

2024

THE 15TH ANNUAL



GALA

Saturday, March 23, 2024 | 7pm

Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia

4355 Ashford Dunwoody Rd. | Atlanta, GA 30346

Pathways
TO EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

and

Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr.
LEGACY AWARD


CLARK ATLANTA
UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI
association, inc.
CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

The Spirit Of Greatness

Dr. James P. Brawley
President Emeritus, Clark College

Greatness is a Clark College (now Clark Atlanta University) tradition not by proclamation, but by commitment and exemplification, attested by the records of good works of many dedicated people over a period of more than a century.

An institution, impelled by the spirit of greatness, is not only the lengthened shadows of a few great men and women, but also, the constantly rekindled and extended spirit of many personalities; it is made great through their dedication, their courage, their devotion to duty, their hard work, their sense of mission, their love of young people, and their commitment to the cause of education. The spirit of greatness here is a legacy to all who would administer, to all who would teach and counsel, and to all who would learn. When the spirit of greatness dies or wanes on a college or university campus, the institution dies.

The spirit of greatness of an institution is expressed in its concepts of human potentials, human capacity, and human possibilities; in the purpose and mission of life; in the nature and purpose of education; and the direction and aid given in the achievement of the highest good for one's self and society. The spirit of greatness for the individual is a spirit of ever becoming; for the institution is a spirit of being the best.

The spirit of greatness as a "Clark Atlanta University" tradition may be expressed in terms of ideals and intrinsic values for which the college has stood historically, and in terms of qualities exemplified in its students and graduates. In summary, some of these ideals, values, and qualities are:

Excellence; high standards in the work of the college, and excellence of work and character of the students.

Achievement; the best possible achievement in residence at the college and after college in the world of work.

Devotion; to work, to duty, to the college, and to worthy causes.

Good Sportmanship; fair play, justice, and honesty; in the game, in the stands, and in the game of life.

Invincibility; the will never to falter, never to give up, never to fail; the will to endure to the end; the will to be victorious playing the game courageously from the beginning to the end, in athletic games and in the game of life.

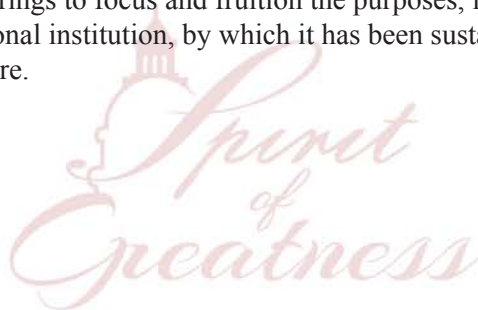
Loyalty; to Alma Mater and to the highest and best for which she stands.

Idealism; love of beauty – the beautiful, the good, the true; as stated in the text of the university, the true, the honest, the just, the pure, the lovely, the things of good report.

Compassion; expressed in sharing and service.

Truth; finding that true education is a search for truth, a search for knowledge and wisdom; a search for fulfillment; a search for the good life

This tradition, "the spirit of greatness," brings to focus and fruition the purposes, ideals, and goals inherent in "Clark Atlanta University" as an educational institution, by which it has been sustained in the past, and upon which its life depends now, and will depend in the future.





The History

Clark Atlanta University is a comprehensive, private, urban, coeducational institution of higher education with a predominantly African-American heritage. It offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees as well as certificate programs to students of diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It was formed by the consolidation of Atlanta University (1865), the nation's first African-American graduate school, and Clark College (1869), the nation's first private, Liberal Arts College for African Americans.



Atlanta University was founded in 1865 by the American Missionary Association, with later assistance from the Freedman's Bureau. By the late 1870s, Atlanta University had begun granting bachelor's degrees and supplying black teachers and librarians to the public schools throughout the South. In 1929-1930, it began offering graduate education exclusively in various liberal arts areas, and in the social and natural sciences. The institution gradually added professional programs in social work, library science, and business administration. At this same time, Atlanta University affiliated with Morehouse and Spelman colleges in a university plan known as the Atlanta University System. The campus was moved to its present site, and the modern organization of the Atlanta University Center emerged, with Clark College, Morris Brown College, and the Interdenominational Theological Center later joining the affiliation.

The story of the Atlanta University over the next twenty years includes many significant developments. The Schools of Library Science, Education, and Business Administration were established in 1941, 1944 and 1946 respectively. The Atlanta School of Social Work, long associated with the University, gave up its charter in 1947 to become an integral part of the University. The influence of Atlanta University has long since been extended through professional journals such as *Phylon* and organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Both *Phylon* and the NAACP benefitted from the visionary leadership of founder W.E.B. Du Bois, who served Atlanta University as an administrator and a member of its faculty.



In 1957, the controlling boards of the six institutions (Atlanta University; Clark, Morehouse, Morris Brown and Spelman colleges; and Gammon Theological Seminary) ratified new Articles of Affiliation. Unlike the old Articles of 1929, the new contract created the Atlanta University Center.

Clark College was founded as Clark University in 1869 by the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (which later became the United Methodist Church). The University was named for Bishop Davis W. Clark, who was the first president of the Freedmen's Aid Society and became bishop in 1864. A sparsely furnished room in Clark Chapel, a Methodist Episcopal Church in Atlanta's Summerhill

section, housed the first Clark College class. In 1871, the school relocated to a new site on the newly purchased Whitehall and McDaniel Street property. In 1877, the School was chartered as Clark University.

Spirit of Greatness

2024 Spirit Of Greatness



The History

An early benefactor, Bishop Gilbert Haven, visualized Clark as the “University” of all the Methodist schools founded for the education of freedmen. Strategically located in the gateway to the South, Clark was founded to “give tone” to all of the other educational institutions of the Methodist Episcopal Church providing education for Negro youth. After the school changed locations several times, Bishop Haven, who succeeded Bishop Clark, was instrumental in acquiring 450 acres in South Atlanta, where in 1880 the school conferred its first degree. Clark relocated in 1883 and established a department, named for Dr. Elijah H. Gammon. Known as Gammon School of Theology, it became an independent theological seminary in 1888 and is now part of the Interdenominational Theological Center.



During the 1930s, it was decided that, for purposes of economy and efficiency, Clark would join the Atlanta University Complex. While students on the South Atlanta campus fretted over final examinations in the winter of 1939, work was begun across town on an entirely new physical plant adjoining Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College. During the 1980s some of the advantages of proximity, which half a century earlier had seemed promising, again became evident. Clark College and Atlanta University through consolidation preserved the best of the past and present and “Charted a Bold New Future.” Clark Atlanta University was established on July 1, 1988.



In November 1987, after more than a year of discussion, the Boards of Trustees of Atlanta University and Clark College authorized an exploration of the potential advantages of closer working arrangements between the two institutions, including their consolidation into one university. In April 1988, the joint committee delivered its report, *Charting A Bold New Future: Proposed Combination of Clark College and Atlanta University*, to both boards for ratification. The report recommended that the two schools be consolidated into a single institution. On June 24, 1988, the Boards of both Clark College and Atlanta University made the historic decision to consolidate the two institutions, creating Clark Atlanta University. The new and historic University inherits the rich traditions of two independent institutions, connected over 150 years by a common heritage and commitment; by personal, corporate, and consortia relationships; and by location.

Clark Atlanta University has had a distinguished line of presidents since its establishment in 1988. Thomas W. Cole Jr., Ph.D., served as the first president from 1988 through 2002. He had served concurrently as the president of both Atlanta University and Clark College prior to consolidation. Walter D. Broadnax, Ph.D., served as the University’s second president from August 1, 2002, through July 31, 2007. Carlton E. Brown, Ed.D. served as the third president of Clark Atlanta University from August 1, 2008, through June 30, 2015. Ronald A. Johnson, Ph.D., served as the fourth president of Clark Atlanta University from July 1, 2015, through December 7, 2018. Mrs. Lucille H. Mauge served as the interim president from December 8, 2018, through February 4, 2020. George T. French Jr., Ph.D., serves as the fifth president of Clark Atlanta University effective September 2, 2019.



Pathways To Excellence Awardees Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Legacy Award Recipients

2024 Spirit Of Greatness

2008

Dr. Alfred D. Wyatt, Sr., CC 1950; AU 1986
Dr. Winfred Harris, CC 1955; AU 1957
Dr. Pernessa C. Seele, CC 1976; AU 1978
Dallas Austin

2010

Dr. Marva Nettles Collins, CC 1957
Congressman Hank Johnson, CC 1976
Jerri DeVard, AU 1983
Kenny Leon, CC 1979

2011

Ambassador Andrew Young, Honorary Degree
Dr. Isabella Taylor Jenkins, CC 1953
Monty Ross, CC 1980
Chaka Zulu, CAU

2012

Carl Ware, CC 1965
James Patterson, CC 1957
Dr. Reatha Clark King, CC 1958
Monica Pearson, Honorary Degree

2013

Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr., President Emeritus
Dr. James K. Bennett, CC 1976
Tharon L. Johnson, CAU 2002
Dr. Helene D. Gayles
Dr. Mary Frances Early, CC 1957

2014

Dr. Joseph E. Lowery
Dr. Eleanor Rogers Gittens, CU 1941*
Lyle E. Gittens, CC 1942*
Jaynae Ingram, CAU 2000
C. T. Martin, AU 1976
Dr. Pearlle Craft Dove, CU 1941; AU 1943
Evelyn Gibson Lowery, CC 1946
(posthumously)

2015

Dr. Juan H. McGruder, CAU 1990; 1992
Nellie Wolfe Gaylord, CC 1943; AU 1950*
(posthumously)
The Honorable Meca L. Walker, CAU 1993
Dr. Melvin R. Webb, AU 1968
The Honorable Clarence Cooper, CC 1964

2016

Jesse S. "Coach Mac" McClardy, CC 1957 (posthumously)
Tina Dunkley, AU 1980
Terry Lee, CC 1972*
Bomani Jones, CAU 2001

2017

The Honorable Brenda Hill Cole, AU 1967
Al B. Reid, CC 1983*
Anthony W. White, CAU 1999
Steve Ewing
Kenya Barris, CAU 1996
Horace Henry, CC 1971

2018

Leona Barr-Davenport, CAU 2001
Amanda M. Davis, CC 1978
(posthumously)
Dr. Craig Oliver, CAU 1997
Brenda J. Tolliver, CC 1972; AU 1973
Billye Suber Aaron, AU 1960*
Raymond Watson, AU 1974

2019

Bryan-Michael Cox, CAU
Juanita M. Eber, CC 1952
Om P. Puri, Ph.D.
Carl Seldon, CC 1963
Maurice Slaughter, AU 1985
Brenda W. Walker, CC 1975

2020

Valeisha Butterfield Jones, CAU Alumna
Stacey Lee Spratt, CAU and AU Alumna
The Honorable Marvin Arrington, Sr., Clark College Alumnus
Jacque Reid, CAU Alumnus

Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Legacy Awardee, CAU Trustee
Emeritus, Dr. Elridge W. McMillan, Clark College

2022

Deisha Barnett, CAU 2000
Pinky Cole, CAU 2009
Melanie I. Campbell, CC 1983

Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Legacy Awardee,
Thomas W. Dortch, Jr., AU 1986

2023

Sherry Martin, CAU 1998
Janis Parker Pressley, CC 1985
Helen Smith Price, AU 1981

Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Legacy Awardee,
Raymond "Tweet" Williams, CC 1949

*Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Legacy Award

2024 Spirit of Greatness Programme

Opening Selection

Lift Every Voice and Sing
Clark Atlanta University Philharmonic Society

Welcome

Shekinah Burden, Class of 2024
Miss Clark Atlanta University

Introduction of Mistress of Ceremonies

Anthony Mitchell, Class of 2024
Mister Clark Atlanta University

Mistress of Ceremonies

Joyce Littel – V103
Radio Personality

Greetings

Shaunte Norris, CAU '96
National President, Clark Atlanta University Alumni Association, Inc.

Jeffrey Gilbert
Chief Security Officer, The Coca-Cola Company

George T. French, Jr., Ph.D.
President, Clark Atlanta University

Invocation

Lee May, CAU '98
Senior Pastor, Transforming Faith Church

Dinner Entertainment

Special Performance by Carl Thomas

Spirit of Greatness

2024 Spirit of Greatness Programme

The Appeal

Richard L. Lucas, Ph.D.

Vice President, Institutional Advancement

Pathways To Excellence Awards Presentation

Dhanfu E. Elston, Ph.D., CAU '96

SSenior Vice President for Strategy & Chief of Staff, Complete College America

Nikki T. Harland, CAU 2000

Chief Operating Officer, Paradies Lagardere

C. Lamont Smith, CC '78

Founder, All Pro Sports & Entertainment, Inc.

Mass Media Arts Icon Presentation

Bryan Barber, CAU '96

Motion Picture Filmmaker

Dallas Martin, CAU 2008

Founder, Power Circle Entertainment

Dr. Thomas W. Cole Jr. Legacy Award Presentation

Getchel Caldwell 'AU79

Founding Director, NCBCP Thomas W. Dortch, Jr. Institute

Closing Remarks

President Norris

National President, Clark Atlanta University Alumni Association, Inc.

The Alma Maters

Clark Atlanta University Philharmonic Society

Atlanta University - Clark College - Clark Atlanta University

After Glow

La Grotta Room

March 19, 2024

Dear Spirit of Greatness donors and committee,

On behalf of Clark Atlanta University and the Board of Trustees, thank you for your tremendous efforts in supporting our 15th annual Spirit of Greatness Gala. As a result of your endeavors, we have raised more than \$65,000 in ticket sales for this signature event. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to make this year's event an immense success.

Your dedication to supporting the Spirit of Greatness event will help Clark Atlanta University continue its pursuit of providing quality education and resources to our young scholars. Additionally, you've helped us recognize and honor CAU alumni and outstanding individuals who work continually to positively impact our local communities.



As we come together to celebrate another year of the excellence that is Clark Atlanta University, I want to remind each of you to continue to shine CAU's beacon of hope, determination, distinction, and greatness today and forever.

Again, I appreciate your collective efforts. Our success is a direct result of your time, talents, and commitments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory B. Morrison'.

Gregory B. Morrison
Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer,
Cox Enterprises, Inc.
Chairman of The Clark Atlanta University Board of Trustees



Legend: Atlanta University - AU, Clark College - CC,

Clark Atlanta University - CAU

March 23, 2024

Greetings Clark Atlanta University Family, Friends, and Supporters,

I am deeply honored and delighted to welcome you to the 15th Annual Spirit of Greatness Gala. The Clark Atlanta University National Alumni Association extends its unwavering support and commitment to the success of this annual fundraising event year after year, and for that, I am eternally grateful. Your commitment to our alma mater is a testament to your dedication in advancing Clark Atlanta University's (CAU) fundraising endeavors. Additionally, I would like to extend my thanks to all individuals outside of the alumni association who have contributed to the triumph of this fundraising gala. Your time, talent, and contributions will greatly benefit our scholars.



The Spirit of Greatness Gala provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our esteemed alumni and notable individuals who embody CAU's mission by making a positive impact in their communities through philanthropy, support, mentoring, and active participation.

This year, we continue to honor our recipients by presenting the coveted Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Legacy Award, named in honor of the first president and president emeritus of Clark Atlanta University. The 2024 recipient of the Thomas W. Cole, Jr. Legacy Award is Getchel L. Caldwell, II, AU 1979, former senior vice president of Institutional Advancement and University Relations at Atlanta University and CAU.

The 2024 Pathways to Excellence Awards, created to recognize those outstanding alumni who are trailblazing in their respective fields, made a difference in their communities, and positively impacted our beloved Clark Atlanta University. Our 2024 Pathways to Excellence Award recipients are: Fannie Bakon, CC 1958; Nikki Harland, CAU-Grad 1996, Chief Operating Officer, Paradies Lagardere; Dhanfu Elson, CAU 1996 and 2003, Chief of Staff and Sr. VP of Strategy, Complete College America; C. Lamont Smith, CC 1978, Founder, All-Pro Sports & Entertainment/ Sports Agent; and Charmaine Ward-Millner, CC 1982, VP of Marketing, Communications and Community Relations, Kaiser Permanente. This year, we will also present special recognition awards to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the field of mass media.

Honorees represent Atlanta University, Clark College, and Clark Atlanta University. They are trailblazers in their respective fields, and their contributions have shaped and informed the course of history. Honoring their excellence is a platform for current students to witness the spirit and excellence that a Clark Atlanta University education offers. The convergence of CAU's past, present, and future is truly extraordinary.

On behalf of the CAU students, faculty, and staff, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for joining us on this special evening and for your investment in the future of the scholars we proudly serve.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George T. French, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George T. French, Jr., Ph.D.
President

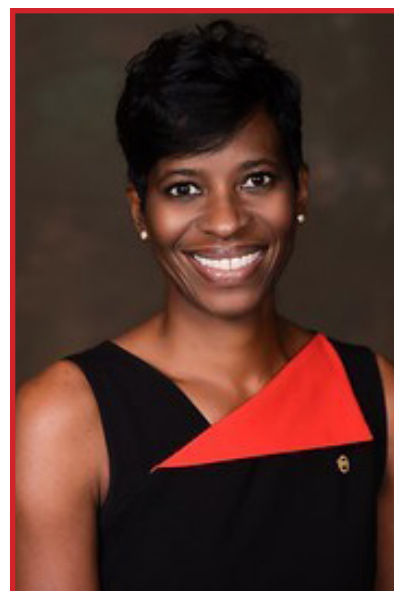


Greetings Alumni and Friends of Clark Atlanta University:

Thank you for attending the 15th annual Clark Atlanta University Alumni Association Spirit of Greatness Gala!

We assemble this evening to acknowledge the accomplishments and significant contributions of alumni, and we especially thank the Clark Atlanta University Alumni Association for their continued passion and support of “One Exceptional University.” The CAUAA and Clark Atlanta University are united in vision and focus to enhance the student experience, raise funds to support successful student matriculation, and to advance the university’s mission.

Clark Atlanta University has a rich history and a strong legacy of leadership and is committed to providing a transformative learning experience that produces graduates who positively impact their communities, the nation and the world. With more than 30,000 powerful, innovative, and influential alumni under the leadership of our fifth president, Dr. George T. French, Jr., we continue to raise the profile and expand the university’s footprint. It is within the spirit of greatness that we continue to amplify our legacy.



This evening we are proud to celebrate and honor the 2024 Pathways to Excellence honorees: Nikki Harland, CAU 1996, Chief Operating Officer Paradies Lagardere; Dhanfu Elston, CAU 1996, 2003, Senior Vice President for Strategy and Chief of Staff Complete College America; C. Lamont Smith, CC 1978, Sports Agent and Founder All Pro Sports and Entertainment, and the 2024 Dr. Thomas W. Cole, Jr., Legacy Award recipient; Getchel Caldwell, AU 1979, Founding Director of the NCBCP Thomas W. Dortch, Jr. Institute. This year we also spotlight two Mass Media icons: Dallas Martin, CAU 2008, Owner of Power Circle Entertainment and Bryan Barber, CAU 1996, Filmmaker.

Each honoree elucidates the Clark Atlanta University standard and embodies the spirit of greatness. They serve as curated examples of service, dedication, and excellence for our current students, for our alumni, and the broader community forever changed by the impact of their leadership.

To my fellow alumni, as stakeholders, it is our passion for the university and our continued support that will allow us together to make a difference.

Finally, to our corporate partners, thank you for helping to make this year’s gala a tremendous success. We truly appreciate your sponsorship and your willingness to stand with us financially in support of the students we serve. Your undaunted connectivity and engagement will help further propel our momentum and soaring spirit of greatness.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lorri L. Saddler". The script is fluid and cursive.

Lorri L. Saddler, Ed.D., CAU 1992, 2020
Vice President, Alumni Relations and Engagement



Dear Clark Atlanta Family and Friends,

On behalf of the Clark Atlanta University Alumni Association, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 15th annual Spirit of Greatness Gala. We are honored to have you join us for this evening of celebration and recognition of individuals who have achieved greatness in their respective fields as we raise funds for our students. We are also excited to help Clark Atlanta University continue to thrive.

As we gather together on this momentous occasion, we reflect on the power of greatness and the impact it has on our society. The Spirit of Greatness Gala is a tribute to those who have dedicated their lives to achieving excellence and have become an inspiration to us all through their culture for service and time, talent, and treasure dedicated to Clark Atlanta University. Congratulations to C. Lamont Smith, Nikki Harland, Dhanfu Elston, Getchel Caldwell, and our Mass Media Arts Icon Award recipients Bryan Barber and Dallas Martin.

Through this event, we aim to celebrate the spirit of greatness and inspire future generations to aspire toward achieving their full potential. We believe that by recognizing and celebrating the achievements of these remarkable individuals, we can encourage others to strive for excellence in their own lives and in turn, contribute to the betterment of our society.

Tonight, we come together to honor the indomitable human spirit that drives individuals to go above and beyond in their pursuits. We celebrate those who have made a significant impact on our world through their work, creativity, and perseverance. We sow seeds to ensure that our legacy will continue.

Once again, we are delighted to have you with us tonight, and we hope that you will enjoy the evening's festivities as we come together to honor the Spirit of Greatness.

All the best,

Shaunte' Norris
President
Clark Atlanta University National Alumni Association, Inc.



2024 Spirit Of Greatness



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Legend: AU-Atlanta University; CC-Clark College; CAU-Clark Atlanta University; (Joined the BOT)

2024 Spirit Of Greatness



Dhanfu E. Elston, Ph.D.

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE
HONOREE



Dhanfu E. Elston, Ph. D

Senior Vice President for Strategy & Chief of Staff
Complete College America

As an undergraduate student leader, Dhanfu E. Elston (pronounced: dah-NEE-foo), from Compton, California, became entrenched in CAU's motto of "Culture for Service." During those formative years, he served as Chairperson of the Orientation Guide Corps, Vice President of the Student Government Association, President of the Pan Hellenic Council, President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Alpha Phi Chapter, and President of the Pre-Alumni Council. Elston's heightened level of activity led to being hired in CAU's Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. In addition to advancing high quality CAU student engagement, he led New Student Orientation and coined the current "CAU Experience" brand for new students and parents. Along with a community of engaged young Alumni, Elston worked to create CAU Reunion, an endowed university scholarship that is supported by a series of annual events and contributors. The CAU Reunion group worked with the CAU Alumni Association and Athletic Department to increase Homecoming attendance and a tailgating experience that has dramatically increased alumni participation.

Elston has served a 28-year career in postsecondary education that spans a range of executive leadership, federal and state policy, not-for-profit operations, and academic officer positions. He is Complete College America's Senior Vice President for Strategy and Chief of Staff, where he utilizes his national policy and campus expertise for practical application, implementation, and scaling of high impact strategies across a 51-member Alliance network of states and institutional consortia throughout the United States. He provides oversight of national external partnerships and has led CCA's guided pathways initiatives, Purpose First career alignment strategy, 15 To Finish national campaign, and standards to close equity and institutional performance gaps. Elston has also coordinated relationships with Governors' Offices, higher education state-wide systems, and national partners in their college completion efforts. He launched a national initiative with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund to amplify completion efforts at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and minority-serving institutions. Over his higher education career in academic and student affairs, Elston has created and implemented comprehensive success and retention programs that have garnered national attention. He has been recognized as a champion of college completion policy initiatives at institutions that educate highly diverse and minoritized student populations.

Prior to his current role with CCA, Dr. Elston held the position of Executive Director of Student Success and Transition at Purdue University Calumet (now Purdue Northwest). Under Elston's leadership, Purdue Calumet experienced exponential gains in first-year retention, graduation rates, and enrolled credit hours. As the Faculty Assistant Director for Undergraduate Studies, he also provided leadership to Georgia State University, which is nationally recognized as a model for collegiate academic success. Earlier in his career, Elston held positions in student affairs and enrollment management at Georgia State and Clark Atlanta University, where he led student activities and leadership development functional areas.

In addition to having authored numerous research articles and publications in the areas of college completion, intercultural relations, leadership development, and HBCUs, Dr. Elston was a featured author in the nationally recognized book, "Beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act: Inclusive Policy and Practice for Higher Education." He has been awarded the Georgia State University Martin Luther King, Jr. Torch of Peace Award and EAB's inaugural Data-Driven Impact Award for utilization of student success technology. A sought-after speaker, Elston has received notable media attention outlets, including Forbes, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Ed, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, and National Public Radio. He is a frequent presenter and contributor to the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Elston earned a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies from Georgia State University. He earned both an M.A. in Educational Leadership and B.S. in Biology from Clark Atlanta University.

Elston is a member of and has held leadership roles in numerous professional associations, including The Howard University Center for HBCU Research, Leadership, & Policy (Advisory Council Member), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Pathways Collaborative (Advisory Committee), Credentials As You Go (Advisory Committee), Credential Engine (Advisory Committee), Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (Advisory Committee), NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (past Chairperson of the African American Knowledge Community), Southern Center for Broadening Participation in STEM (Board Member), Association of Fraternal & Leadership Values (Board Member), NACADA: The Global Advising Community, LeaderShape, Inc., American Educational Research Association, Golden Key International Honour Society, and Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society. He is an active Life Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.



Nikki T. Harland

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE
HONOREE



Nikki T. Harland

Chief Operating Officer
Paradies Lagardere

As the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Paradies Lagardere, Nikki oversees over \$1.3B in sales that contributes to the organization's continued success and standing in the Travel Retail industry. She has leadership responsibility for Retail Operations, Dining, Merchandising, Business Systems and Transformation and Human Resources. Nikki is also a founding member of the organization's Diversity & Inclusion Council.

With over twenty-five years of business experience, Harland has contributed to various change initiatives in her career that have propelled turnarounds and growth efforts within organizations. Her work experience includes responsibility in the dining, retail, entertainment, and professional sports industries. Prior to her role with Paradies Lagardere, Nikki was the Senior Director of Field Human Resources for Gap, Inc.'s Old Navy Stores. In this role, she provided people leadership for the Brand's 1,000+ stores and 45,000 employees in North America. Additional leadership experiences also included The Atlanta Braves, Atlanta Hawks, Turner Broadcasting System, Inc and Babies "R" Us/Toys "R" Us.

Nikki is a counted-on business leader that has consistently expanded her leadership scope over time. Most recently, she successfully acted as the Executive Sponsor of Paradies Lagardere's acquisition and integration of Hojeij Branded Foods (HBF) and Vino Volo. The successful integration supported the organization's material growth in the Travel Retail Dining space. She currently serves as the Executive Sponsor of the company's recent acquisition of Tastes on The Fly.

A native of Atlanta, GA, she attended Benjamin E. Mays High School, received her BA in Psychology from Spelman College and holds an MBA in Marketing from Clark Atlanta University. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Jack and Jill of America, Inc., the International Women's Forum (IWF) and the Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC.) She is a former member of the EVO Payments Board of Directors. Nikki currently serves on the Board for the National Black Arts Festival, is a Board Trustee for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and the Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC.)

She is a member of Leadership Atlanta's Class of 2023 and has been recognized consistently as one of Atlanta's Top 100 Women of Influence.

Nikki and her husband, Joseph, reside in Atlanta, Georgia with their 17-year-old son.





C. Lamont Smith

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE
HONOREE



C. Lamont Smith

Charles Lamont Smith (C. Lamont Smith) is an attorney, sports agent, and entrepreneur who currently resides in Denver Colorado. He attended Langston University for two years before transferring to Clark College (now Clark Atlanta University). Lamont graduated Magna Cum Laude from Clark in 1978 with a degree in mass communications. After working in radio and television for three years, he decided to go back to school and pursue his law degree at Howard University.

While at Howard Law, he served as the student bar association vice president and received the American Jurisprudence Award for excellence in the study of contracts. After graduating from Howard, Lamont joined the Denver Law Firm of Gorsuch Kirgis . He spent two years with the Gorsuch firm before he was asked to join Faegre & Benson, where he would establish the firm's sports law practice. In 1987, C. Lamont founded All Pro Sports and Entertainment (APSE), the oldest and most successful minority owned sports agency in the world.

Lamont has been described by The New York Times as one of the most powerful agents in the country. USA today has called him a pioneer and Sports Illustrated has selected him twice as one the most influential minorities in sports. In 1991, he became the first and only sports agent to grace the cover of Black Enterprise Magazine. He has received numerous awards and special recognition including inclusion in the trail blazers compilation that is housed in the Smithsonian History Museum. He has represented five Hall of Fame athletes (Barry Sanders, Jerome Bettis, Willie Roaf, Steve Atwater, and Joe Thomas), as well as dozens more in football, basketball and boxing. He recently launched his groundbreaking Hall of Famers podcast, HOFs the Podcast, where Lamont and his co-host sit down exclusively with Hall of Famers from the world of sports, delving into their remarkable journeys to greatness.





Bryan Barber

MASS MEDIA ARTS ICON
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Bryan Barber

Bryan Barber is a music video and motion picture filmmaker. He has directed many music videos for popular artists. Bryan Barber takes inspiration from many sources and says his upbringing has always helped form his vision. For Barber, writing and directing began as an outlet to have a voice.

Barber failed out of three colleges before finally deciding to study film at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. The challenge for him was taking his studies seriously. Eventually, a short film written and directed by Barber won him a trip to the Tel Aviv International Student Film Festival sponsored by the United Negro College Fund. From that experience, he knew he had a place as a filmmaker.

Barber directed his first music video, Skew It on the Bar-B in 1998 for Outkast. Barber soon became known for his original, left of center, narrative video scripts, and visual directing style.

Early on, Barber produced his videos through his own company, Bush Harbor Filmworks, Inc. He eventually joined a major production company where his success as a director took off working with stars like Beyonce, Justin Timberlake, Kelly Clarkson, Christina Aguilera, Mary J. Blige, Dr. Dre, Kanye West, Janet Jackson, and Wiz Khalifa. This led to him being a groundbreaker in the field and hailing several award-winning classic videos.

Barber has directed more than 200 music videos; 40 commercials; and wrote, directed, and produced various television and film projects.

Barber received a Grammy nomination for Best Music Video, Short Form for directing Outkast's "Hey Ya!". He is also the winner of three MTV awards; five BET awards; two Soul Train Michael Jackson Icon Awards; five MVPA awards; and two Much Music awards. His videos and artist collaborations have amassed over 100 million albums sold worldwide. Barber has also directed numerous commercials for clients such as Pepsi, Target, CoverGirl, Chevrolet, Verizon, Shoe Carnival, Sony, and The Sugar Bowl.

After a decade of pushing the genre, Barber was inspired to move into feature films with his debut of the HBO/Universal Studios produced Idlewild written, directed, and co-produced by Barber. A 1930s musical set in the fictional Georgia town of Idlewild (inspired by the Michigan resort town that served as a safe vacation haven for middle-class blacks in the pre-Civil Rights era). The film starred OutKast (whose members include André 3000 and Big Boi), Paula Patton, and Faizon Love. OutKast also produced Idlewild (album) an accompanying album.

After Idlewild, Barber had the opportunity to work on several television projects. Most notably, Barber directed episodes of the Nickelodeon sitcom, Instant Mom, starring Tia Mowry.

Barber is currently working on an adaptation of Gigantor after acquiring the rights.



Dallas Martin

MASS MEDIA ARTS ICON
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Dallas Martin

Dallas Martin knows a thing or two about hit records. From discovering Roddy Ricch to working with the likes of Meek Mill, Nipsey Hussle, Wale, and Rick Ross, it's safe to say he only works with the best of the best.

Hailing from Flint, Michigan, Martin became enthralled in music in his middle and high school years, listening to everything he could get his ears on. With a knack for identifying what would be a hit record, he began picking singles off projects that music labels would pick for their artists — the ones that would take over radio airwaves and clubs all around the world.

Developing a sheer confidence for his craft, Martin began educating himself on what people did behind-the-scenes as an A&R, learning and soaking up as much knowledge as possible via research online, books or music documentaries. While he listened to all genres of music, The Notorious B.I.G. and Puff were his biggest inspirations as he realized his own potential for a thriving career in music.

Upon graduating high school, Martin attended Clark Atlanta University with the intention of obtaining the best education that would serve his break into the music business. During his senior year, he finally landed an opportunity to intern for Shakir Steward (Senior VP of A&R at Def Jam signing the likes of Jeezy and Rick Ross). For two years straight, Steward trained Martin's ear and taught him all the tools necessary to become a successful A&R.

After being offered a consulting position in 2008 at Def Jam, Martin was hired as a full-time A&R by L.A. Reid in 2009. Very new to the position, Martin describes it as being "thrown into the fire, like being a rookie on the Lakers or the Yankees. You're surrounded by a bunch of veterans, people who've been doing it at a high level for years."

During that first year, Martin failed to deliver any albums and was fired as a result. Working on Juelz Santana's project at the time, there were internal politics he had no control over. Of course, an A&R's main job is to deliver albums — but Dallas would redeem himself ten fold.

In 2010, Martin returned to ATL after spending most of '09 in New York, utilizing all the relationships he'd made in music thus far. Staying connected to all the upcoming talent from producers to writers to artists, he eventually was noticed by Joie Manda who was restarting Warners Records' urban division. After a meeting with Joie and Todd Moscovitz, Martin was hired as an A&R at Warner in 2011.

Wasting no time, his first week on the job Martin reached out to Rick Ross to set up a meeting to discuss a partnership with Maybach Music. In February of that year, Martin finalized the MMG deal together with Manda, as the hit records came flowing in. Wale's "Lotus Flower Bomb," Meek Mill's "Amen," Rick Ross' "I'm A Boss," and all the MMG Self-Made albums followed suit.

With standout accomplishments such as Wale's "Ambition" going #1 and the MMG records being nominated for a Grammy, Martin was promoted to VP of A&R at Warner Records. Meek Mill's debut album *Dreams & Nightmares* ensued, hailing the "Dreams & Nightmares" intro track which became one of the most iconic songs of all-time.

In 2013, they closed down the urban division at Warner and moved all the staff to Atlantic Records, which was the sister company under Warner Music Group. Working on Wale's *The Gifted* landed another #1 record, "Bad," as Martin brought in K. Michelle who released her #1 R&B album with *Rebellious Soul*. That next year, he worked on Omarion's smash hit "Post To Be" which became a multi-platinum record.

Putting in relentless hours in the studio, Martin met Nipsey Hussle and convinced him to do a partnership with Atlantic Records. Martin states, "I always thought he was a fucking superstar since the day I met him. He was already a big artist in the underground, we both connected because we knew how big he could be globally."

Promoted to Senior VP of A&R at Atlantic Records, Martin released Nipsey's debut album *Victory Lap* (also nominated for a Grammy). He states, "Nipsey really put his heart into the project. He worked on that for three years because he knew it was going to be a classic."

In 2018, Martin's intern Keefa brought Roddy Ricch to the table. Immediately, Martin saw Roddy's talents as a songwriter and artist. "You could see the potential this kid had in the music world," he states. "He was that good." Simultaneously working on Meek's #1 album, *Championships*, they released Roddy's first mixtape *Feed The Streets 2* — home to viral singles "Die Young" and "Every Season," both of which went Platinum.

The following year, Nipsey's "Racks In The Middle" featuring Roddy Ricch took home the Grammy for Best Rap Performance — Martin's first Grammy win. He states, "It was amazing, being able to work with so many dope artists who have such an impact in the music world was definitely a highlight of my career."

Martin then A&Red Roddy's debut album *Please Excuse Me For Being Antisocial*, which also hit #1. Still, no one was prepared for the heights "The Box" would reach: holding the #1 spot for 17 weeks straight on the Hot 100 and nominated for three Grammys. Fast forward to 2020, Martin brings that same energy for his newest developing act, Symba from the Bay Area, describing him as "one of the most prolific writers I've worked with."

Now, Martin celebrates the launch of his own record label, Power Circle Entertainment. With years of experience and tools under his belt, Martin is excited to embark on this journey.



Getchell Caldwell

DR. THOMAS W. COLE, JR. LEGACY

HONOREE



Getchel Caldwell

Getchel L. Caldwell II, is a noted and accomplished senior management strategist with a successful fundraising portfolio that has been recognized nationally having raised over 300 million for non-profits, colleges and universities over a 30-year tenure.

Also recognized as a communication's, marketing, project management, program audit, public policy and governmental relations expert, he has worked with successful teams in stabilizing operations for growth. A noted thought leader in the national philanthropic space, Caldwell has served seven noted colleges and Universities as Vice President and Chief Fundraising Officer.

He has been on the senior management teams at liberal Arts, graduate, research, comprehensive, private, state related, and church affiliated colleges and universities and successfully lead all institutions in many instances through their first formal fundraising program and or campaign. (Johnson C. Smith University, Atlanta University, Clark Atlanta University (two terms), Morris Brown College, Tuskegee University, Fayetteville State University and the Fayetteville State University Foundation).

Highly motivated and recognized as a national resource particularly in the Historically, Black, College and University Community (HBCU's), Caldwell has help grow the "culture of Philanthropy" directed at this unique and productive group of institutions and has help shape a new generation of academic advancement leaders.

Additionally, Caldwell is equally known for his support of the arts, community development, urban revitalization, and program development directed at lifting up underserved communities.

Born in Columbus, Ohio, he attended elementary school in Charlotte, North Carolina, and matriculated at the junior high and high school levels in Ann Arbor Michigan. He holds the B.S. Degree from Florida A& M University (Honors) the Master of Public of Public Administration from Atlanta University (Honors). Caldwell also has certifications in Volunteer Management from the University of Colorado and Criminal Justice Planning from U.S. Department of Justice. He is also a member of both Leadership Charlotte, N.C (1984) and Leadership Atlanta, GA (1993). He is also a member of Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc.

In 2022 Mr. Caldwell joined the consulting team with the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation first as a consultant, then was appointed by the President and CEO (Melanie Campbell) as Founding Director of the NCBCP Thomas W. Dortch, Jr. Institute housed on the campus of Clark Atlanta University.



Mistress of Ceremonies



Joyce Litell



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