



WHITNEY M. YOUNG JR.

2025

gala

HONORING THOSE WITH
COURAGE UNDER FIRE



FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2025

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President Letter 2025

As the political climate shifts and new distractions arise daily, the **Greater Washington Urban League (GWUL)** remains steadfast in our mission. Rather than being discouraged, we are motivated to roll up our sleeves and continue the work that has always been at the core of our movement. Now, more than ever, we must ensure that our culture, our needs, and our voices remain at the forefront of decisions that shape our lives.

While uncertainty may create fear, history reminds us that we have been here before. Past generations fought tirelessly for civil rights, equity, and inclusion—often under far more challenging circumstances. Yet, they persevered. And so must we.

The fight for justice has never been easy, but every challenge presents an opportunity to rise. This moment demands action. We must stand firm, protect the progress we have made, and push forward with unwavering determination to secure a better future.

Now is not the time to retreat. It is not the time for anger or despair. Instead, it is the time to build on the blueprint left by the civil rights leaders who came before us. Their resilience and strategic action paved the way, and we must follow their lead—step by step, challenge by challenge.

The need for equity and inclusion has never been greater. It is well-documented that organizations thrive when they embrace diverse perspectives. Without representation across the board, industries and institutions will suffer. Inclusion is not just a moral

imperative—it is a proven driver of success. Since **1938**, when Black families fled the Jim Crow South in search of a better future, **GWUL** has fought for the rights of marginalized communities. We have never taken our foot off the gas, and we won't start now. Fighting for justice is not just what we do—it is who we are.

Winners are the ones who put in the work to achieve their goals. Our goal is clear: to secure the rights and freedoms that all people deserve—without interruption, without compromise.

We are, and will remain, a powerful voice for equity and justice.

Join our movement. Get involved. We need you.

With deepest appreciation,



GEORGE H. LAMBERT, JR.
President & CEO
Greater Washington Urban League

Good Evening, Friends and Supporters,

Tonight, we gather in a spirit of reflection, celebration, and purpose. It is my deepest honor to welcome you to the 48th Annual Whitney M. Young Jr. Courage Under Fire Gala, an evening dedicated to a man whose vision, courage, and unwavering commitment to justice continue to inspire generations.

Imagine, for a moment, the world as Whitney M. Young Jr. saw it, not just as it was, but as it could be. A world where opportunity was not a privilege but a right, where barriers were not walls but bridges waiting to be built. His fight for equality was not easy, nor was it without opposition, but he faced every challenge with resilience and a steadfast belief in the power of unity.

His words still echo through time: "The hardest work in the world is being out of work." They remind us why we are here tonight. In a world still grappling with economic uncertainty, social divides, and systemic inequities, our work is far from over. But just as Whitney Young persevered, so must we.

This evening, we have the privilege of honoring individuals who embody that same spirit of courage. Their stories of resilience and of triumph against adversity, are proof that change is not only possible but within our reach when we stand together. Their journeys remind us that courage is not the absence of fear, but the decision to push forward despite it.

None of this would be possible without you, our sponsors, donors, and volunteers. Your generosity fuels this mission, turning aspirations into action, and dreams into

reality. Your belief in our work ensures that Whitney Young's legacy is not just remembered but lived.

To our honorees, thank you. Your commitment to justice, to lifting others as you rise, is the heartbeat of this evening. It is because of leaders like you that we continue to push forward, undeterred, in pursuit of a more just and equitable society.

As we celebrate tonight, let us also recommit ourselves to the work ahead. Let this gala not only be a moment of recognition but a call to action. The path to progress is paved by those willing to walk it, together.

Thank you for being here, for your support, and for believing in the power of unity and change.

Enjoy this incredible evening.



DAWN C HENDRICKS

Board Chair
Greater Washington Urban League

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George H. Lambert, Jr.

Jesse Price

SOCIAL MEDIA

Use **#GWULGala25** and **#CourageUnderFire** when capturing moments from tonight's event.

Follow **@GWUL365** for real-time updates and recaps!



@GWUL365

ORDER OF EVENTS

RECEPTION

INVOCATION

Rev. Dr. Kendrick E. Curry | Board of Directors, Greater Washington Urban League

OPENING REMARKS

Dawn Hendricks | Chair of the Board of Directors, Greater Washington Urban League

Kimberly A. Bassett | Secretary of D.C.

Marc H. Morial | President & CEO, National Urban League

George H. Lambert Jr | President & CEO, Greater Washington Urban League

DINNER SERVED

YOUTH ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2025 iEmpower Scholarship Recipients

LIONESSE OF JUSTICE AWARD

Congresswoman Maxine Waters | Congresswoman & Advocate

BEACON OF GRACE AWARD

Will Dawkins | General Manager Of The Washington Wizards

ORDER OF EVENTS

CONTINUED

WINGS OF HOPE AWARD

Ira Kress | President at Giant Food

LIVE AUCTION & PADDLE RAISE

Willa Hall Smith | Advisory Board, Greater Washington Urban League

Kimberly Corbin | CAFO, Greater Washington Urban League

TORCHBEARER IN COMMUNICATIONS AWARD & FIRESIDE CHAT

Karine Jean-Pierre | Former White House Press Secretary, Special Advisor to the President, Author,
Activist, and Media Personality

Laura Coates | Chief Legal Analyst and Anchor, CNN

CLOSING REMARKS

George H. Lambert Jr | President & CEO, Greater Washington Urban League

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

AFTER PARTY

Fire & Bravery Gala After Party
Featuring DJ Trauma, hosted by Thursday Network will start at 10 PM

DINNER MENU

HORS D'OEUVRES

Roasted Lamb Lollipop
Mint Chutney

Vegetarian Spring Roll (NF, V)
Soy Ginger Sauce

Mozzarella and Watermelon Lollipop (GF, NF, V)
Balsamic Syrup

Smoked Trout with Lemon Cream on Cucumber Slice (GF, NF)
Coriander Seedling Mayo

Tandoori Chicken in Cucumber Cup (GF, NF)
Yogurt Raita

FIRST COURSE

Classic Baby Spinach Salad (GF, V)
Belgian Red Endive, Pear Tomatoes, Mandarin Oranges,
Toasted Almonds, Raspberry Vinaigrette

DINNER MENU

CONTINUED

ENTRÉE

Five Spiced Beef Tenderloin, Pan Roasted Diver Scallops (GF, NF)
Charred Brocolini, Edamame, Sweet Potato Purée, Sake Plum Emulsion

Vegan Option

Vegan Paella with Plant Based Chorizo (GF, NF, V)
Peppers, Green Peas, Saffron Broth

DESSERT

Cheesecake Trio (NF, V)
Chocolate, Vanilla Bean and Tropical

WINE SELECTION

Lutzville Chardonnay & Lutzville Cabernet



ABOUT WHITNEY M. YOUNG JR

Whitney Moore Young Jr. was a pioneering social worker who redefined the role of that profession, and its importance to the civil rights cause. His progressive work as the executive director of the National Urban League, and his efforts to bridge racial boundaries and usher African Americans into the social and economic mainstream, had enduring results for Black people and for the nation.

Young was born in Lincoln Ridge, Kentucky, on July 31, 1921. His father was president of the Lincoln Institute, a boarding school for Black children where his mother taught, and where Young attended school. He graduated as class valedictorian, showing great promise early on.

In 1944, he found himself in World War II Europe in an all-Black regiment with a white captain. In Young's own words, "It was my Army experience that decided me on getting in the race relations field after the war. Not just because I saw the problems, but because I saw the potential, too. I grew up with a basic belief in the inherent decency of human beings."

Returning to his studies at Kentucky State Industrial College, Young graduated with a B.S. in 1946 and immediately embarked on graduate studies in social work at the University of Minnesota. There he had his initial contact with the Urban League, a relationship that would extend throughout his life.

In 1954, he became dean of the Atlanta University School of Social Work, and the stage was set for his direct encounter with the struggle for civil rights in the South. As a member of the

Atlanta Unitarian Church, he forced that body to change its practice of holding annual picnics at segregated parks. He fought successfully to desegregate the Atlanta public library system, and co-chaired the Atlanta Council on Human Relations. In 1961, a golden opportunity presented itself. He was offered and accepted a job as executive director of the National Urban League. As executive director, Young revolutionized the thinner workings of GWUL and substantially expanded its fundraising ability, making connections with previously unused funding sources.

In 1963, Young brought the Urban League in as a participant in the March on Washington. Young perceived that GWUL's participation would actually serve to neutralize the most radical fringe. The result was that the Urban League became a standard-bearer and progressive force for the entire civil rights movement.

Young was also a forceful advocate for greater government and private-sector efforts to eradicate poverty. His call for a domestic "Marshall Plan," a 10-point program designed to close the huge social and economic gap separating Black and white Americans, significantly influenced the discussion of the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty Legislation. For this, President Johnson awarded him the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in 1968.

Young was the author of two books, *To Be Equal* and *Beyond Racism: Building an Open Society*. He died tragically of a heart attack in 1971 while attending a conference for Black leaders in Nigeria.



Greetings

Greater Washington Urban League Whitney M. Young, Jr. Gala

March 28, 2025

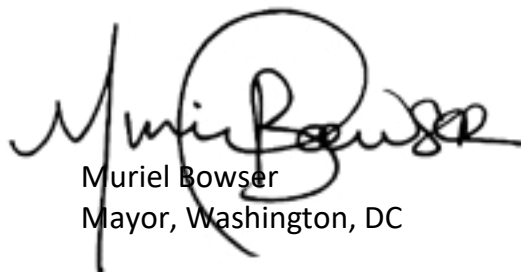
As Mayor of Washington, DC, I am pleased to offer greetings to organizers and attendees of the Greater Washington Urban League's Whitney M. Young, Jr. Gala. I am deeply appreciative of your 87 years of service to those in need across DC and the region.

First organized in 1938 during dire economic circumstances for DC's Black residents, the Greater Washington Urban League has, for close to a century, acted decisively to create educational and professional opportunities. As Whitney M. Young, Jr., steered the National Urban League to ever more profound outcomes in the long journey towards equality and justice, you implemented his vision at the local level. That important and necessary work continues today. The Greater Washington Urban League has fought for the rights and opportunities of our city's historically disenfranchised population, providing consistent and direct action and opportunity for those most in need. You have ensured that succeeding generations have had the resources they needed to thrive.

Today, your programs and initiatives support over 10,000 families. You have provided 6,500 households with critical support for rent, utilities, and personalized counseling services. Perhaps most importantly, over many decades of service, you have awarded over \$2 million in scholarships to our youth. These investments have been, and remain, transformative for the community you serve and Washington, DC's present and future.

It is fitting that the theme of this year's gala is "Building the Vision: The Power of We". This spirit of collective mobilization bolsters the strength, reach, and success of your programs and initiatives. I commend you for all you have achieved in honor of Whitney M. Young, Jr.'s rich legacy.

Once again, welcome and congratulations to our friends at the Greater Washington Urban League. I am proud to join you in celebrating your accomplishments while looking ahead to the future—a future that is informed by the collective Power of We. Let's keep pushing!



Muriel Bowser
Mayor, Washington, DC





COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004



Kenyan R. McDuffie

Councilmember, At-Large
Chair Pro Tempore
Chair, Committee on Business and
Economic Development

Committee Member

Executive Administration and Labor
Judiciary and Public Safety
Youth Affairs



March 28, 2025

Dear Greater Washington Urban League:

As Councilmember, At Large, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to extend greetings to the participants and organizers of the Greater Washington Urban League (GWUL) on your continued commitment to our community by having your annual Whitney M. Young, Jr. Gala. The theme “Building the Vision: The Power of We” is a celebration of resilience, tradition, and honors the collective strength of our community.

GWUL, thank you for your continued dedication to empowering our communities for over 85 years and touching over five million lives. The District of Columbia is grateful for all you do. Congratulations on another successful event and may you all continue to be changemakers!

In Service,

Kenyan R. McDuffie

BETTER TOGETHER

THE PARKS
MAIN STREET
★ ★ ★
RIGGS & MANOR

The Parks Main Street is a new program of Greater Washington Urban League operating within the Entrepreneurship Center.

Black Owned Businesses

CAP8 DOORS & HARDWARE
CHICK-FIL-A FORT TOTTEN (RIGGS PARK)
DISCOVERY LEARNING ACADEMY
HAPPY VIOLET DC NATURAL NAIL CARE SALON & SPA
HIBISCUS MEDICAL CENTER
IAN'S HAIR & NAIL STUDIO OPENING
INTEGRATIVE BODYWORKS LLC
LOVELY LADY BOUTIQUE (LLB)
LOVE & CARE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
MANOR PARK BARBER SHOP
MINUS AND ASSOCIATES INSURANCE
PEACHES KITCHEN RESTAURANT & CATERING
RAMDASS PHARMACY
ROBTCO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
ROSS PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
SENBEB CAFÉ
SENBEB NATURAL FOODS CO-OP
SEWA INTERNATIONAL FOOD, INC.
THE LEARNING CURVE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER (TLC)
THE V.I.P. ROOM
TROKA INSURANCE
URBAN GARDEN BREWING
UNITEES SCREENPRINT & EMBROIDERY
WASHINGTON DOOR & HARDWARE
WINGSTOP (RIGGS PARK)



Greater Washington
Urban League

BETTER TOGETHER



CONGRATULATIONS

BLACK RESTAURANT ACCELERATOR PROGRAM GRANTEES!

Ama's Catering Experience	Mimis Ethiopian BBQ
Birds Kitchen	Mix and Mingle Coffee Lounge
Chef Girl "R" CHI	Mr. Braxton Bar & Kitchen
Chefs of the Streets	Night Owl Vegan
Corner Water	Open Crumb
DC Conscious Café	Reese's Catering Services
District Chop Bar	Road Map to Holistic Health
Dogs On the Curb	RockSolid Creative Food Group
Feast in a Basket	Soul Mega
Fritters & Roast	SouthEast Restaurant Group, dba Dcity
Hard Knocks Catering	Smokehouse
Harvest 2 Health	Sweet Sosumba
Hella Beanz Catering	Takoma Station
Hiatus Cheesecake	The Fresh Food Factory Market
Jimmi Juice	The Mason Jar
Lala Lover Catering	Umi Says
Lillian's Southern Box	Union Chefs Club @ Roosevelt High School
LuvPlates Soul & Grill	Urban Garden Brewing
Magnolia Blossoms Catering and Events	Vicky's Trinidad and Tobago Kitchen

**BLACK
RESTAURANT
ACCELERATOR**



Greater Washington
Urban League



PEPSICO
FOUNDATION



ABOUT THE GREATER WASHINGTON URBAN LEAGUE

The Greater Washington Urban League is one of the District of Columbia's oldest civil rights organizations. The Greater Washington Urban League (GWUL) envisions a thriving DC Metro Area where multi-generational Black communities flourish, free from the systemic barriers of minoritization. Our mission is to increase the wealth, wellness, and political power of historically marginalized populations, with a particular focus on dismantling structures that perpetuate racial inequity. Through this work, we strive to counter generational weathering, combat psychological oppression, and address structural barriers, dispossessed wealth, and community disinvestment.

Since our founding in 1938 during the Great Migration, GWUL has been a cornerstone of civil rights and community service in the District. Initially, we supported thousands of Black families fleeing the oppressive Jim Crow South in their search for safety and economic opportunity in Washington, D.C. Today, our mission continues to guide individuals toward self-sufficiency amidst weaponized systems of disenfranchisement that perpetuate anti-Black disparities in health, wealth, and justice.

For 85 years, GWUL has remained at the forefront of civil rights and community service, directly impacting millions of lives. With over 125 professionals and support from The Thursday Network (our 300-member young professionals' auxiliary) and a 100-member Guild, we annually serve more than 10,000 predominantly low-income households. Our programs span key areas that are critical to building equitable and thriving communities:

HOMEOWNERSHIP

Empowering families to transition from renting to owning through financial counseling, education, and down payment assistance.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Providing financial aid to alleviate housing insecurity, food shortages, utility disruptions, education delays, and medical emergencies.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Distributing financial resources and offering counseling to stabilize families and disrupt cycles of homelessness.

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Equipping individuals with the knowledge and tools to build assets, make informed decisions, and secure long-term financial stability.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Fostering self-development, skills acquisition, workplace navigation, and job pathways to maximize life-long earnings.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Stimulating, scaling, and safeguarding Black-business ownership by nurturing and elevating competent well-positioned Black entrepreneurs.

HEALTH & HEALING

Uniting organizations and diverse clinical stakeholders to foster Black wellness, safely helping individuals recognize and address trauma and engage in self-care and community healing.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Preparing the next generation of servant leaders through civic engagement, opportunity exposure, education, and scholarships.



ABOUT THURSDAY NETWORK

Founded in 1992, Thursday Network is the young professionals' auxiliary of the Greater Washington Urban League. Comprised of approximately 200 dedicated young professionals, we support the Empowerment Goals of our affiliate through impactful community service, civic advocacy, and leadership development programming.

Our mission is to provide a forum for young professionals, ages 21–40, to focus their energies on community service, personal and professional development, and political engagement. For over 30 years, Thursday Network has proudly championed initiatives that uplift and empower, reinforcing our commitment to service and advocacy. This term, our work is guided by five programmatic pillars: Leadership Development, Civic Advocacy, Economic Security, Social Determinants of Health, and Youth Empowerment.

Each year, we host signature programs such as our:

- Annual MLK Day of Service Blanket and Toiletry Drive where over 200 volunteers come together to assemble over 2,000 toiletry kits for local men and women's shelters;



@thursdaynetwork



@thursdayntwk



@Thursday Network -
Greater Washington Urban League
Young Professionals

DONATE

JOIN US



- Young Blacks Give Back (YBGB) Month held during the month of May, where Thursday Network members perform a series of four to six community service events to reinvigorate the organization's resolve to serve and to reinforce the importance of giving back to causes and persons in need (YBGB is recognized by a DC mayoral proclamation, as an outstanding and noteworthy achievement in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan community);
- The Empowerment Academy mentoring program where Thursday Network hosts a mentoring program for DC area youth focused on personal development, college readiness, career exploration and healthy living; and
- iEmpower Scholarship program where we award scholarships to local high school seniors and college freshmen.

Beyond service, we invest in our members' personal and professional development through workshops, seminars, and networking opportunities that foster leadership and growth.

Thursday Network stands as one of the most progressive, service-driven organizations in the D.C. metropolitan area. We invite you to join us, support our mission, and become a part of "the movement" driven by young professionals dedicated to giving back, empowering our communities, and creating lasting change.



@thursdaynetwork



@thursdayntwk



@Thursday Network -
Greater Washington Urban League
Young Professionals

DONATE

JOIN US



ABOUT THE GUILD

Greater Washington Urban League Guild is an auxiliary that assists GWUL in providing direct community services to individuals and families in the metropolitan area. It promotes and supports GWUL in the areas of youth development, fundraising, volunteer services, health, education, and community engagement, connecting GWUL to communities in Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and the District of Columbia.

The Guild's membership is comprised of dedicated individuals of diverse talents, skills, and abilities.



@GWULGuild

DONATE!

HELP US HELP
OUR COMMUNITY



**Greater Washington
Urban League**



SCAN ME

.....

thank you

UPCOMING EVENTS AT GWUL



Greater Washington
Urban League

Health & Wellness

Perinatal Mental Health Training

Certification Training | May 7th - May 9th

Back 2 School Health & Wellness Festival | August 23rd

gwul.org



Greater Washington Urban League
ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER

Entrepreneurship Center

Business Wisdom Wednesday | Every 2nd & 4th Wednesday until Sep 24th

Lunch Time Mixer | Every 2nd & 4th Thursday until Oct 23rd

The Parks Main Street: Corridor Clean Ups | Spring 2025

The Parks Main Street: Manor Park Signature Event - TBD | May 2025

The Parks Main Street: Riggs Park Art Crawl | July 12 or 19, 2025

The Parks Main Street: Music on Main | April - August 2025

Art All Night hosted by The Parks Main Street | September 2025

gwul.org/ec



CENTER FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION
Accelerating Economic Opportunity | Advancing Financial Wellness

Center for Financial Inclusion

Let's Get It Together Credit Score Optimization | May 17th

gwul.org/fec

UPCOMING EVENTS AT GWUL



Greater Washington Urban League
HOUSING CENTER

Home Pathways & Counseling Center

First Time Homebuyers

Getting Your Homeownership Dream | April 5th

MPDU Orientation Seminar | April 10th

gwul.org/housing-services

THURSDAY NETWORK

Thursday Network

Young Blacks Give Back Month | May

Empowerment Academy | May

National Day of Service | May 3rd

Empowerment Summit | May 13th - May 16th

Spirit of Service | August

National Day of Wellness | August 16th

National Voter Registration Day | September 16th

Fall Join Week | September 29th - October 5th

National Day of Empowerment | November 15th

thursdaynetwork.org



Greater Washington
Urban League

Guild

The Guild

Annual Community Health Fair | August 23rd

Future Leaders in Mobility Program | August

gwul.org

2025 HONOREES



BEACON OF GRACE AWARD

WILL DAWKINS

General Manager of the Washington Wizards

Will Dawkins enters his second season as general manager of the Washington Wizards. In his role, Dawkins oversees the day-to-day operations for both the Wizards and Capital City Go-Go.

After arriving in D.C. in June of 2023, Dawkins quickly ushered in a new era of Wizards basketball with a plethora of intentional roster moves aimed to reposition the franchise. Dawkins acquired future draft capital and young players, highlighted by drafting 18-year-old Bilal Coulibaly from France with the seventh overall pick of the 2023 NBA Draft, and the first selection of his tenure as general manager. Coulibaly's impact in D.C. was felt immediately as he was voted a 2024 NBA Rising Star and become the youngest player in franchise history to start in a game.

Dawkins continued repositioning and injecting youth into the franchise by drafting Alex Sarr (2nd overall, 19 years old), Bub Carrington (14th overall, 18 years old), and Kyshawn George (24th overall, 20 years old) with the team's three first round selections in the 2024 NBA Draft after a series of draft-night trades where he accumulated additional future draft capital. The Wizards' three first-round selections were the most made by any NBA team on day one of the draft and the most by Washington since 2010. Washington enters the 2024-25 campaign with 12 players aged 25 years or younger – tied for the second-most in the league.

During the 2024-25 offseason, Dawkins promoted Brian Keefe as the 26th head coach in franchise history, establishing a coaching staff focused on player development and foundation building. Jonas Valanciunas and Saddiq Bey chose Washington in free agency, while Malcolm Brogdon was acquired via trade, giving Dawkins a trio of veterans to help mold the young players in Keefe's first full season as head coach.

Dawkins spent the previous 15 seasons with the Oklahoma City Thunder, rising from front office intern to hold a variety of positions with influence throughout the organization where he helped assemble teams that contributed to the second-best winning percentage in the NBA from 2010 to 2020, with a Finals appearance in 2012 and four appearances in the Western Conference Finals.

Dawkins last served as the Thunder's vice president of basketball operations from 2020-23 where he was directly responsible for roster and staff development, data science & solutions, strategic planning and the handling of personnel matters, including player evaluation and acquisitions.

Prior to his role as vice president of basketball operations, Dawkins spent three seasons as the team's vice president of identification & intelligence, where he was responsible for overseeing the professional and amateur evaluation departments (both domestically and internationally). He also served as assistant video coordinator, scouting coordinator and director of college player personnel, a position he held for five seasons.

Dawkins is a graduate of Emerson College, where he served as captain of the men's basketball team and became a two-time Arthur Ashe Sports Scholar All-American. The Springfield, Massachusetts, native led the High School of Commerce to the 2004 Division I State Basketball Championship, while earning the honor of Western Massachusetts Player of the Year. He was inducted into the Springfield Massachusetts High School Sports Hall of Fame in 2015.

Dawkins and his wife, Tara, have three children, Trey, Journee and Rylee, and currently reside in Northern Virginia



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WINGS OF HOPE AWARD

IRA KRESS



Since its founding in 1936, Giant Food has been a trusted name in grocery retail, serving communities with quality products, exceptional service, and a deep commitment to customer satisfaction. What began as a small Washington, D.C., supermarket has grown into a leading regional chain, operating over 160 stores across Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia.

With a strong focus on innovation and community engagement, Giant Food continues to evolve to meet the needs of modern shoppers. From fresh, locally sourced produce to cutting-edge digital conveniences like online ordering and delivery, Giant remains dedicated to making grocery shopping easy, accessible, and rewarding for all.

Beyond the aisles, Giant Food has a proud legacy of supporting local communities through initiatives in hunger relief, health and wellness, and sustainability. As a trusted neighborhood partner, Giant Food is committed to nourishing both individuals and the communities it serves—one meal at a time.

For more information, visit giantfood.com.



@Karine Jean-Pierre



@K_JeanPierre

TORCHBEARER IN COMMUNICATIONS

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE

Former White House Press Secretary, Special Advisor to the President
Author, Activist, and Media Personality

Karine Jean-Pierre, Former Press Secretary and Special Advisor to the President Author, Activist, and Media Personality Karine Jean-Pierre is the former Press Secretary and Special Advisor to President Joseph Biden, Jr. She is the first Black person and first openly queer person to serve as the White House Press Secretary is the longest serving female in this role. Karine is a long-time advisor to President Biden, having served in senior communications and political roles in the Biden Administration, the Biden campaign, and in the Obama Administration.

Prior to her role on the campaign, she served as Chief Public Affairs Officer for MoveOn.org and an NBC and MSNBC Political Analyst. Jean-Pierre served as Regional Political Director for the White House Office of Political Affairs during the Obama-Biden administration and as Deputy Battleground States Director for President Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. She served as Southeast Regional Political Director for President Obama's 2008 campaign, Deputy Campaign Manager for Martin O'Malley for President, Campaign Manager for the ACLU's Reproductive Freedom Initiative, and Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Legislative and Budget Affairs for two members in the New York City Council

Previously, Karine worked at the Center for Community and Corporate Ethics, pushing major companies to change their business practices, and is the author of her memoir titled Moving Forward: A Story of Hope, Hard Work, and the Promise of America. Born in Martinique and raised in New York, Jean-Pierre is a graduate of Columbia University.



@Maxine Waters



@repmaxinewatersl

LIONESSE OF JUSTICE AWARD

CONGRESSWOMAN MAXINE WATERS

Congresswoman Maxine Waters is considered by many to be one of the most powerful women in American politics today. She has gained a reputation as a fearless and outspoken advocate for women, children, people of color and the poor.

Elected in November 2024 to her eighteenth term in the U.S. House of Representatives with more than 75 percent of the vote in the 43rd Congressional District of California, Congresswoman Waters represents a large part of South Los Angeles including the communities of Watts and the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County comprised of Lennox, West Athens, Willowbrook, and El Camino Village. The 43rd District also includes the diverse cities of Gardena, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lawndale, Compton and Torrance.

Congresswoman Waters made history as the first woman and first African American Chair of the House Financial Services Committee. She is the Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease. She is also a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and member and past chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Prior to her election to the House of Representatives in 1990, she spent 14 years in the California State Assembly, where she rose to the powerful position of Democratic Caucus Chair. She was responsible for some of the boldest legislation California has ever seen. She is a co-founder of Black Women's Forum, a nonprofit organization of over 1,200 African American women in the Los Angeles area. In the mid-80s, she also founded Project Build, working with young people in Los Angeles housing developments on job training and placement.

As she confronts the issues such as poverty, economic development, equal justice under the law and other issues of concern to people of color, women, children, and poor people, Rep. Waters enjoys a broad cross section of support from diverse communities across the nation.

Throughout her career, Congresswoman Waters has been an advocate for international peace, justice, and human rights. Expanding access to health care services is another of Congresswoman Waters' priorities. She spearheaded the development of the Minority AIDS Initiative in 1998 to address the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS among African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities. She is also the author of legislation to expand health services for patients with diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

Long active in the women's movement, Rep. Waters has given encouragement and financial support to women seeking public office. Many young people, including those in the hip-hop music community, praise her for her support and understanding of young people and their efforts at self-expression. One testament to her work is the Maxine Waters Employment Preparation Center, a multimillion dollar campus providing education and employment opportunities to residents of the Watts area.

When twice impeached former President Donald Trump was elected, Congresswoman Waters became the leader of the resistance. Many young people learned what most of us knew about her for over the past 40 years - that Maxine Waters will always speak truth to power, will always stand up and fight for what is right, for justice and equality! As a result, she has earned the title of "Auntie Maxine."



lauracoates.com



@Laura Coates



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HOST FIRESIDE CHAT

LAURA COATES

CNN Chief Legal Analyst & Anchor

Laura Coates is CNN's chief legal analyst and anchor of Laura Coates Live, airing weeknights at 11pm ET. The show will showcase the day's most interesting stories with smart, provocative, and thoughtful analysis, while leveraging Coates' significant experience as a prosecutor and relentless pursuit of the facts. At the intersection between law, politics and pop culture, the high energy show will take the news viewers have already heard and help them to truly understand it.

Emmy nominated Coates joined CNN in 2016 and plays a central role in the network's extensive legal programming, as well as having a prominent role in major news moments, including CNN's coverage of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, the January 6th hearings and the two impeachment hearings of President Donald Trump, hosting a special entitled White House in Crisis: The Impeachment Inquiry. She routinely covers high-profile criminal prosecutions, including the trial of Alex Murdaugh and former police officer Derek Chauvin.

Coates is also the host of the award-winning daily "The Laura Coates Show" on SiriusXM's bipartisan P.O.T.U.S. channel where she interviews world leaders and politicians from both sides of the aisle and engages the audience with a lively discussion on the intersection of politics and the law.

Coates has authored two books, *You Have the Right: A Constitutional Guide to Policing the Police* and New York Times bestseller *Just Pursuit: A Black Prosecutor's Fight For Fairness*.

A native of Saint Paul, Minnesota, Coates graduated from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs and the University of Minnesota Law School, where she serves on the Board of Advisors, before beginning her legal career in private practice. She practiced law in Minnesota and New York handling cases ranging from intellectual property litigation and First Amendment issues to defamation and media law. Called to public service, she transitioned from private practice to the United States Department of Justice, thriving as a federal prosecutor. She served as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice during the Bush and Obama administrations, specializing in the enforcement of voting rights throughout the country. She also served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, prosecuting a myriad of violent felony offenses including drug trafficking, armed offenses, domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault.

She and her husband live in Washington, DC with their two young children. You can find her on social media at @thelauracoates.



@iamjslocumb



@iamjonathanslocumb

EVENT HOST

JONATHAN SLOCUMB

Jonathan Slocumb is a veteran comedian/actor who is globally known for being a “Clean Comedian” and admired for his unique fashion style.

The proud Atlanta, Georgia native is also a sought after MC/Host of corporate and special events across the country and overseas. He still holds the record for being the longest Main Stage host of ESSENCE Festival for 7 years in a row.

He has been featured in EBONY, on CNN, BET, COMEDY CENTRAL, HLN, TVONE, Upscale Magazine, & The Tom Joyner Morning Show

He is also known for his roles on “The Steve Harvey Show”, Tyler Perry’s “Meet the Brown’s” (movie), and recently multiple episodes on THE WONDER YEARS as well as numerous other films, TV shows and stage plays.



ENTERTAINMENT

DJ TRAUMA

DJ Trauma (born Tayari McIntosh, New York City) has been a DJ and Producer for the past 20+ years and has been called up to perform for some of the world's biggest celebrities like Dave Chappelle, Jay-Z & Beyonce, Serena Williams, Oprah and more. He has rocked the stages in 40+ countries and does between 100-150 gigs a year. DJ Trauma's mission is to connect people globally through their love of music, and his passion is to use music as a means to travel and see the world. Therefore, the question always is #whereintheworldisdjtrauma.

Currently DJ Trauma is the official tour DJ for legendary comedian Dave Chappelle. Prior to that, he toured with artists such as Ciara, Monica, Keri Hilson, Sean Garrett, and others. In addition, DJ Trauma often collaborates with brands, and has been part of campaigns and events by Nissan, McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Coors Light, and Nike.

After moving from the birthplace of hip-hop (NYC) to Atlanta to attend Clark Atlanta University, DJ Trauma got his start doing local clubs and college parties. Then he became a DJ on V-103FM in Atlanta, the #1 urban radio station in the country and also signed with Priority Records, releasing his first single in 2017 - "Take Me High" ft. The Dan. From there, the celebrities came calling. He was the headline DJ for Dwayne Wades 40th Birthday Party, Nipsey Hussle's Grammy Nomination Party, Jay-Z and Beyonce's Baby Shower, Serena Williams' Wedding, LeBron James' Beats By Dre NBA All Star Party, Tiffany Haddish's Tour, and many more.

When not on the road, DJ Trauma is at home in Los Angeles, working on mixes, doing live sets on his Twitch channel, and guest appearing on radio stations and podcasts. He also has an annual flagship event called The Trauma Unit Retreat, which takes place every June at the RoMarley Beach House in Puerto Morelos, Mexico. Going on its third year, over 500 music lovers and party goers gather for an always sold-out 4-day retreat centered around good music and good vibes. Not only does it feature DJ Trauma's unique blend of hip hop, R&B, dance, reggae, and Top 40 (along with guest sets from special artists & DJ's) but the retreat also comes with his guarantee that lifetime memories will be made, lifelong friendships will be formed, and everyone will be dancing all night long. Previous retreat highlights include special guests and performers such as Rocsi Diaz, Brian Michael Cox, Anthony David, DJ Mars and Supreme LaRock.

DJ Trauma is inspired by the music of Stevie Wonder, Jay-Z, and A Tribe Called Quest and DJs such as Kid Capri, Kool DJ Red Alert, Mr. Magic, and works day and night to continue to revolutionize hip hop music for the next generation, and to ignite the scene wherever he goes. From the city that never sleeps, to the DJ that never settles – DJ Trauma is always down for the next adventure and has his bags packed, his passport handy, and his set list ready to go.

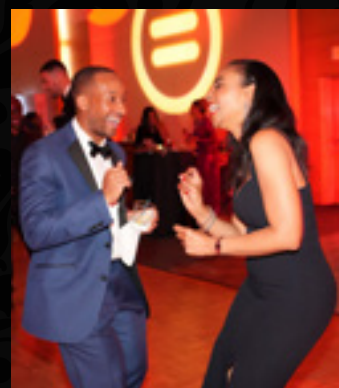
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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

As an important and long standing manifestation of its mission, together the Greater Washington Urban League (GWUL) and its young professionals' auxiliary, Thursday Network (TN) are committed to awarding scholarships to high school seniors and college students. In conjunction with numerous concerned corporate sponsors, GWUL has facilitated the distribution of more than \$2 million in scholarships to more than 300 young adults.

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Renee Jones Usher/Paddle Raise	Jeremy Brooks Stage Assistance Male
Shari Brooks Usher/Paddle Raise	LaShan Wood Coat Check
Talia McKenzie Usher/Paddle Raise	Jalia Inman Coat Check
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We would like to congratulate this year's honorees: Will Dawkins, General Manager of the Washington Wizards and Laura Coates, CNN Chief Legal Analyst & Anchor. We honor these individuals for their personal strength and resilience, while continuing to help others realize that every person and family can thrive.

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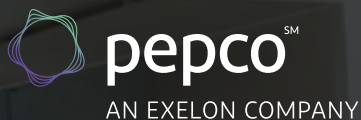
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CONGRATULATIONS

On behalf of the entire George Washington University community, President Ellen M. Granberg congratulates each of the remarkable Courage Under Fire honorees of the Greater Washington Urban League's 2025 Whitney M. Young Jr. Gala.

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