her time at the NPS, Coleman-Robinson was the Program Lead for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grant (HBCU) and the Underrepresented Community Grant programs for STLPG. She has devoted herself to helping bring voice to communities that lacked representation in the fabric, space and time of American history, and was the subject-matter expert in the STLPG Division on the policies and procedures of museums who were awarded grants. In her eleven years with the NPS, Coleman-Robinson worked closely with numerable grantees to help preserve their stories through grant programs such as Save America's Treasures, African American Civil Rights, HBCU, Preserve America, Underrepresented Communities, and the Native Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. She also served in leadership roles within the National Park Service's Employee Resource Groups to help foster and promote relationships and visibility of employees and sites that are underrepresented within the National Park Service and was often called upon for historic research studies that pertained to African American history and culture.

Prior to her role at the NPS, Coleman-Robinson worked for and with several museums within the DC Metro Area and helped to create diversity plans for Board of Directors, visitors, and staff, social media fundraising plans, facilitated stakeholder meetings and assisted in the overall sustainability of several programs and grants. She assisted the National Park Service in acquiring the African American Civil War Monument, spearheaded an initiative to forge relationships between the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the African American community within D.C. as well as increase African American visitation, co-curated The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture's inaugural community exhibition as well as collected materials and built relationships throughout the State of Maryland for the museum, increased Board diversity and helped the National Electronics Museum appoint the first African American to the Board, co-chaired a social media fundraising campaign which helped secure an American Express Grant for the Carter G. Woodson Home.

She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has a Bachelor of Arts in U.S. History from Virginia State University; a Master of Arts and a Doctorate of Philosophy in U.S. History with a minor in Public History from Howard University.

###

Maureen Costello, MA

Education Advocate / Executive



Ms. Maureen Costello is the Executive Director for the Center for Antiracist Education at the nonprofit Stand for Children Leadership Center and the former Teaching Tolerance Director at the Southern Poverty Law Center. Throughout her career, Costello has been committed to fostering the ideals of democracy and citizenship in young people. At Stand for Children, Costello leads efforts to encourage honest conversations about our country's history and present in order to find ways to heal, foster understanding, and create the future all students deserve.

At the Southern Poverty Law Center, she grew the Teaching Tolerance program extensively, adding new initiatives like the *Teaching Hard History: American Slavery* project; Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching; the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards; the Teaching the Movement project; the Perspectives text bank and custom Learning Plan Builder; and the Educator Grants Program supporting anti-bias programming in classrooms, schools and districts. She also held a lead role in the production of student friendly documentaries *Bullied* and *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*.

Costello began her career as a history and economics teacher at Notre Dame Academy High School in Staten Island, and previously worked as the Director of the *Newsweek* magazine Education Program and for the Scholastic, Inc. as the Director of its 2010 Census in School project. She earned her B.A. from The New School University and an M.A. in American History from the New York University Graduate School of Liberal Arts.

###

DeAnna Dodds Cummings, MPA

Foundation Leader / Advocate for the Arts



DeAnna Cummings joined the McKnight Foundation in June 2020 as Arts program director. Founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive, McKnight invests in the arts and other sectors to support the state's working artists and culture bearers and advocate for the value of their work as leaders in the state.

Before coming to McKnight, Cummings was the co-founding CEO of Juxtaposition Arts (JXTA), a social enterprise business in north Minneapolis that trains and employs historically underestimated youth as a springboard to higher education and careers in art and design. Established in 1995 as an after-school program in the North Side's Sumner-Glenwood neighborhood, JXTA has become one of the most important cultural institutions in the Twin Cities.

Cummings has served on the Bush Foundation's board of trustees since 2013. She is a 2016 *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal* Women in Business awardee and a Minnesota Public Radio 2013 Arts Hero. From 2016 to 2018, she was a DeVos Institute Fellow in the selective fellowship program in arts management at the University of Maryland, College Park. She holds a master's in public administration from Harvard University and studied sociology and psychology at the University of Minnesota.

###

Conny Graft

Museum Consultant



Conny Graft is the retired President and Principal of Conny C. Graft Research and Evaluation, a museum consulting firm she founded and ran for twenty years. In this position, she worked with museums to help them articulate and evaluate their impact and meaningful outcomes for current and potential audiences. Services also included training on interpretive planning, evaluation, and developing interpretive strategies for targeted audiences. Graft previously worked at Colonial Williamsburg for twenty-seven years as Manager of Research & Evaluation and as Director of Interpretive Planning, Director of Interpretive Education, and Evaluation.

Graft's clients included The Smithsonian, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Mount Vernon, Monticello, The Montpelier Foundation, The Harriet Beecher Stowe House, The American Association of State and Local History, the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, and history projects in Greece and Spain. She has published her research in chapters in two edited volumes, *Interpreting Slavery at Museums and Historic Sites* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) and *Reimagining Historic House Museums – New Approaches and Proven Solutions* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

Graft has previously served the museums discipline as President of the Virginia Association of Museums and was on the board of The Visitor Studies Association. She has a B.A. from Bowdoin College in American History.

###

F. Michael Higginbotham, JD, LLM

Professor of Law / Author / Advocate



Michael Higginbotham is a law professor, author, and international political consultant. As an expert on civil rights, human rights, and constitutional law, Higginbotham has taught and written extensively on racial equality issues for over thirty years. He is the author of the books *Race Law: Cases, Commentary, and Questions* and *Ghosts of Jim Crow: Ending Racism in Post-Racial America* (NYU Press, 2013). In its fifth edition, *Race Law* is widely used in colleges and law schools throughout the United States and several foreign countries.

Higginbotham worked for the Public Justice Center, one of Maryland's largest public interest firms beginning in the 1990s, the group fought cases on behalf of homeless students, detainees at the Baltimore City Detention Center on their right to medical care, and on behalf of Eastern Shore poultry workers denied extra pay for working overtime. Higginbotham has also worked to diversify the region's law professionals. In 2011, Higginbotham co-founded the Fannie Angelos Scholarship program, a program that identifies students at Maryland's historically black colleges and universities in their sophomore and junior years as future attorneys. The program helps them apply to law school and throughout their legal studies and was recognized by the American Bar Association in 2017.

Higginbotham has published numerous articles and editorials in journals and newspapers throughout the United States. Appearing regularly on CNN Tonight hosted by Don Lemon, Higginbotham has frequently provided commentary to media worldwide. Additionally, he currently serves as a legal advisor to Senator Ben Cardin. Before joining the University of Baltimore law faculty in 1988, Higginbotham was a Law Clerk to United States Court of Appeals Judge Cecil Poole, an Associate with Davis Polk, and a Lecturer in Law at the University of Pennsylvania. Higginbotham also served as former Chairman of the Board of the Public Justice Center.

Higginbotham is the chairman of the Board of the Public Justice Center, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the former chairperson of the Association of American Law Schools Committee on Recruitment and Retention of Minority Faculty. He is a member of the District of Columbia Bar. Higginbotham graduated from Beverly Hills High School in 1975, received a Bachelor of Arts degree magna cum laude from Brown University in 1979, a Juris Doctor degree from Yale University in 1982, and a Master of Laws degree with honors from Cambridge University in 1985 where he was a Rotary Scholar.

###

Hasan Kwame Jeffries, PhD

Scholar / Public Historian



Hasan Kwame Jeffries is Associate Professor of History at The Ohio State University, where he teaches courses on the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement.

In addition to his academic work, Dr. Jeffries has participated in several major public history projects. From 2010 to 2014, he was the lead historian and primary scriptwriter for the \$27 million renovation of the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee, the site where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. He hosts the podcast “Teaching Hard History,” a production of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s educational division, Teaching Tolerance. He also regularly shares his knowledge of African American history and contemporary Black politics with the public through lectures, workshops, op-eds, and radio and television interviews. He has also contributed to several documentary film projects as a featured on-camera scholar, including the Emmy nominated, four-hour, PBS documentary *Black America Since MLK*.

Jeffries consults regularly with school districts on developing anti-racism programming. This work includes conducting professional development workshops for teachers, speaking to student assemblies, and developing inclusive curricular centered on social studies. In the classroom, Jeffries takes great pride in opening students’ minds to new ways of understanding the past and the present. This has led him to push the very boundaries of what we think of as a classroom, including taking small groups of undergraduates to Montpelier. For his pedagogical creativity and effectiveness, he has received Ohio State’s Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching, the university’s highest award to teaching, and the Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award.

Jeffries is the author of *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama’s Black Belt* (New York University Press, 2009), which tells the remarkable story of the African American freedom movement in Lowndes County, Alabama, the birthplace of Black Power. He is also the editor of *Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2021), a collection of essays by leading civil rights scholars and teachers that explores how to teach the Civil Rights Movement accurately and effectively. Jeffries’ current book project, *In the Shadow of Civil Rights*, examines the Black experience in New York City from 1977 to 1993.

Jeffries graduated *summa cum laude* from Morehouse College with a B.A. in History (1994) and earned a Ph.D. in American History, with a specialization in African American History, from Duke University (2002). He taught for a year at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, before joining the faculty at The Ohio State University in 2003.

###

Dean Nicole Thorne Jenkins, PhD, CPA

Financial Expert / University Administrator



Dean Nicole Thorne Jenkins is the John A. Griffin Dean of the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia. An award-winning educator and researcher, she is an expert in the areas of financial reporting, organizational strategy, and valuation. Throughout her career, Jenkins has built a reputation for integrating the academic, financial, and strategic plans of higher education institutions to foster alignment from which strategy is executed. As an accounting and finance professional with over 30 years of experience, Dean Jenkins brings a deep appreciation for integrity, transparency, and the common good to all that she does.

Jenkins joined the McIntire School in July of 2020 following her tenure as the Von Allmen Chaired Professor of Accountancy and Vice Dean of the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky. As Vice Dean, she led all internal operations for the college including strategic planning; development and implementation of the College's first diversity, equity, and inclusion programmatic plan; budget and finance; and collaborations with faculty to design and launch both standalone and interdisciplinary academic programs across varying modalities.

Jenkins is a certified public accountant and started her career in the audit department of PriceWaterhouse (PwC). She holds a certificate in leadership from Stanford Graduate School of Business and is a former president of the Financial Accounting and Reporting Section of the American Accounting Association. She is the recipient of a best paper award, three outstanding service awards, two outstanding faculty awards, and a dean's award. Jenkins received BAs in both Accounting and Finance from Drexel University, her PhD from the University of Iowa, and has served on the faculties of Washington University in St. Louis, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Kentucky.

She has published articles in numerous academic journals, is a sought-after speaker and business consultant, and serves as an expert witness in matters related to financial reporting, valuation, and estimation of damages. Currently, Jenkins serves on the advisory board at the Tippie School of Business at the University of Iowa and on the Board of Trustees for Strada Educational Network and Beta Gamma Sigma (Honor Society) where she is on the accounting and finance committees.

###

Lori Ann LaRocco

Broadcast Journalist / Author



Lori Ann LaRocco is the Senior Editor of Guests at CNBC, a role she has held since 2017. Prior to that, she served as a Senior Talent Producer for CNBC, the recognized world leader in business news and real-time financial market coverage. A nationally renowned business journalist, she has worked at the network since 2000. At CNBC, LaRocco coordinates high profile interviews and special multi-million dollar on-location productions for all shows on the network.

LaRocco's journalism is particularly focused on the politics, current events, and history of global trade and the insights of top business leaders. She is the author of five books: *Trade War: Containers Don't Lie*, *Navigating the*

Bluster (Marine Money 2019), *Dynasties of the Sea: The Untold Stories of the Postwar Shipping Pioneers* (Marine Money 2018), *Opportunity Knocking* (Agate Publishing 2014), *Dynasties of the Sea: The Ships and Entrepreneurs Who Ushered in the Era of Free Trade* (Marine Money 2012) and *Thriving in the New Economy: Lessons from Today's Top Business Minds* (Wiley 2010).

LaRocco's extensive networks within the business industry has enabled CNBC to break major news regarding business deals and has earned her respect from Wall Street to Washington. She is a proud board member of the Rose Brucia Educational Foundation, which provides free stranger safety to all schools and families around the world. Prior to joining CNBC, LaRocco was an anchor, reporter and assignment editor in various local news markets around the country.

LaRocco received a BA in Mass Media Communications & Broadcast Journalism in 1992 from the State University of New York College at Plattsburgh. She was awarded the Distinguished Visiting Alumni Award by State University of New York Plattsburgh in April 2010. She was named to the inaugural Sachem Hall of Honor (Freshman Class Inductee) in 2017, which recognizes alumni who have achieved extraordinary success in their chosen field or have provided exemplary service to the Sachem Central School District.

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Colonel Patricia J. McDaniel, US Army, Ret., JD

Attorney



Col. Patricia J. McDaniel is an Information Technology (IT) Attorney with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs located in Austin, Texas. She retired from the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps in 2009, where her last position was Chief of the U.S. Army Trial Defense Service, an independent Field Operating Agency.

McDaniel holds a J.D. from the University of Texas at Austin, an M.B.A. from Wheeling Jesuit University, and an M.P.A. from Texas A&M University. She is a 2017 Senior Executive Fellow of the Harvard Kennedy School.

McDaniel is a descendant of Benjamin McDaniel of Montpelier (1790-1875) and serves on the Montpelier Descendants Committee Board of Directors.

###

Soledad O'Brien

Broadcast Journalist / Philanthropist



Soledad O'Brien is an award-winning journalist, critically acclaimed author, speaker, and philanthropist who anchors and produces the Hearst Television political magazine program "Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien." Ms. O'Brien, Founder and CEO of Soledad O'Brien Productions, also reports for HBO Real Sports, the PBS NewsHour, and WebMD. She has appeared on networks Fox and Oxygen and anchored and reported for NBC, MSNBC, and CNN. O'Brien and her husband, Brad Raymond, have created the PowHERful Foundation (previously named Starfish Foundation, and before that the Soledad O'Brien & Brad Raymond Foundation) to help disadvantaged young women get to and through college. Ms. O'Brien created and launched an award-winning documentary film series *In America* that was among CNN's most successful domestic and international franchises. She has also hosted the "Black in America" and "Latino in America" series.

Ms. O'Brien has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards for her reporting, including three Emmys, the George Foster Peabody award, an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Prize honoring excellence in broadcast and digital journalism in the public service, and the Gracie Allen Award. She has also authored two books, *Latino in America* (Celebra 2009) and *The Next Big Story: My Journey Through the Land of Possibilities* (Celebra, 2010). Newsweek Magazine named her one of the "15 People Who Make America Great." Ms. O'Brien has also received the NAACP President's Award (2007) and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Goodermote Humanitarian Award (2008) for her humanitarian efforts and journalistic excellence. In 2009, O'Brien received the 2009 Medallion of Excellence for Leadership and Community Service from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. In 2008, O'Brien was the first recipient of the Soledad O'Brien Freedom's Voice Award from the Morehouse School of Medicine for being a catalyst for social change.

Ms. O'Brien is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. She is a graduate of Harvard University, where she became a Distinguished Fellow in 2013. She lives in New York City with Raymond and their four children.

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Joshua Rothman, PhD

Scholar



Dr. Joshua D. Rothman is an American historian. He is a Professor and Chair of the Department of History at the University of Alabama, where he was also formerly the Director of the Frances S. Summersell Center for the Study of the South. He co-directs a research project with colleagues at Cornell University, the University of New Orleans, and other universities titled *Freedom on the Move: A Database of Fugitives from North American Slavery*. Dr. Rothman has published three books: a history of interracial sex in Virginia before the Civil War titled *Notorious in the Neighborhood: Sex and Families Across the Color Line in Virginia, 1787-1861* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), *Flush Times and Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson* (University of Georgia Press, 2012), and *The Ledger and the Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America* (Basic Books, 2021).

Dr. Rothman has received numerous fellowships, grants, and awards for his research. His scholarship has been funded by grants from the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Southern Foodways Alliance. He has received fellowships from the American Council for Learned Societies, the American Antiquarian Society, the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University, the Huntington Library, the Virginia Historical Society, and Virginia Humanities. He has also won awards for his books, including (for *Notorious in the Neighborhood*) the 2004 Outstanding Book Award from the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender, and (for *Flush Times and Fever Dreams*) the Gulf South Historical Association's Michael V.R. Thomason Book Award for the best book on the history of the Gulf South and Southern Historical Association's Frank L. and Harriet C. Owsley Award for the best book in southern history.

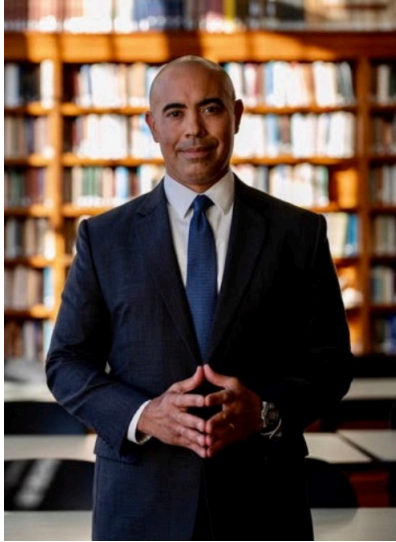
He has also served as a consultant for numerous museums and historic sites, including the Freedom House Museum in Alexandria, Virginia, and the Forks of the Road site in Natchez, Mississippi.

Dr. Rothman received his BA from Cornell University in 1994 and his PhD in History from the University of Virginia in 2000. He is currently editing and introducing a new critical edition of *Life of Elisha Tyson, the Philanthropist*, a biography of an early antislavery activist, and working on a history of the Ku Klux Klan hearings of 1871.

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Ian H. Solomon, JD

Higher Education Leader / Attorney / Public Servant



Ian H. Solomon is Dean of the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy at the University of Virginia. For four years, Solomon served in the U.S. Senate as legislative counsel to then-Senator Barack Obama. Later, under the Obama administration, he was confirmed unanimously by Congress as the U.S. executive director for the World Bank Group, where he championed private-sector development in Africa and negotiated a range of multi-stakeholder agreements.

Solomon has also been a consultant with McKinsey & Company, an associate dean and visiting lecturer at Yale Law School, and a vice president and lecturer in law at the University of Chicago. Before joining the Batten School, he led his own international consulting practice focused on conflict and collaboration.

Solomon earned his A.B. from Harvard University and his J.D. from Yale Law School. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and has traveled and worked extensively in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

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Reverend Lawrence “Larry” E. Walker, Sr.

Pastor / Administrator



Reverend Lawrence “Larry” E. Walker is a church pastor and administrator in Columbia, Maryland, particularly focused on youth education and community empowerment. He currently serves as the Deputy Pastor and Chief-of Staff at Celebration Church at Columbia, the largest Black congregation in Howard County, Maryland. He has served in his current role since 2005.

Rev. Walker’s career has focused on improving the lives of African American residents. Under Rev. Walker’s leadership, Celebration Church has made a tremendous impact on the community. He set up a partnership with the local school system which provided students with greater access to the extensive programs and support services offered by the church. As the President of the African

American Community Roundtable of Howard County, Rev. Walker established the organization as a leading voice in the community. For decades he’s been a leader addressing racial inequalities in education, health, diversity, equity and inclusion, economic opportunities, policing and transportation. He served on the Board of the Community Foundation of Howard County, and on the county Board of Education in 2014. Service to others is at his core, volunteering in several capacities within the community and school system, including President of Parents of African American Students, Co-chair Operating Budget Review Committee, Redistricting Committee and Community Advisory Council.

Rev. Walker has received several awards for his public service and civic involvement, such as the statewide Parent Involvement Matters Award (2008) awarded by a collaboration between Comcast and the Maryland State Department of Education. Larry is a Life Member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and served as the National Director of Sigma Beta Clubs. He received his B.S. in Business, Management, Marketing and Related Support Services from Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College at Baton Rouge in 1981. He is a proud descendant of Benjamin McDaniel of Montpelier (1790-1875) and serves on the Montpelier Descendants Committee Board of Directors.

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Currently Serving MDC-Nominated TMF Board Members

James French, MBA

Banker / Finance and Technology Entrepreneur



James French was elected as the founding Chair of the Montpelier Descendants Committee in 2019 at a Juneteenth gathering of Descendants who assembled to establish an independent organization founded on the principles of the rubric. Soon thereafter, he was invited to join the Board of The Montpelier Foundation.

French is a seasoned, independent global professional and entrepreneur specializing in finance, strategy and innovation, was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy, Boston University and obtained his MBA from the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business.

French is the founder of Anansy, which supports SMEs in the African technology arena. His advisory clients include leading corporations in emerging markets, and Top Ten Global business schools, such as the Darden Graduate Business School at the University of Virginia on engaging with African innovators as he understands that Africa's massive economic potential extends beyond its natural resources and is closely tied to its youth and their potential for innovation.

As an IT instructor at the African Development Bank's Young Professionals Program, French trained some of Africa's future elite, who now lead global institutions. As a treasurer and head of financial engineering for Citigroup in Africa, he learned how to innovate in an unlikely place – Africa's capital markets. Consulting for the US Treasury and the International Finance Corporation, he advised governments and the financial sector in strengthening capital markets, financing SMEs and improving micro-finance.

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Bettye Kearsse, PhD, MD

Writer / Retired Pediatrician



Dr. Kearsse is the author of the multiple award-winning memoir *The Other Madisons: The Lost History of A President's Black Family* (Mariner Books, 2020), which took some thirty years of research and writing and rewriting. It is both a personal family history and an homage to millions of silenced, invisible African Americans. The memoir is an intimate work of narrative nonfiction that discovers, discloses, and embraces a more inclusive and complete American story.

Dr. Kearsse holds a B.A. in Genetics from the University at California at Berkeley, a Ph.D. in Biology from New York University, and an M.D. from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. After practicing pediatrics in Boston, MA, for thirty-one years, she retired and now lives in Santa Fe, NM. Among her most rewarding experiences as a physician were her travels to China on behalf of Wide Horizons for Children, an international adoption agency, and service on the Board of Directors of From Roots to Wings, a community-based organization in Boston for grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising.

Dr. Kearsse's writings have appeared in multiple well-regarded magazines, such as the New York Times and TIME. Her engagements include television, multiple podcasts and radio shows, James Madison's Montpelier, the Afro American Historical and Genealogical Society, the American Bar Association, Harvard University, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. She is a member of the Montpelier Descendants Committee and the Montpelier Foundation Board of Directors and is a descendant of an enslaved cook and her enslaver, President James Madison.

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J. Drew Lanham, PhD

Scholar / Ecologist



Dr. Lanham is Alumni Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology in the Forestry and Environmental Conservation Department at Clemson University. He was named an Alumni Master Teacher in 2012 and is a Certified Wildlife Biologist. In his twenty years as Clemson University faculty, he has worked to understand how forest management impacts wildlife and how human beings think about nature. He has been visiting James Madison's Montpelier since 2016 and served as Montpelier's ecologist-in-residence in 2020, when he collaborated with Montpelier researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of how the wildlife habitats reflect the Madison-era use of the plantation land.

Lanham is the author of several peer-reviewed publications related to the impacts of forest management and other human activities on songbirds, herpetofauna, small mammals and butterflies. In addition to his academic scholarship, Lanham is an accomplished author of nonfiction and poetry, writing about his experiences as a birder, hunter and African American man in the birding and conservation communities. His first solo work is *The Home Place- Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature* (Milkweed Editions 2017), which was awarded the 2017 Southern Book Prize, the Reed Award from the Southern Environmental Law Center, was named a "Best Scholarly Book of the Decade" by the Chronicle of Higher Education, and was a finalist for the John Burroughs Medal.

Lanham has served as a board member with the South Carolina Wildlife Federation, South Carolina Audubon, American Birding Association, Aldo Leopold Foundation, BirdNote, and the North American Association for Environmental Education. He has been awarded fellowships by the Audubon-Toyota Together Green initiative, the Clemson University Institute for Parks, and was most recently named a 2016 Brandwein Fellow for his work in Environmental Education. Lanham received his BA and MS in Zoology and his PhD in Forest Resources from Clemson University.

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