

Sun-Reporter



A NEWS JOURNAL DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE OF THE PEOPLE ✨ 77 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE ENTIRE BAY AREA

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BEST BUY IN THE WEST

TALENTED TWENTY-FIVE



Karen Clopton



Rashad Johnson



Dekai Dike



John Smith



Emily Rogers-Pharr



Meron Foster



Nichole Jordan



Attica Bowden



Majeid Crawford



La Ronda "Sug" Smith



Renard Monroe



Pia Harris



Dr. Rubin Sorrell



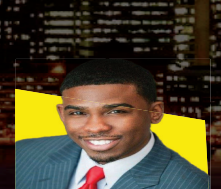
Tina Claybon-Carter



EJ Jones



David Tucker



Milan Balinton



Floyd Kenneth Rollins



Theresa Rutherford



Susan Brown



Michelle Peters



Iowayna Peña



Kenneth Little



Everett Brandon



Cedric Akbar



Kevon Looney

Sun Reporter



(ISSN 0890-0930)

Dedicated to the cause of the people-- that no good cause shall lack a champion and evil shall not thrive unopposed.

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Carlton B. Goodlett, PH.D., MD., Editor/Publisher 1945-1997

Amelia Ashley-Ward
Editor/Publisher

And The Beat Goes On

By Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward

I'm approaching my 45th anniversary as a journalist and publisher with the Sun-Reporter. Yes, I've spent my professional career making Black voices heard.

I was an early member of the unofficial Talented 25. I was college educated, loved my community, and was willing to serve.

My mother encouraged me to ask the owner, Dr. Carlton Goodlett, for a job after I graduated from San Jose State in 1979 with a degree in Journalism. Doc was away, and the paper's Managing Editor Thomas

C. Fleming supervised my mid-winter internship and encouraged my hiring.

I started out as a reporter and photojournalist. I later became Women's editor and eventually the chief editor. My base pay was \$280 monthly. I managed to survive off my meager salary while living at home, and later from combining the salary with my husband's. I sacrificed to bring my talent back to my community. Mother taught that you had to give to get.

My professional life has been fulfilling. I have won more awards than I can showcase. They are my merit badges for giving voice to the voiceless,



Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward with San Francisco Mayor London Breed and Vice President Kamala Harris

for not allowing evil to thrive unopposed.

I used my pen in a mighty way to empower women. I will always be proud of our long journey

supporting Kamala Harris, who became the most powerful woman in the world. It was a lonely and sometimes frightening

Continued on page 33

Dr. Rubin Sorrell II, a fourth-generation resident of San Francisco's Bayview Hunter's Point, is deeply rooted in his community. Grandson to the legacy of the 'Mayor of Hunter's Point and Political figure / Community Activist 'Charlie Walker'. He has always seen himself as a link in a grand chain. He received his primary and secondary education in the San Francisco Unified School District and later attended North Carolina A&T State University. In 2012, he was commissioned as a US Army officer with a degree in Biology. Dr. Sorrell served for 10 years, mainly in the California National Guard, combining his military background with public health when he earned a Master's in Public Health

in 2016. That same year, he founded Dental Robin Hood, a nonprofit tackling dental health disparities in disadvantaged communities. The organization comprises the Dental Robin Hood Project, Anomaly Program, and Cut N Care Initiative, all funded by Dr. Sorrell himself.

The Dental Robin Hood Project involves providing toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental hygiene guidance to residents of socioeconomically disadvantaged communities like Bayview Hunter's Point. The Anomaly Program focuses on offering at-risk high school students from the same community the tools, resources, and exposure needed to pursue careers in dentistry. Finally, the Cut N Care Initiative targets barbers and beauticians in Bayview Hunter's Point, educating them about oral cancer symptoms and raising awareness about oral health. Dr. Sorrell now works at the Bayview Health and Wellness Center, serving the medical patients of his community. He is married to Peggy Sorrell, with whom he has two children, Cameron and Chase Sorrell. Dr. Sorrell is actively involved in various local and dental community boards and, as of August 2023, leads the District 10 Children's Oral Health Task Force, aiming to eliminate disparities in children's oral health in San Francisco's District 10.



Dr. Rubin Anthony Sorrell

Milan R. Balinton



Milan R. Balinton, the Executive Director of the African American Community Service Agency (AACSA) and a member of the Golden State Warriors' 2022 Impact Warriors, has a remarkable history of community leadership. Under his stewardship, AACSA has evolved from a small operation with two employees into a robust organization with 26 employees and a projected budget of \$3 million. Milan's deep-rooted commitment to his community extends beyond his professional role, as he actively mentors youth through organizations such as the Tiger Woods Foundation, 100 Black Men of Silicon Valley, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. He has been recognized for his outstanding contributions, receiving accolades like the Harambee Award from San Jose State University and commendations from prominent Assembly Members.

Milan's leadership shone brightly during the COVID-19 pandemic when AACSA's community faced heightened challenges. Milan and his team swiftly realigned the agency's services to meet the urgent needs of the community, offering support in areas such as food distribution, mental health services, housing assistance, and economic empowerment workshops. This resulted in AACSA providing essential supplies and food to over 25,000 individuals and facilitating housing assistance programs in collaboration with key partners.

Beyond his work with AACSA, Milan actively participates in regional committees and task forces, advocating for health and racial equity and representing the community in various capacities. His multifaceted engagement reflects his dedication to making a positive impact on his community and ensuring its well-being in times of crisis and beyond.

the community in various capacities. His multifaceted engagement reflects his dedication to making a positive impact on his community and ensuring its well-being in times of crisis and beyond.

DONATE

MILAN BALINTON

RE-ELECTION 2024

FRANKLIN-MCKINLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Congratulations to Milan R. Balinton, on being selected as a member of the Sun-Reporter's Class of 2023!

Paid for by
the Re-Elect Balinton to Franklin-McKinley School District 2024
FPPC #1453477

HONORING
THE BAY AREA'S
TALENTED

25

**LEADERS &
ACHIEVERS**

IN OUR AFRICAN
AMERICAN COMMUNITY



San Francisco
Water Power Sewer
Services of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Congratulations to all of the Talented 25 honorees and to our very own San Francisco Public Utilities Commission recipients:



Michelle Peters
Equity and Outreach
Specialist



Emily Rogers-Pharr
Executive Director
Southeast Community Center

You exemplify serving the public and investing in community. Thank you to the Talented 25 for making San Francisco a better place to live, work and grow.



Just like many church girls, Michelle Peters grew up working in ministry serving under 3 generations of Bay Area pastors in her family. From singing in the children's choir to becoming a lead soloist in the "big choir" at 12 years old; to directing, arranging vocals and instrumentation weekly. She expanded her gift of music under her father's pastorship by directing a 25-50 voice youth & young adult choir; winning singing competitions for scholarships and money to support the inner-city youth members who were accepted into colleges and for the operational cost of running the Victory Baptist Church Youth & Young Adult Ministry, re-naming it, "The CLIC," Committed Leaders In Christ which encompassed a comprehensive music & arts program.

Professionally, Michelle studied communications at San Francisco State University, and after completion, she garnered a position at KPIX Channel 5, a CBS affiliate in San Francisco. Michelle's professional career has always centered around equity. She is an Equity Communications Specialist and a member of the External Affairs Racial Equity Working Group at the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. She holds the trademark to "ChurchGurl" and is the Executive Director of a non-profit community-based program, Peters Family Enterprise/ChurchGurl Foundation, and the T-Shirt line. In fact, she was one of the first to create message-wear blinged-out T-shirts back in 2004. Today, you will find many walking in her footsteps with a T-shirt line to brand their various endeavors. Michelle is also a freelance digital and film producer creating shows like "ChurchGurl Champions and ChurchGurls Rock."

Michelle Peters



As the Executive Director of the Southeast Community Facility, Emily is responsible for the day-to-day operations at the center, including programs, staff, facilities, budget, community engagement, and SECF Commission support. She was previously with the City of East Palo Alto where she served as the Community Programs Manager.

Emily is the daughter of the late Bayview community activist, Adam Rogers, and has personal and longstanding ties to the community. Emily has worked with some of the most dynamic policy leaders in the Bay Area. She was the Legislative Aide to former District 10 Supervisor Sophie Maxwell and oversaw a foster care task force convening, coordinated legislation to strengthen the Citywide Surety Bonding Program, and organized legislative efforts to ban the free distribution of tobacco in San Francisco. Emily also worked with former District 6 for Councilwoman Desley Brooks in the City of Oakland. She also worked for the Bayview Hunters Point Project Area Committee (PAC), providing administrative, policy research, and analysis support to the 21-member community advisory body.

Emily's policy and program efforts have focused on social justice and equity initiatives for Black and Brown, especially youth and seniors. She is an advocate for community improvement and transformation. She has been both a supporter and a lobbyist for transportation programs that remove barriers to self-sufficiency. Emily is a graduate of Holy Names High School. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the California State University - East Bay and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of San Francisco.

Emily Rogers-Pharr



SEIU 1021 congratulates President Theresa Rutherford

on being recognized by the Sun-Reporter for her outstanding leadership as part of the Talented 25 Class of 2023!

In San Francisco over recent years, we have fought to



- Hold corporations accountable for paying their fair share of the taxes that keep public services strong, from healthcare to transportation
- Ensure pay equity for women and people of color in City jobs
- Provide educational and career advancement opportunities for SF City workers
- Protect and expand City services beyond police to keep SF residents, workers, and visitors safe and healthy
- Save Laguna Honda Hospital
- Champion humane, equitable solutions to our city's biggest challenges, from homelessness to mental health

SEIU 1021 IS COMMITTED TO:



Racial Justice



Economic Justice



Environmental & Climate Justice



Unions For All:



Worker Power



Reclaiming Our Democracy

Recently, Theresa Rutherford formally assumed her duties as the new president of SEIU Local 1021. Theresa was appointed to this role by a supermajority vote by the SEIU 1021 Executive Board at their July meeting upon news that previous President Joseph Bryant would be moving on to become executive vice president of SEIU at the international union level.

"I'm excited to continue SEIU 1021's good work building power and organizing to see workers empowered, growing, and having opportunities," said **Theresa** when the announcement was made back in July. *"More than anything else, I'm just excited to engage more workers and to support and educate them to know that the power we have lies in our collectively working together and strengthening ourselves as union members and working as a collective group."*

Theresa Rutherford is a name that is likely familiar for many SEIU 1021 members already, as she has served in local-wide office since 2016. Before being becoming president of SEIU 1021, Theresa served our union most recently as vice president of San Francisco and as vice president of representation before that. Theresa would tell you that the fighting spirit that has prepared her so thoroughly for this new responsibility has been with her for her entire life. Theresa was born in Jamaica, where she grew up with plenty of strong, female role models in her life.



Theresa Rutherford

As the managing director of California Public Affairs, David Tucker sets the long-term strategy and oversees the financial performance of community engagement, influence and relationships across key markets in the state of California. He engages cross-functionally with operational, commercial, and other leaders to ensure the holistic strategy meets the needs of California guests and communities and drives market results.

David joined Alaska Airlines in 2020 after an extensive career in public affairs and government relations in the city, county, state, and federal levels. He most recently served as the senior external affairs officer for the California COVID-19 vaccine task force, where he developed and implemented outreach and educational programs focused on elected officials, state agencies, business associations and civic groups.

David brings his collaborative spirit and extensive knowledge of the California market to help Alaska advance positive brand management and continue to foster community partnerships in the state.



David Tucker

CONGRATULATIONS



to **THE TALENTED 25!**



Attica Bowden is a San Francisco native born and raised in the Fillmore/Western Addition neighborhood. She has dedicated her life to public service and community empowerment. She has recently retired from the San Francisco Fire Department, having served a remarkable 25-year tenure with them. She entered her service in 1997 as a firefighter/EMT and in June 2022 hung her hat for the last time as a Chief, Assistant Fire Marshal.

Attica Bowden holds a Bachelor of Science degree, in Organizational Leadership. She has taken all of the tools and knowledge acquired and poured them into her community. She takes immense satisfaction in being a catalyst for change. In 2018 after the loss of her mom, Sherry “Dusty” Harris, she founded a non-profit organization, Dustys’ Fishing Well. This organization has blossomed into providing life skills programming for teens and an amazing workforce development program, City EMT for the TAY members of the community.

Moving beyond her illustrious career in the San Francisco Fire Department, she now resides in the East Bay with her two children and enjoys spending time with family and loved ones.

Attica Bowden



John Smith Jr. is a dedicated public servant who currently holds the position of Executive Director at the San Francisco Fire Youth Academy. This community-based organization utilizes the framework of the fire service to offer high school students valuable mentorship, life skills, and guidance toward college and career opportunities. John finds immense satisfaction in empowering young individuals to recognize their role in shaping the future.

Despite being a native of the Bay Area, John’s post-graduation from the University of Hawaii Hilo led him on a global journey in the realm of basketball. His experiences extend to the non-profit sector, including collaborations with various organizations not only in the United States but also abroad, with notable stints in Germany, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia. His local involvement encompasses contributions to organizations such as KEEN San Francisco, San Quentin Sports Ministry, Project Open Hand, Curry Senior Center and Project Homeless Connect.

When he’s not pursuing his passion for fishing, John cherishes spending quality leisure time with his beloved family, including his wife Alison, and their daughter, Zadi Allyn. Additionally, he serves as the Vice President of the San Francisco Black Firefighters Association and holds a Board Member position with the San Francisco-based non-profit organization, Dusty’s Fishing Well.

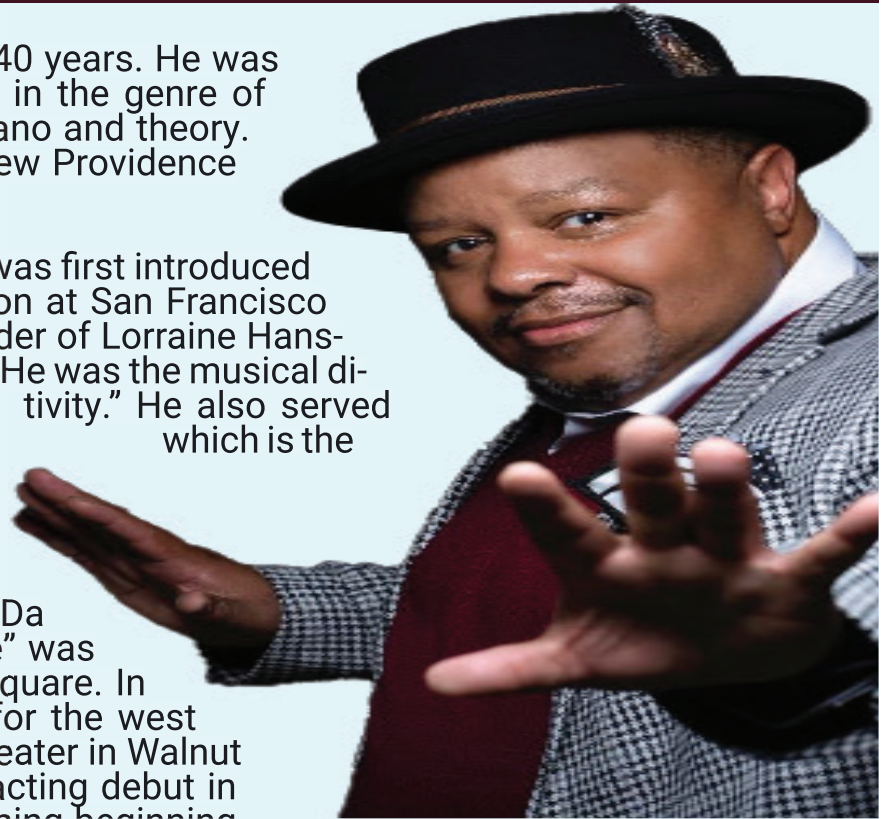
John Smith

Kenneth Little

Kenneth Little has been playing music in the Bay Area for over 40 years. He was trained privately at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in the genre of classical music. It was there that he studied the art of playing piano and theory. His formative years began when he was a teenager playing for New Providence Baptist Church.

It was at church where he learned how to play gospel music. He was first introduced to musical theater under the direction of Dr. Rhonnie Washington at San Francisco State University. His big break came when introduced to the founder of Lorraine Hansbury Theater by Arvis Strickling-Jones to the late Stanley Williams. He was the musical director for numerous productions of Langston Hughes' "Black Nativity." He also served as musical director for five productions of "A Soulful Christmas" which is the theaters current holiday production.

Ken was also featured keyboardist in the West Coast premiere of "HIT IT" a hip hop musical conceived by Jared "Chocclatt" Crawford who also starred on Broadway in the hit musical "Bring In Da Noise, Bring In Da Funk." In 2019 "An Evening With Kenneth Little" was his debut at the infamous Yoshi's Supper Club in Jack London Square. In 2020 right before the pandemic he served as musical director for the west coast premiere of "Bessie" the musical at the Margaret Leshner Theater in Walnut Creek, CA. Not only as pianist in the production but making his acting debut in the role of "Mr. Pickles" Bessie's pianist. Currently he enjoys teaching beginning to advanced piano at the Community Music Center in San Francisco.



Floyd Kenneth Rollins II, a San Francisco native, embarked on a remarkable journey shaped by his family values and love for service. He completed his education in San Francisco's public schools and furthered it at San Francisco State University. After four years working at a residential facility for troubled youth in San Leandro, CA, he received the call to join the San Francisco Fire Department. Graduating from the 98th probationary class in 1998, Floyd's 25-year career has seen him rise from a firefighter to his current role as Captain, serving in various capacities across the city, with his present position as Captain of Rescue 2, a specialized heavy-duty rescue unit. In addition to his firefighting duties, Floyd has actively contributed to the San Francisco Firefighters Local 798, serving as its President, and as a director and secretary in the past. This union represents all 1,500 uniformed members of the San Francisco Fire Department. Beyond Local 798, Floyd extends his commitment as a District Representative for the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) in the 10th district, which encompasses California, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Guam.

His dedication to this work is grounded in his desire to honor those who came before him, safeguard the achievements of firefighters, and leave a lasting positive impact on the union. Beyond his professional life, Floyd carries a deep passion for music, inherited from his musical family. He's played the drums for churches and local artists in the Bay Area.

Floyd Kenneth Rollins

Kevon Grant Looney (born February 6, 1996) is an American professional basketball player for the Golden State Warriors of the National Basketball Association (NBA). As a freshman playing college basketball with the UCLA Bruins, he earned second-team all-conference honors in the Pac-12 in 2014-15. After the season, he decided to forgo his college eligibility and enter the 2015 NBA draft and was subsequently selected in the first round by Golden State with the 30th overall pick. He won consecutive NBA championships with the Warriors in 2017 and 2018. He also led the team in rebounds and was a defensive anchor in the Golden State's 2022 Championship run.

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Champion-



Kevon Looney



CONGRATULATIONS, KEVON LOONEY
2023 SUN-REPORTER TALENTED 25

Cedric Akbar



Cedric Akbar is the executive director of Positive Directions Equals Change. He urges the people of San Francisco and everywhere to really look deeply at laws and policies in policing and prisons and accepted beliefs and practices around recovery. He believes that the system is not designed for black people's success. In San Francisco, as in all cities plagued by the vestiges of slavery, African Americans get substandard care and quality of life while being pushed into increasingly dangerous situations through job or housing loss, addiction, underfunded schools and police and state violence. That's why Cedric co-founded At Positive Directions, a San Francisco-based organization providing comprehensive services to justice-involved individuals grappling with addiction, mental health, and rehabilitation.

At Positive Directions, the focus is on building healthy and engaged people, moving toward the light and toward working together to build trusted spaces to renew and grow. The program offers intensive case management, a range of support options, and a commitment to long-term client success. At Positive Directions also provides comprehensive rehabilitation and recovery services, including detoxification, housing assistance, career development, and specialized support groups. Join our community today by signing up for our weekly meetings and events - no referrals necessary!

In his professional capacity, Cedric manages eight reentry programs including the Positive Directions TRP Academy, the Minna Project, the Billie Holiday Stabilization Center, and HER House. The commonality of these public service roles is his ability to effectuate strategic partnerships to create, grow and sustain operational efficiencies geared toward recovery, prevention, or limit criminal justice system involvement, promotion of public safety, and coordination of activities with other state and private agencies.

CONGRATULATIONS



Cedric Akbar

Westside Community Services commends
you for your great leadership!

Iowayna Peña is the Director of Government Affairs and Real Estate Development for the San Francisco Giants, where she manages many aspects of the Mission Rock development project. Most notably, Iowayna led the implementation of the 1st women's construction workforce training in the history of San Francisco. She has a background in education, sports medicine, and public policy.

Having served in legislative roles for both Oakland and San Francisco, she is a dedicated advocate for equitable solutions to our societal challenges, and approaches this work with the goal of effecting change for under-resourced communities.

Iowayna earned her M.S. in Kinesiology with a focus in Exercise Science from California State University, Fullerton where she excelled, graduating as an accomplished researcher. Iowayna is an active volunteer in her community, and in her free time enjoys hiking with her family or cruising around on her skateboard.



Iowayna Peña



Iowayna Peña
Director, Government Affairs
& Real Estate Development

CONGRATULATIONS TO
IOWAYNA PEÑA
OF THE SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

and all of the Sun-Reporter 2023 Talented 25 honorees.

Thank you to Iowayna for your invaluable contributions and dedication to the real estate and sports industries. You continue to make an incomparable impact on our community.



BWOPA READY!

**CALLING
YOUNG EMERGING
LEADERS**

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**BWOPA 2024
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT
CAUCUS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**



ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS | RSVP TODAY!

[BIT.LY/BWOPAYACLEADERSHIPCOUNCIL](https://bit.ly/BWOPAYACLEADERSHIPCOUNCIL)

QUESTIONS? EMAIL: STAFF@BWOPA.ORG



Tina Claybon Carter is a native of San Francisco. Professionally she is a certified meeting planner with 15+ years in the sales and marketing arena where her primary focus was the management and development of events, channel marketing programs, promotions, office/project management, product packaging, collateral development, advertisement, and more. Her career has spanned over several industries including entertainment, technology, education, healthcare, and nonprofit. Using her arsenal of creative skills Tina leveraged her years of experience to launch A Pure Love Affair Event and Artists Management, where she is honored to represent Stellar Award winner, Billboard #1 artist for My Block Inc., Lena Byrd Miles, and the greater Bay Area's own Tamara Edwards, Shelene Huey Booker and Elder Eric Claybon in 2009. She is also known as the "the event percolator" helping to bring her client's event concepts from vision to reality. She is also the Visionary of SHE'S THAT CHICK, a nonprofit focused on cultivating and equipping women to reach their maximum potential through Entrepreneurship.

Tina Claybon-Carter

Congratulations

TINA CLAYBON-CARTER

**ON BEING CHOSEN AS ONE OF THE
2023 SUN-REPORTERS TALENTED 25 AND
FOR MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS THROUGHOUT THE BAY AREA**

Job well done!!!



The Well Ministries International, Inc.
"Refresh, Replenish, and Restore"

**San Francisco, California
Pastor Freddie M. Carter, Sr. and
The Well Ministries Int'l, Inc. Family**

www.thewellministriesint.com



**THE SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE OF PROTOCOL AND THE
SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE CONGRATULATE
MERON FOSTER
DEPUTY PROTOCOL DIRECTOR**

**FOR BEING RECOGNIZED ON THE TALENTED 35 THIS
YEAR.**

**CONGRATULATIONS ON THIS DISTINGUISHED
ACHIEVEMENT AND THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU
HAVE DONE FOR APEC 2023 THAT WILL POSITIVELY
IMPACT SAN FRANCISCO FOR YEARS TO COME.**





As the Deputy Chief of Protocol at the Mayor's Office of Protocol, Meron specializes in implementing cultural diplomacy programs that facilitate cross-cultural exchanges between San Francisco and its global partners. Her work contributes to advancing the foreign policy objectives of the City and County of San Francisco, fostering an environment conducive to successful diplomacy.

Before joining the Mayor's Office of Protocol, Meron held the position of Program Associate at the James Irvine Foundation. In this role, she effectively managed and processed over 400 grants across seven initiatives, amounting to \$153 million.

Earlier in her career, Meron dedicated her efforts to a family-operated nonprofit focused on supporting AIDS orphans in Ethiopia. Here, she took on various roles such as Ambassador Program Coordinator, Project Manager, and Event Planner. She played a pivotal role in establishing international partnerships, crafting and executing strategic plans, and developing external communications and marketing strategies.

Meron holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations and African Studies from San Francisco State University, along with an MBA in Management from Mills College. While originally from Ethiopia, she now proudly calls the Bay Area her home.

Meron Foster



In the vibrant landscape of economic development, Pia stands as a dynamic force, currently steering the ship as the Interim Chief Operating Officer at the San Francisco Housing and Development Corporation (SFHDC). At the heart of her impactful initiatives lies a groundbreaking program that has empowered 90 Black entrepreneurs, securing a commendable \$1.2 million in grants. Pia's commitment extends far beyond mere financial support; she actively guides businesses in their transition to brick-and-mortar establishments, playing a vital role in the revitalization of the Fillmore Corridor.

Pia's entrepreneurial prowess recently manifested in the future opening of her first restaurant. As well as the one-year anniversary of "In the Black," a shared retail space designed to nurture and showcase the talents of Black entrepreneurs in the Fillmore. This endeavor epitomizes her dedication to fostering economic growth and providing a platform for black entrepreneurs to thrive.

Pia's impact extends to the cultural fabric of the community, where her commitment to community engagement is evident in the successful management and production of transformative events. From the lively Fillmore Juneteenth and Western Addition Music Festival to the past SF Reggae Festivals, Pia has masterfully orchestrated gatherings that draw over 20,000 attendees, significantly benefiting local businesses and showcasing the richness of the community.

Pia Harris



Congresswoman

BARBARA LEE

12th District of California



**PUTTING
PEOPLE**

OVER POLITICS

It continues to be an honor and a privilege to serve you. This year, I'll keep fighting to expand access to affordable housing and child care, reinstate the Child Tax Credit, and enact laws that advance equality, justice, and prosperity for all.

I wish you and your loved ones a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

- ✓ Passed strongest gun reform in 30 years
- ✓ Gave Medicare power to negotiate drug prices and drive down costs
- ✓ Lowered costs for working families and created millions of jobs with the Inflation Reduction Act
- ✓ Passed largest climate bill in history
- ✓ Protected Social Security & Medicare from conservative cuts
- ✓ Guaranteed Medicare enrollees don't pay more than \$35 a month for insulin or \$2,000 a year for prescription drugs

Source: White House



@REPBARBARALEE

OAKLAND OFFICE

1 Kaiser Plaza, Suite 1010
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 763-0370

Here to serve you!



Majeid Crawford, Executive Director of the New Community Leadership Foundation (NCLF), is dedicated to helping artists and small businesses through financial and technical support. His deep commitment to community engagement and understanding of inequality make him a key advocate for diversity and inclusion. He has led numerous projects at NCLF.

In 2022, Majeid received the Jefferson Award for raising over a million dollars to help entrepreneurs with rent and other business needs, highlighting his impactful support for businesses and the community. As one of the co-founders of the San Francisco Black Led Organization Coalition (SF-BLOC) since 2020, he has helped secure over \$3 million for Black-led organizations. He also collaborated with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) to launch the Fillmore Merchants and Neighborhood Collaborative, fostering growth and connection in the Fillmore community during the pandemic.

Majeid co-produced the first public commemoration of the 1978 Jonestown tragedy in 2018 and played a key role in fundraising over a million dollars for the renovation of the Fillmore Mini Park.

Growing up in Fillmore, his experiences have fueled his passion for community betterment and fairness. He is studying Urban Planning at San Francisco State University, holds an associate degree in arts, and is actively involved in volunteer efforts like youth mentoring and community outreach.

Majeid Crawford



La Ronda “Sug” Smith

La Ronda “Sug” Smith, a dedicated businesswoman, hails from San Francisco’s Western Addition/Fillmore District, embodying the spirit of community collaboration. Her journey in leadership began early, founding the black student union and becoming the first black graduate with honors from Star of the Sea Academy. Afterward, she pursued higher education at San Francisco State University, majoring in criminal justice with a minor in social science. Smith’s career trajectory led her from women’s retail sales at Joseph Magnin to a flourishing real estate profession, spanning roles at Friia & Company, ReMax Realty, and TRI / Coldwell Banker. She also contributed her expertise to the Noble Fields School of Real Estate. Driven by her entrepreneurial dreams, Smith established “Cleaning Angels,” a

reputable house cleaning services company, and later ventured into Sug’s Event Center, an esteemed venue in Daly City for various occasions. Her community engagement spans over three decades with the San Francisco Juneteenth committee, serving in diverse roles and earning distinctions like Grand Marshal in 2012. Beyond her entrepreneurial pursuits, Smith is an active participant in numerous community organizations, and currently holds the position of Vice-President for the American Business Women Association San Francisco Chapter from 2023 to 2024.

New Community Leadership Foundation (NCLF)

congratulates

MAJEID CRAWFORD

Executive Director, NCLF on his recognition as one of the *Sun-Reporter's* Talented 25



2023 RECOVERY DAY EVENT - BOEDDEKER PARK
Majeid Crawford, NCLF Executive Director (L) with Actor Danny Trejo, who recently celebrated 55 years of sobriety.

NEW COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

envisions a new community centered on equity for black-owned businesses. NCLF provides three core programs that serve to uplift and empower business owners, entrepreneurs, and the disenfranchised:

• 2-STEP

provides technical assistance and resources for small nonprofits in need of grant funding, working collaboratively with clients to build capacity and successfully meet their goals.

• LIFE IN THE ARTS

delivers direct services and support to up and coming creative artists helping them start and grow for profit and nonprofit businesses.

• TECHNICAL ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL HUB

UpSkill, NCLF's technical assistance and consulting program, helps small, for profit businesses – micro enterprises, small businesses and entrepreneurs – start, strengthen and grow their operations.

NCLF IS PROUD AND HONORED TO SERVE HUNDREDS OF OUTSTANDING SMALL BUSINESSES IN SAN FRANCISCO

"I am very grateful and thankful to NCLF. I'm thankful for them patronizing us. Thank you to them and the city of San Francisco. Without them, Chicago's Barbershop might not have an optimistic view of the future." ~

Robert Terrell Harlan, Jr., Owner | Chicago II Barbershop

"I have observed and noticed that NCLF has been working within the community from the ground up. To me, as a community member, it means so much!"

~Shonette Jones, Owner | Thoughtful Thoughts

"NCLF played a big part in my business getting access to resources and grant opportunities. I can't thank them enough for all the information they share with me daily. These are some good-hearted people that, as my sister Myisha T.Hill would say, "Live into the Work!"

~Lazaro Ruiz, Owner | ESTBC Prints

"NCLF helped me literally stay in business ... and helped show me the ropes on available grants, bringing the community together in the Fillmore."

~Lawrence Gomez, Owner | Lawrence

"I never imagined all the support I am receiving as a Black woman in this community. It brings tears to my eyes."

~Cheryl Shanks, Entrepreneur

"NCLF dedicated time to work with me and assist me in finding money for my business. Although I am not a computer user, they took time and had great patience in completing applications. They continue to be a resource in building my business."

~Bouchaib Bourdod, Owner | Crepes A La Carte



NCLF CELEBRATES MAJEID CRAWFORD AND JAMEEL RASHEED PATTERSON
(Executive Director and Associate Director, respectively), awardees of the Jefferson Award in Oct. 2022 in recognition of raising one million dollars in direct support of small businesses in San Francisco, through OEWD's Small Business Training Grant.



NCLF WORKS WITH PEGASUS ENTERTAINMENT & EVENTS INC. EDDIE GRIFFIN LIVE COMEDY SHOW IN SAN FRANCISCO
(L-R: Hugh (EMC) Gregory, NCLF VP; Majeid Crawford, NCLF Executive Director; Comedian Eddie Griffin; Jameel Rasheed Patterson, NCLF Associate Director).

NEW COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

415-857-1136 | info@NCLFINC.ORG

233 Eddy Street, San Francisco, CA 94102



Deka, a visionary Nigerian-American entrepreneur, is the driving force behind Omatochi, an innovative startup with a heartfelt mission to revolutionize senior care. Her inspiration for founding the company stemmed from a deeply personal experience with her father, fueling her determination to create the solution she wished she had during that challenging time.

As the CEO and Founder of Omatochi, Deka is unwavering in her commitment to empowering elderly individuals. Her goal is to enable them to lead enriching lives within the sanctuary of their homes, ensuring not just safety, happiness, and an improved quality of life but also a profound sense of dignity and comfort. Deka's passion knows no bounds and extends well beyond her business endeavors. Actively involved in philanthropy, she serves on the board of several non-profit organizations, including the Urban League of Greater San Francisco Bay Area. Her focus is on supporting seniors and underserved communities, and her commitment is evident as she dedicates her time and resources to uplifting underprivileged individuals. With a robust background in Financial Services and an MBA from California State University, East Bay, Deka combines strategic experience with a compassionate heart. Her strategic insight propels Omatochi's innovative approach to senior care, while her empathetic nature ensures a human touch in every aspect of her work. In addition to her professional accomplishments, Deka derives immense fulfillment from her role as a mother to two daughters.



Deka Dike



Congratulations, Deka Dike!

Forefront Capital congratulates you for being selected among the Sun-Reporter Talented 25 Class of 2023. We are inspired by your tireless service, leadership and dedication to the community.



Proud Moment

Heartfelt congratulations to our inspiring leader, **Deka Dike**, for being recognized among **Sun Reporter's Top 25 Talents of 2023!** Your visionary leadership in revolutionizing senior care is the heartbeat of Omatochi. This honor is a testament to your dedication and impact.

Congratulations from the entire Omatochi team!

WE'VE HEARD THE GREAT NEWS



CONGRATULATES THE TALENTED 25

FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS
TO OUR COMMUNITY AND
THE GREATER BAY AREA

YOU ARE AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL.

Here at **YCD**, we offer services in

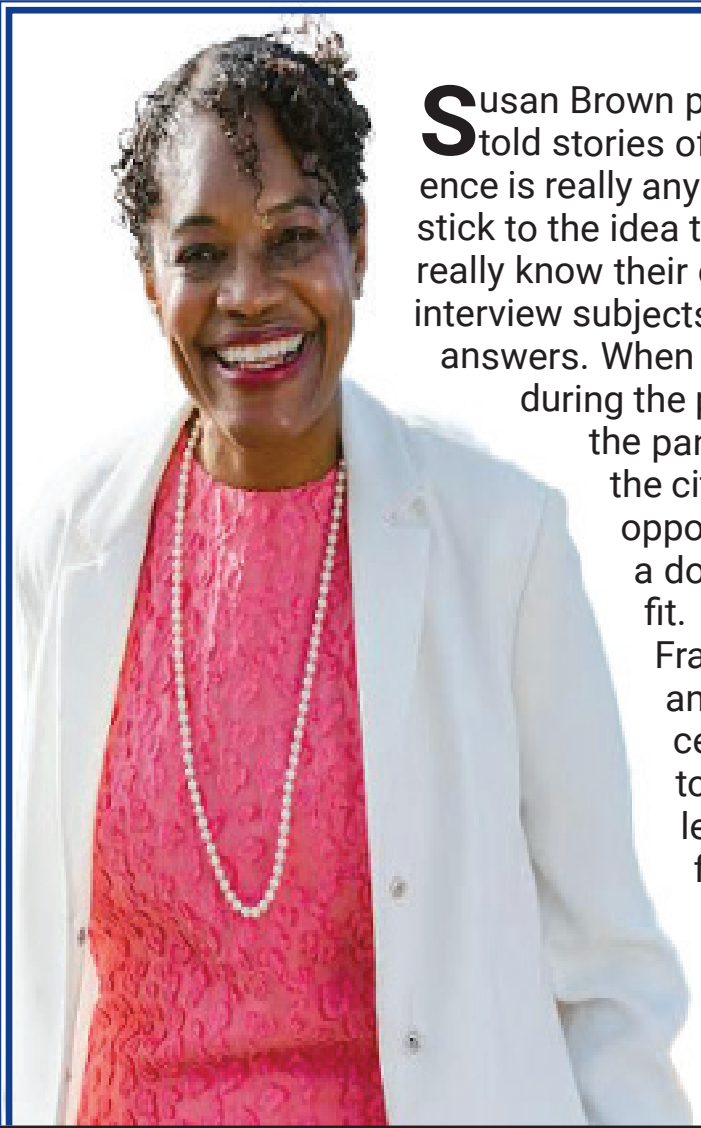
- Workforce Development
- Education
- Housing

To learn more about the services
we provide, visit

 www.ycdjobs.org

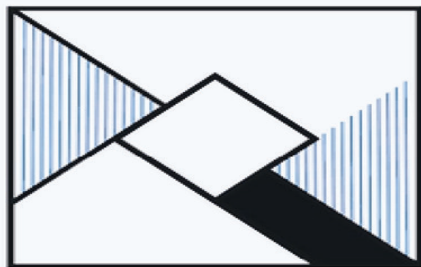
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 [@ycdjobs1973](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ycdjobs1973)



Susan Brown produces and co-hosts Beyond the Fog Radio, a podcast that explores the untold stories of San Francisco's long history and the characters that help shape it. Her audience is really anyone who wants to know the history of San Francisco and the Bay Area as they stick to the idea that San Francisco and the Bay Area is home to so many people who may not really know their culture and their amazing and rich history. They have an enormous variety of interview subjects and stories that unfold...When you stop and ask questions, you get amazing answers. When Susan's friend Jae called to check on how she and her business were doing during the pandemic, Susan regretfully informed him that her business was on hold until the pandemic had subsided. When Jae suggested they start a podcast to celebrate the city they both loved, Susan jumped at the chance. Susan knew this would be an opportunity to do what she loved most: give people a place to tell their stories. As a documentary film director, she knew switching to a podcast would be a natural fit. As a native San Franciscan, Susan relished the opportunity to explore San Francisco through the power of the stories of The City's many notable residents, and to share those stories with the world. Most importantly for Susan, she could celebrate the city where she was born and raised while giving a unique outlet to those legends who had helped shape this beautiful city. She was excited to learn from her colleagues and for this opportunity to work with her two wonderful and multi-talented co-hosts Michaela Joy O'Shea and Jae Yee.

Susan Brown



PJ JOHNSTON
COMMUNICATIONS

CONGRATULATES
FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE

SUSAN BROWN

for
HER TALENT & SUCCESS

and for the HONOR of being named
one of the Bay Area's and
THE SUN-REPORTER'S
TALENTED 25



**CONGRATULATIONS TO SUSAN BROWN
AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE
SUN-REPORTER'S TALENTED 25 CLASS OF
2023.**



DEREK SMITH, OWNER

**SERVING AND SUPPORTING SF BAYVIEW
HUNTERS POINT FOR OVER 30 YEARS.**

Rashad Johnson's lifelong dedication centers on closing the gap between equality and equity, with a focus on uplifting Black and Brown communities. Based in Sacramento, he has spent nearly a decade in local and state politics and government, using his expertise in public affairs, government relations, community engagement, and communications to assist clients in expanding their impact and entering new markets.

Before joining S360, Johnson served as the Senior Government Affairs Manager for Eaze, California's largest legal cannabis retailer. There, he played a key role in launching programs like Momentum, a business accelerator, and the Social Equity Partners Program, both dedicated to supporting BIPOC entrepreneurs in the legal cannabis industry. He also advocated for these initiatives in multiple states, including Washington and Arizona.

Previously, Johnson worked with Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson (no relation) and played a vital role in mobilizing communities for better educational opportunities. His involvement in crafting SB 1294, the groundbreaking California Cannabis Equity Act, while working for Senator Steven Bradford's office, highlighted his commitment to addressing the War on Drugs systematically.



Rashad Johnson

Change Makers *for Progress*

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LOCAL EXPERTISE.

NATIONAL REACH.

S360

Rashad Johnson, Senior Vice President, California
RASHADJ@STRATEGIES360 | 916.239.8798

STRATEGIES360.COM

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission
is pleased to congratulate

KAREN CLOPTON

Chair, Human Rights Commission

for being named to this year's *Talented 25* list.

With gratitude for all you do for community
and warmest wishes on this honor!

**SAN FRANCISCO
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION**





An award-winning trailblazer, Commissioner Karen Clopton is a champion of human and civil rights, a distinguished DEI attorney and ESG organizational expert, and former Chief Administrative Law Judge.

Serving in executive leadership and board roles for highly regulated public, private, and non-profit organizations, she oversees policy, ethics, finance, operations, complex domestic and global compliance, labor and employment law, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, fund development, and human resource risk management.

Nationally recognized as a civic leader and humanitarian, Commissioner Clopton's vision and expertise change laws, create programs, and positively impact the bottom line. She brings gravitas as a neutral, an unbiased fact finder, and an ombudsman.

Karen Valentia Clopton



Ernest "EJ" Jones is a fourth-generation San Franciscan and has lived in the Lakeview/OMI neighborhood for his whole life. His great-grandparents moved to San Francisco from the segregated South, his mother was a teacher at San Francisco Unified School District and his father worked for SF MUNI. Through their efforts, they instilled strong working-class values, with an emphasis on education, community, and the value of hard work.

EJ applied these lessons throughout his professional life; advocating for our youth and our families, working in City Hall, and building coalitions across our neighborhoods. As board president of I.T. Bookman Community Center, EJ developed sustainable programs and services to address the needs of community members. In his time as a founding board member of The City Eats, he had the privilege of helping organize monthly opportunities to distribute meals to those in need in San Francisco.

These passion projects encapsulate EJ's love for San Francisco, his care for his neighbors, and his desire to uplift and create a community where members feel welcomed, safe, and heard.

EJ Jones



**Congratulations to the Talented 25
for their service and leadership
throughout the Bay Area**

Renard Monroe, a Bay Area native from San Francisco's Lakeview/OMI district, has a rich family history of community engagement. He was raised in District 11 and credits his strong work ethic to the influence of family members, particularly his grandmother, Julia Monroe, a pioneering black business owner who ran the Hunter Point Restaurant after relocating from Louisiana. Renard's deep-rooted commitment to community service led to the founding of Youth 1st, a year-round program offering mentorship, academic activities, tutoring, and a variety of specialty classes for youth, all at little or no cost. Supported by organizations like DCYF, the Dream Keepers initiative, and San Francisco Recreation and Parks, Youth 1st operates in the Lakeview/OMI neighborhood.

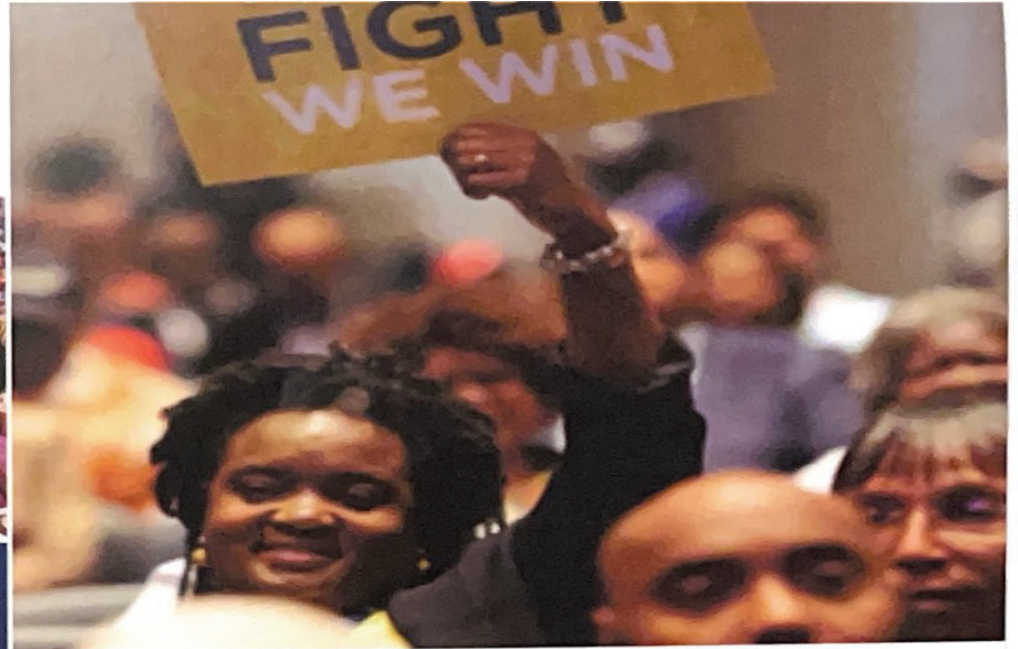
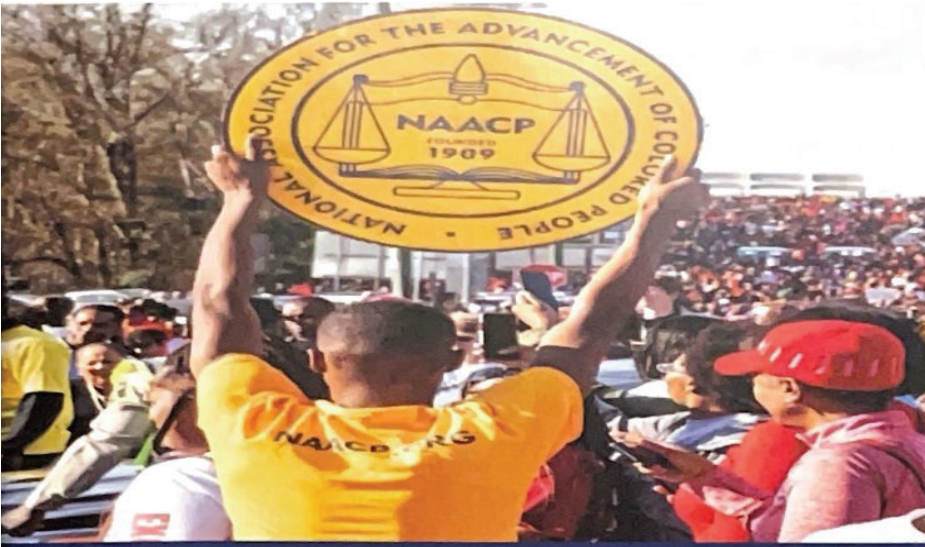
Youth 1st maintains two locations in OMI/Lakeview at Merced Heights Playground and 4095 19th Ave. Renard Monroe is also a driving force behind Invest Black SF, a Black-led community collaborative dedicated to assisting black-led organizations and providing valuable resources to the San Francisco community. This commitment translates into active participation in community events, town hall meetings, community awards ceremonies, and an annual comedy show. Renard's unwavering dedication reflects the influence of those who paved the way for him and underscores his passion for serving the community.



Renard Monroe

A congratulatory graphic featuring a photo of Renard Monroe wearing a blue hoodie and a blue cap with a logo. The background is white with a blue brushstroke behind him. Logos for Youth 1st and Invest Black SF are in the top corners, and a STEM Frenzy logo is at the bottom. The text reads: 'CONGRATULATIONS Renard Monroe ON YOUR RECOGNITION AS ONE OF THE SUN-REPORTER'S TALENTED 25'.

CONGRATULATIONS
Renard Monroe
**ON YOUR RECOGNITION AS
ONE OF THE SUN-
REPORTER'S TALENTED 25**



THRIVE with
US

NAACP
San Francisco Branch

The time is now. By becoming a member of the NAACP, you'll join a network of activists standing up to injustice, fighting back against systemic racism, and answering the call for equality.

SCAN BELOW TO
JOIN THE
MOVEMENT



<https://sfnaacp.org>

Steps to register:

1. Enter contact information in the "Tell Us About Yourself" section
2. For Zip Code enter "94115" to join SF Branch Unit 1065

It's one thing to succeed as a community - it's another thing to *thrive*.

Take your advocacy one step further. As a member of the NAACP, you're making it your personal goal to ensure that our community thrives in every aspect including education, economics, health and wellbeing, and racial justice. Thriving in NAACP looks like:

Organizing marches, rallies, and direct action campaigns to bring attention to local issues

Supporting access to quality education, healthcare, economic opportunities

Participating in voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns

We meet every 4th Sunday of each month.

Contact Us

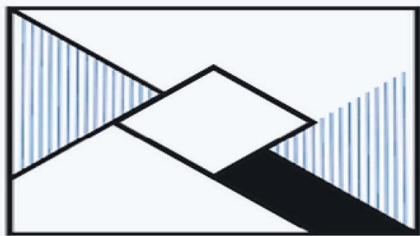
📍 1290 Fillmore Street, Ste. 109
San Francisco, CA, 94115
(415) 922-0650

Nichole Jordan currently holds the role of Chief Operating Officer at Indr, Inc., a Series A SaaS company. Here, she is responsible for developing the go-to-market strategy and customer success practice. Her extensive background in customer advocacy includes being the former Chief Operating Officer at Remix Software, which was later acquired by Via. Prior to this, Nichole managed customer relationships across 400 cities on five continents.

Beyond her professional career, Nichole is an active volunteer and leader in various non-profit organizations. She serves on the American Red Cross Bay Area Board of Directors, focusing on the BioMed committee and sickle cell initiative. She also holds the position of International Technology Chairman for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® and has a history of leadership roles in organizations like the Twenty Pearls Foundation and the San Francisco chapter of the Links, Incorporated. Nichole's academic background is impressive, with a B.S. in Civil Engineering from U.C. Davis and an M.B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.



Nichole Jordan



PJ JOHNSTON
COMMUNICATIONS



**CONGRATULATES
FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE**

NICHOLE JORDAN

for
HER TALENT & SUCCESS

and for the HONOR of being
named one of the Bay Area's and
**THE SUN-REPORTER'S
TALENTED 25**



PACT congratulates Chair and co-founder Everett Brandon, JD and the other Talented 25 for their legacy, work, and impact in the Bay Area community. PACT educates and supports low-income Bay Area middle and high school students by empowering them to realize the dream of a brighter educational and financial future, while becoming tomorrow's community leaders. Since 1963, PACT has served 60,000 young people, placing approximately 36,000 students in colleges and other postsecondary institutions. The organization just celebrated 60 years, and looks forward to another 60 years of impact to the community!"

If College is the Question? PACT is the Answer!



Everett Brandon's remarkable journey spans continents and decades, marked by an unwavering commitment to social change. Born in the Panama Canal Zone, his educational path led him from Gary, Indiana, to Los Angeles, California, where he earned a bachelor's degree in public administration from UCLA and later a Juris Doctor from UC Berkeley School of Law. His early years included service in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and a transformative summer in India through the Project India program.

After completing his education, Everett Brandon immersed himself in the Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs in San Francisco, gaining invaluable experience across city departments and public institutions. He then joined the NAACP as a Field Secretary for the West Coast, playing a pivotal role in advocating for crucial legislations addressing employment, housing, and accommodations discrimination.

Breaking barriers, Everett became the first Black stockbroker in downtown San Francisco, recognizing the urgent need to combat segregation and disparities. Co-founding PACT Inc. alongside Dr. Henry Lucas, he dedicated his efforts to enhancing opportunities for minorities, particularly in segregated districts. His extensive career also included roles in community development consultancy, contributions to Columbia University's Urban Affairs Program, and representation of the Phelps-Stokes Foundation in programs across African countries.

Everett Brandon

And The Beat Goes On Continued from page 1

journey to help elect London Breed Mayor of San Francisco. But we made it.

It's time now for me to work to pass the torch. I am proud of my journalist son who is now working with me. Evan Carlton Ward is what the Talented 25 represents. He's a prepared community servant and working to make us better. He is the editor of this special edition of the paper. Continue to chart your path to greatness, Evan.

I salute the women and men who make up this

year's Talented 25. They have chosen to bring their expertise home to benefit all of us. May they continue to serve faithfully and earnestly. I pray that they will please the ancestors who have paved their way and paid for the freedoms they enjoy. I urge them to fight until all of God's children are equal and free.

"Hang on to the world as it spins around. Just don't let the spin get you down. Things are moving fast, hold on tight and you will last. Take it from me, someday we'll all be free."
(Donny Hathaway)



Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward with Dr. Maya Angelou



TAS STRATEGIES would like to congratulate Everett Brandon on his recognition as one of this year's Talented 25! Your continuous commitment to community improvement is definitely a cause for celebration! Thank you for all you have done and all you continue to do.

You are a San Francisco legend!





*Congratulations to the
Sun Reporter Talented 25*

**YOUR TALENT, HARD WORK, AND
DEDICATION ARE AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL.**

MAYOR LONDON BREED

Paid for by Re-Elect Mayor London Breed 2024. Financial disclosures are available at sfethics.org.

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

THE LEGACY CONTINUES: Congratulations to the Sun Reporter's Talented 25!

You stand on the shoulders of great women and men who've paved the way before you, from Carlton B. Goodlett to Amelia Ashley-Ward. Now, it's Evan Ward's time to shine.

The mission of 'Pleading Our Own Cause' lives on through you. Keep the torch burning bright.

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