The City University of New York Black Male Initiative

12th Annual CUNY Black Male Initiative Conference

THE BLACK & LATINO MALE IMAGE: REWRITING THE NARRATIVE

FRIDAY OCT. 6, 2017 | 8:30AM - 7PM

Medgar Evers College
1650 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11225

@BMICUNY @CUNYBMI www.cuny.edu/bmi

CUNY Black Male Initiative programs are open to all academically eligible students, faculty and staff without regard to race, gender, national origin or other characteristic.

Register at www.cuny.edu/bmi

MCU Strong Trusted Growing

Citi
Purpose

In its Final Report to the Chancellor, The City University of New York Black Male Initiative (CUNY BMI) Task Force listed as its first recommendation that CUNY has a public responsibility to provide critical leadership on the challenges facing men of color and to raise its voice vigorously and unwaveringly to help mobilize efforts to achieve social and educational equity. CUNY BMI represents the University’s acknowledgement of its stature as the nation’s largest urban public university and its obligation to raise societal awareness of the challenges facing underrepresented students, particularly men of color, and to create concrete strategies designed to increase their chances of pursuing higher education. Through its programming, particularly the annual Conference, CUNY BMI fulfills its role of raising awareness and sharing information about the pronounced challenges that many men of color face in the present society that frustrate their access to higher education. With this in mind, the CUNY BMI Conference reaches a broad audience of individuals within the CUNY community and beyond.

Theme

The Twelfth Annual CUNY BMI conference, The Black & Latino Male Image: Rewriting the Narrative, will feature a morning keynote by Dr. Byrant Marks, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Morehouse College Male Initiative and an afternoon keynote by Mychal Denzel Smith, Writer, Television Commentator and Author of Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man’s Education. The conference also includes morning and afternoon panel discussions that address five primary topics: media, advocacy, economics, policy, and incarceration. The morning panels specifically will discuss the historical context of how a negative Black and Latino male image was constructed. While the afternoon panels will discuss strategies to change the Black and Latino male image. The overall theme of the conference will focus on dispelling the stereotypes and negative imagery of men of color and replacing them illustrations of success and triumph.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 am to 9:30 am</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast/Registration</td>
<td>Bedford Building - Ampitheater</td>
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<td>9:30 am to 10:30 am</td>
<td>Welcome Remarks and Introduction</td>
<td>Bedford Building - Founder’s Auditorium</td>
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**Dr. Jermaine Wright**  
University Director  
The City University of New York  
Black Male Initiative

**James B. Milliken**  
Chancellor  
The City University of New York

**Dr. Rudolph Crew**  
President  
Medgar Evers College  
The City University of New York

**Inez Barron**  
Chairperson, Higher Education Committee  
The New York City Council

**Chika Onyejiukwa**  
CUNY USS President
Morning Keynote Address and Morning Panel Discussions

10:30 am to 11:40 am

Morning Keynote Lecture
Dr. Bryant Marks, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Morehouse College Male Initiative

_Location: Bedford Building - Founder’s Auditorium_

11:45 am to 2:00 pm
Record Your Video and Express Why You are ExceptionAL!
with Dr. Judy Touzin
[https://www.theexceptionalproject.net](https://www.theexceptionalproject.net)

_Location: The Atrium in AB1 Building_

11:45 am to 1:05 pm  Morning Panel Discussions (Concurrent)

1. **Media Panel - From User to Creator**
IG, Twitter, FB, LinkedIn… What do they all have in common? The more consistent you are in building your online presence, the stronger your brand identity becomes. Come to this panel to learn from some of NYC’s media geniuses to learn about the ways to establish yourself as not only a media user but also a creator! Also, learn what not to do, so make sure you keep a solid reputation and online presence; therefore, changing the image of men of color as thugs and deviants.

**Moderator:**
Conrad Tillard, Minister

**Panelists:**
Jerry “Wonda” Duplessis, Entertainer

Thomas Martin, Enterprise Relationship Manager, LinkedIn
Darnell Edmonds, Managing Partner at Edmonds Production Group (EPG)

Kia Lowe, Assistant Vice President for Sephora Trade Marketing at Lancome Paris

Location: Bedford Building, President’s Conference Room

2. Finance and Economics Panel: If it Don’t Make Dollars, It Don’t Make Sense
How are you building your brand and your image? What ways are you contributing to the economic wealth of yourself, your family and your community? What opportunities are out there to help increase your own personal wealth? Come and learn from people who work in finance and economics, about the ways that you can capitalize on your biggest asset… yourself and circulate Black wealth in the community.

Moderator:
Erika Pearson, Management Consultant, Advisory Services, Customer and Growth Strategy, Ernst and Young

Panelists:
Walla Elsheikh, Founder and Director, Birthright AFRICA

Corey Fernandes, Municipal Credit Union's Vice President of Business Development and Member Relations

Daniel Brown, CFP, Financial Advisor/Recruiter, World Finance Group

Emond Richardson, State Farm Agency Owner

Location: Bedford Building - Founder’s Auditorium

3. Advocacy Panel: S.W.A.G. – Student Wellness, Advocacy, Gun Violence
Many of us have had to deal with the trials of our community members being treated unfairly and unjustly. In some cases, violence and loss of life have hit our homes without a moment’s notice. This panel will be a powerful unpacking of what it means to engage in advocacy, wellness and fight against gun violence. Find comfort and support knowing this panel will be empowering to you.

Moderator:
Marcus Bright, Ph.D., Director, MDEC/BMI

Panelists:
Makeba Pinder, Counseling Center at Medgar Evers College

Trenelle Gabay, Advocate and Wife of Carey Gabay

Saundra Thomas, Vice-President of Community Affairs, WABC-TV
4. **Policy Panel: Politics As Usual**

Laws and policy are often made in isolation with input from a few. Making it difficult for individuals from historically marginalized communities to perceive that they can make a difference in policy. This panel is full of powerhouse community members that will speak about the realities of how we can or cannot shape policy that affects our own communities.

**Moderator:**
Esmeralda Simmons, Director at the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College

**Panelists:**
Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, 43rd Assembly District in Brooklyn

Alan Newton, Former CUNY BMI Research Associate

Landon Dais Esq., Associate for Forchelli, Curto, Deegan, Schwartz, Mineo & Terrana LLP and Community Activist

**Location: Bedford Building - Norman B, Johnson, Room 2008**

5. **Mentorship Panel: Mask Off - Genuine Mentoring Relationships**

Mentorship can often be the key to living well, performing well and becoming the student you want to be. Come and meet some mentors that exist within CUNY BMI, as students and panelist share their experience on what mentorship looks like. Step by step, these student and adult panelists will detail how they became a mentor or a mentee, and what it looked like for them to build a relationship with their mentors. Mentorship is not just for school, but for life!

**Moderator:**
Dr. Christopher Boxe, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Chemistry at Medgar Evers College

**Panelists:**
Lisa Evelyn, Medgar Evers College, Director for the Women’s Center

Joyann Kershaw, Lisa’s Mentee, Sophomore at Medgar Evers College

Geodanis Mompremier, Alumni of Medgar Evers College, Class of 2017

McKenley Dieudonne, Mentee, Male Development and Empowerment Center (MDEC), at Medgar Evers College,

**Location: S-Building - Mary Pinkett Room**

1:10 pm to 1:55 pm **Buffet Luncheon**
Location: Bedford Building - Amphitheater or AB1 Building - Dining Hall and Bedford Building-Welcome Center

VIP Lunch

Location: AB1 Building - Room 312 (Green Room)

Afternoon Keynote Address and Afternoon Panel Discussions

2:00 pm to 3:10 pm

Afternoon Keynote Lecture
Mychal Denzel Smith, Writer at The Nation, Television Commentator and Author of *Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man's Education*

Location: Bedford Building - Founder’s Auditorium

3:20 pm to 4:40 pm

Afternoon Panel Discussions (Concurrent)

6. *It Starts With Me: How to Advocate For Yourself and Others*
One of the core elements of the CUNY BMI is modeling advocacy through the programmatic elements offered at each of the 31 BMI projects. Advocacy can range from the simple action of taking advantage of campus resources, to the more long-term idea of fighting for justice and voice in a community using local resources and developing community partnerships. This panel will highlight of the best practices for creating and providing advocacy.

**Moderator:**
Lurie Daniel Favors Esq., General Counsel at Medgar Evers College

**Panelists:**
Pamela Jackson, Director of Student Success, Co-Founder of She Thrives, Socio-Emotional Leadership Trainer
Raquel Bennett, Center for Women’s Development

Rev F. Romall Smalls, Senior Affiliate Chaplain, Student Christian Movement at New York University

**Location: Bedford Building - Founder’s Auditorium**

7. **Policy Panel: Speak Up and Speak Out**

Policies that affect students everyday tend to be unspoken and undiscussed. For some college students, there are issues surrounding being a part of communities that are hidden and at times unsupported. Undocumented students, re-entry students and students with learning challenges are often disproportionately affected by policy. This panel will allow members of these communities to expose strategies they have used to speak up and speak out.

**Moderator:**
Angel Seda, Alumni of Medgar Evers College, Class of 2017

**Panelists:**
Devon Simmons, John Jay College Urban Male Initiative and College Initiative, Senior at John Jay College

Devante Tate, Black Lives Matter NYC Coalition

Richard Green, Adjunct/Lecturer / Social & Behavioral Sciences

**Location: S-Building - Mary Pinkett Room**

8. **Mentoring Panel: The Mentor in ME**

Mentoring can often provide an external perspective for you, that you cannot see yourself. Mentoring also help uncover blind spots on your college path that you may be walking directly into! CUNY BMI has a structured mentorship model promotes peer-to-peer, faculty-to-student and staff-to-student mentoring relationships. This panel will feature the best of the best in the field of mentoring who know the role of mentorship in creating academic success. Come and learn why structured mentoring is a game changer.

**Moderator:**
Dr. Michael Wiltshire, Principal at MEC Preparatory High School

**Panelists:**
Joshua Davis, Alumnus of Medgar Evers College, Class of 2016

Yannick Adams (Joshua’s Mentee) Medgar Evers College Sophomore

Esteban Alcantara, Sophomore, Urban Male Leadership Program, Lehman College

Michael Beasley, Sophomore, Urban Male Leadership Program, Lehman College

**Location: Bedford Building - Norman B. Johnson, Room 2008**

9. **Identity & Aspirations Panel: The ExceptionAL Project**
Black men and boys are often stereotypically portrayed in a negatively light. This panel allows men to share their experiences as Black men in America and gives them a chance to share how they lead, live, and love in powerful ways for the good of their community.

**Moderator:**
Dr. Judy Touzin, Founder, The ExceptionAL Project

**Panelists:**
Dominic Joseph, Senior and Team Leader for Brothers For Excellence at Hunter College, Class of 2018

Michael Deas, Director of the Urban Male Leadership Program (UMLP), Lehman College

Chad Pennington, Photographer and Member of the ExceptionAL Project

Toney Earl Jr., Founder and Executive Director of M.A.D.E. Transitional Services

Shawn Rux, Director of School Renewal, NYC Department of Education

**Location: AB1 Building - Edison O. Jackson Auditorium**

5pm to 7 pm **Closing Reception**

**Location: AB1 Building - Dining Hall**
Participant Bios

Yannick Adams, Medgar Evers College Sophomore

.NOT PICTURED
yannickadams65@gmail.com

Esteban Alcantara is of Latino background and was born and raised in Yonkers. He is currently a Junior at Lehman College, with a double major in Physics and Mathematics. Esteban is expected to graduate in the year 2020. He has been a part of the Urban Male Leadership Program, since the Fall of 2015, and an inducted member since May of 2016. Esteban Alcantara was the recipient of Ronald S. Ellis Scholarship for Academic Excellence within Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and the recipient of Urban Male Leader of the Year in May of 2017. Esteban has also served as a UMLP Peer Mentor the last two years. His career goals are to obtain his Bachelor's and then a Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics, specializing in either quantum gravity or quantum mechanics. Esteban wishes to work on the unified quantum mechanical theory of gravitation, a feat which not even Albert Einstein was able to accomplish.

Email: esteban.alcantara@lehman.cuny.edu

Inez Barron was elected to the NYC Council in 2013, after having served 5 years in the NYS Assembly. Her political service follows a distinguished career of public service in the NYC Department of Education. Inez is the daughter of George and Margaret R. Smith, who raised her to “put God first.” Inez credits her parents with instilling in her the value of education and pride in her culture. Their encouragement to her was “always give your best, do your best, be your best and expect the best.” Inez Barron is succeeding her husband, Hon.Charles Barron as Council Member of the 42nd Council District. Inez and Charles are the parents of Jelani Johnson and Jawanza Barron. For more than fifty years, Ms. Barron has been actively engaged in protesting against civil and human injustices such as segregation, discrimination, apartheid, exclusion of Africa from the NYC curriculum, police misconduct and environmental racism.

Michael Beasley became an inducted member of the Urban Male leadership Program (UMLP), since May 2016. He is a Junior at Lehman College, majoring in Media and Communications with a minor in Theatre. Michael is a first generation college student in his family. His interests include acting, media relations,
motivational speaking, and serving as a role model for future generations. Michael has served as a UMLP Peer Mentor for the last two years.

Email: michael.beasley@lehman.cuny.edu

Ms. Raquel M. Bennett joined Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York in 2002. She holds a B.A in Africana Studies and a M.S. in Adult Education and Human Resource Development from Fordham University and a M.A. in History from Brooklyn College. Currently, Ms. Bennett works in the Center for Women’s Development. She possesses over twenty years of experience in higher education administration, and fifteen years of experience in university teaching—facilitating introductory computer science courses for Westchester Community College and Africana Studies courses at Fordham University and The College of New Rochelle. Since her appointment to the Center for Women’s Development in May 2017, she has provided the additional leadership needed to develop an Annual Report, Events Calendar, and Assessment Handbook, revised the Strategic Plan and cemented a partnership for a Women’s Conference in March 2018. Ms. Bennett’s professional career, personal accomplishments, and community service is evidence of her commitment to the development and success of others.

Email: rbennett@mec.cuny.edu

Shawn Best, University Associate Director, CUNY BMI
Shawn Best is the Associate Director of the Black Male Initiative at the City University of New York. Best previously served as the Project Coordinator for the Black Male Initiative at Hunter College from January 2012 until September 2014. He comes to the Central Office with experience working in Residence Life, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Athletics and Admissions. Best received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Vermont in May, 2000. He received his Master of Arts degree in Higher Education Administration from New York University in May, 2004. Best’s passions lie in helping college students experience holistic success and receive mentorship. In particular, Best’s journey to his current career was paved with mentorship from some of the top African American male college administrators in the country, while pursuing his doctoral degree in Organizational Leadership at Northeastern University with plans to graduate in 2018.

Email: Shawn.Best@cuny.edu
Dr. Christopher Blaszczak-Boxe uses numerical-modeling platforms to assess the evolution of planets on various timescales. On the experimental front, he participates in field and laboratory studies that assess the abundance of potentially toxic substances in indoor/outdoor environments and their potential impacts on human health. He will ultimately continue publishing, such that his contribution to science spans solar and extrasolar system habitable planets. Dr. Blaszczak-Boxe is also builds STEM-education initiatives to help increase, retain, and inevitably steer students towards science and engineering careers and disciplines. Within this context, Dr. Blaszczak-Boxe is aiding in fostering steam-lined academic platforms to help optimize such initiatives. He was born in Kingston, Jamaica and lived on the East Coast for a large fraction of his life. During that time, he attended Morehouse College and earned a B.S. in Chemistry and a Minor in Math. Thereafter, he moved to Pasadena, CA, where he earned an M.S. in both Planetary and Environmental Science & Engineering, to later complete a Ph.D. in Environmental Science & Engineering and a Minor in Geology – all from Caltech. He was then a research scientist at NASA-JPL-Caltech and returned to NYC, where he is now an Associate Professor at CUNY’s Environmental Science and Chemistry at Medgar Evers College and its Chemistry and Earth and Environmental Science Graduate Divisions.

Email: Cboxe@mec.cuny.edu

Marcus Bright, Ph.D., Director, MDEC/BMI
Dr. Marcus Bright is the Director of Male Development & Empowerment Center and Black Male Initiative at Medgar Evers College. He was previously the Executive Director of Education for a Better America and worked in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of Educational Equity, Access, and Diversity and Florida International University Student-Athlete Academic Center. Additionally, he served as an Adjunct Professor of Public Administration at Lynn University, Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University. Dr. Bright received a Bachelor’s Degree in Government and World Affairs from the University of Tampa, a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from Florida International University, and a Ph.D. in Public Administration from Florida Atlantic University. He is a frequent contributor to the Huffington Post and Diverse Issues in Higher Education and has spoken across the country on a variety of topics related to public policy, education, and social justice.

Email: mbright@mec.cuny.edu

Daniel Brown is an independent financial advisor who believes that educating people on basic financial concepts is key to helping many achieve their personal financial goals. He is passionate about delivering this message through seminars, workshops and speaking engagements. Daniel has been in the Financial Services industry for 25 years. In addition to obtaining his Series 7 and Series 6, 9, 10, 24, 63 and 66 Securities licenses,
he also has his New York State Life and Health Insurance and Certified Financial Planner licenses (CFP). Daniel is also an Accredited Asset Management Specialist (AAMS) and a Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor (CRPC). He now recruits, trains and mentors new financial advisors to follow the same entrepreneurial route.

Twitter: @dbrowncfp
Instagram: dbrowncfp

Rudy Crew is President of Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, NY. A lifelong educator and author, Dr. Crew’s career has spanned from the classroom to the chancellorship of the nation's largest school district, New York City Public Schools. In 2012, Dr. Crew was selected to serve as Oregon’s first Chief Education Officer. Dr. Crew is a renowned leader and reformer who has made it a mission to improve student achievement, especially for poor and minority students. The Chancellor’s District, The Parent Academy and the School Improvement Zone are among Dr. Crew’s innovations that are considered national models for reform. These successful strategies have engaged parents, business and political leaders, and the community, ensuring students achieve higher levels of success and are prepared for the global challenges ahead. Dr. Crew has served on numerous boards, including the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Communities in Schools, Al Shanker Institute, and the Public Education Network. He is the recipient of many awards, including the NAACP Educational Leadership Award, the Arthur Ashe Leadership Award, and the AASA National Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Crew’s acclaimed book, Only Connect: The Way to Save Our Schools, continues to guide a vital public discussion.

Landon Dais Esq., Associate for Forchelli, Curto, Deegan, Schwartz, Mineo & Terrana LLP and Community Activist

Landon Dais is an attorney, community organizer and political operative. Dais was recently appointed as the Political Director for the Marijuana Policy Project of NY (MPPNY). As Political Director Landon is tasked with passing comprehensive changes to the current NY Medical Marijuana Law, implement impactful Decriminalization legislation and pass Adult Use legislation. Dais is also an attorney at Forchelli, Deegan & Terrana LLP. A graduate of Hofstra Law School, Columbia University, and Morehouse College. He is also a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. For more than 15 years, Dais has been a community organizer and political activists.

Email: landon.dais@gmail.com
Joshua Davis is a recipient of the Niclas Nagler, Urban Arts Scholarship, which helped pave his way to becoming a recent graduate of Medgar Evers College at CUNY where he was awarded a Baccalaureate Degree of Science in Public Administration, May 2016. Being inducted into Pi Eta Kappa honor society in the spring of 2016, ignited a flame for academic excellence. He spearheaded mentoring programs in 3 New York City’s public high schools, which got the attention of some of New York City’s prominent government officials. Gathering and compiling research on trying to close the achievement gap, morphed a short documentary film about a success story that benefited from the mentoring program [https://vimeo.com/77644692](https://vimeo.com/77644692). From advocating in front of City and State Legislature to sitting on panels such as the Blue-Ribbon Committee on education in the State of New York, Josh has received numerous awards for community engagement and was even featured in online education publications and television networks talking about current politics and fighting to safeguard voter’s rights. After facilitating and designing programs for college students through the Black Male Initiative at Medgar Evers College, he is now running Alumni Relations for the Center for Integrated Teacher Education.

Email: davis.joshuaproductions@gmail.com

Mr. Michael A. Deas was appointed Director of the Urban Male Leadership Program (UMLP) at Lehman College in August of 2008. He continues to create an abundance of program awareness across the Lehman campus as well as other Black Male Initiative campuses. Always putting the needs of the student first, he has developed a program to strengthen academic skills, personal development and character enrichment. Michael Deas earned his Bachelor’s degree in Sociology from Lehman College and holds a Master’s degree in Social Work from Fordham University. Mr. Deas has a long history working in public and private agencies providing support and services for children and families. Additionally, he serves as a motivational speaker, and is a U.S. Army Disabled Veteran. Michael Deas, the Director of Lehman’s Urban Male Leadership Program (UMLP) was recently honored as one of the 25 most influential leaders in the Bronx by City & State New York. Mr. Deas was also honored by the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, as a leader who has made significant social and educational contributions to the city. Director Deas was recognized alongside luminaries such as former New York City Mayor David Dinkins, newly elected Speaker of the New York State Assembly Carl Heastie, and keynote speaker, State Senator Ruth Hassel-Thompson. The recognition is part of the chamber’s African-American heritage celebration, an annual event honoring leading African-American men and women for their dedication to the community. Eight other notable community leaders were also celebrated at the event.

Email: MICHAEL.DEAS@lehman.cuny.edu
McKenley Dieudonne is from Port of Prince, Haiti. He came to America when he was three months old and lived his entire life in Brooklyn, New York. He has no siblings, so he learned responsibility at an early age. His dad is a supervisor at Steiner Studio and his mom works with elderly patients. He is very friendly and respectful when it comes to meeting people. Music is his first passion, as he produces, writes and raps. He is now at Medgar Evers College studying Biology where he hopes to become a Forensic Dentist and also a Music Producer.

Email: Mckenleydieudonne@yahoo.com

Jerry "Wonda" Duplessis was born and raised in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. At 14, he began playing the bass. Early influences at this time included Aston Barrett, and James Jamerson. At 16, he was sent to the US and was raised by his father and his aunt who was also Wyclef’s mother. The basement of their family home soon became their home studio. Jerry Wonda and Wyclef Jean's producing would take off with The Fugees. Their cover of the Roberta Flack classic, "Killing Me Softly" sung by lead vocalist Lauryn Hill reached No. 2 on the Pop charts and No. 1 on the R&B charts. Co-produced by Wonda, their album The Score would become one of the best-selling hip hop albums of all time gaining worldwide recognition.

Email: ardenaltino@gmail.com

Toney Earl, Jr. is the Founder and Executive Director of M.A.D.E. Transitional Services. His background and personal experience is a testament to the power of change and personal conviction. His passion is deeply rooted in the creation of this organization. In 2006, he was arrested for the possession of a controlled substance; this resulted in three and a half years of incarceration in a New York State prison. After satisfying his sentence as a non-violent drug offender in 31 months, he returned to his community in 2008. Upon his reentry to the community, he completed his 5-year post supervision in just 42 months, maintained employment and attended school without incurring a single infraction.
Darnell Edmonds began his formal career in experiential marketing and promotions as an intern working for Sean “Diddy” Combs’ executive office, Sean Combs Enterprises. Edmonds’ relentless determination, hard work and ability to think outside of the box was quickly noticed, allowing him to transcend through the ranks and gain a vast wealth of knowledge surrounding the business. This knowledge accompanied with key relationships he fostered permitted him to not only excel within Bad Boy Worldwide but throughout his entire career. Later, Mr. Edmonds was presented with the opportunity to become Director of Marketing at Power Moves Inc. (PMI), handling experiential marketing for high profiled clients such as McDonald’s, Estée Lauder, Viacom, The Princeton Review and HBO. He would work at PMI for 5 years and then make the exciting decision to venture out and start his own business. Currently, Edmonds is the Multicultural Brand Champion at Greenhouse Agency, a strategic experiential marketing agency creating smart and innovative solutions aimed at World-Renowned brands looking for personalized emotional connections with consumers.

Email: darnelledmonds@gmail.com

Walla Elsheikh is the Founder and Executive Director of Birthright AFRICA where she drives the organization’s mission to inspire youth and young adults of African descent to explore their cultural roots and legacy of innovation in the US and Africa. Walla recently led efforts that successfully launched the pilot Birthright AFRICA program with 7 students from the CUNY Black Male Initiative. The Birthright AFRICA Scholars explored cultural sites, museums, universities and businesses highlighting historic figures and present day leaders and entrepreneurs of African descent in NY, DC, and culminated with a 10-day trip to Ghana. She brings over 15 years of management and leadership experience in both the private and public sectors to the Birthright AFRICA mission and vision leveraging her business background including financial analysis, strategy, and consulting with a passion for education to support Scholars with fulfilling their leadership, entrepreneurial, and financial aspirations. Walla has served as the Program Director of the Food Education Fund, a NYC based non-profit partner of the Food and Finance High School, where she oversaw day to day operations and strategic management including the internship and jobs program. Through the Education Pioneers Fellowship, Walla served as the Director of Education Strategy and Partner Engagement at Global Skills Exchange (GSX) in Alexandria, VA where she led the articulation of GSX’s mission to provide comprehensive solutions for educational organizations that strengthen the preparation of students to meet the skills demand in the 21st century economy. Walla also served as an External Relations Consultant to Life Pieces To Masterpieces (LPTM) in Washington, DC where she supported community awareness and fundraising to drive the organization’s mission of using artistic expression to develop character and leadership, unlock potential, and prepare African American boys and young men to transform their lives and communities. Walla holds a Masters in Business Administration in Strategic Management and Social Innovation from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, where she was the President of Net Impact and a recipient of the Distinguished Public Citizen Award. Prior to business school, Walla taught and worked in financial literacy after four years as a Financial Associate at Goldman, Sachs & Co., where she supported the 2006 $2.2 billion Global Securities Services – Prime Brokerage business. She received a Bachelors of Business Administration in
Finance and minor in Economics from Pace University in 2002. Walla was born in Sudan and grew up primarily in Sweden and Uganda before her family immigrated to the U.S.
Email: walla@birthrightafrica.org

Lisa Evelyn is the Wellness Specialist & Programs Director for the Center for Women’s Development since 2016. She provides an array of workshops, services and programs to help develop women and LGBTQIA students on campus. Her goal is to bring the importance of wellness and healthy lifestyle practices and addressing issues regarding violence and resource deficits which disproportionately impact the lives of women, promoting their self-empowerment, self-awareness, and self-actualization through holistic education and support. Services currently offered in the Center include Stress Free Zone, SHADES Club, She Thrives leadership series, mentoring and internship opportunities, workshops on health, domestic violence, parenting, and relationships.
Email: levelyn@mec.cuny.edu

Lurie Daniel Favors is an activist and attorney committed to racial and social justice. Before graduating from New York University School of Law as a Root-Tilden-Kern public interest scholar, Daniel Favors co-founded Sankofa Community Empowerment, Inc., a nonprofit organization designed to empower racially disenfranchised communities. The Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College of the City of New York named Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq. as its general counsel in Fall 2016.
Email: lfavors@mec.cuny.edu

Corey Fernandes is the Vice President of Business Development and Member Relations at Municipal Credit Union (MCU). MCU, the oldest credit union in New York State and one of the oldest and largest credit unions in the country, with more than 425,000 members and over $2.7 billion in assets. Corey has been with MCU for more than 12 years and has a passion for assisting people. This passion led him to become a Mortgage Loan Originator for MCU to assist New Yorkers with their dream of homeownership. In 2012, after many years of assisting credit union members with their mortgage needs, Corey was promoted to his current role of Vice President. His primary responsibility is to increase the number of members that the credit union serves and provide continued value to the credit union’s existing membership. Before joining MCU, Corey held positions at large for profit banks including Washington Mutual and Bank of America. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Marketing from St. John’s University and has a Master of Science in Finance from Baruch College. He also volunteers and finds ways to give back to individuals who are less fortunate. For the past five years he has organized a group to cook thanksgiving dinner for cancer patients who are residing at American Cancer Society’s Hope Lodge in Manhattan. He also organizes an annual holiday turkey give-a-way for select
community groups and individuals of the community. In addition, he serves on the junior board of the Mt. Sinai’s Adolescent Health Center, a board member of the Black Male Initiative program at CUNY and a board member of the New York City College of Technology Foundation.

Email: cfernandes@nymcu.org

**Trenelle Gabay, Advocate and Wife of Carey Gabay.** Trenelle Gabay has been an innovative icon in the high fashion hair and makeup industry. She used her craft to give back by volunteering with Dress for Success, which is an organization to empower women to achieve economic independence. While working in tandem with industry related philanthropic organizations, such as Locks of Love, a nonprofit, which provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children suffering from long term medical hair loss. After losing her husband Carey Gabay to gun violence it has invariably bolstered her efforts in becoming an advocate for combating social deprivation in their many forms. In an attempt to uphold his legacy and preserve his morals, she founded the Carey Gabay Foundation using the same principles that Carey lived by, kindness, integrity and humanity. Her renewed purpose is turning grievance to action and indifference to compassion while working with communities in creating solutions to improve a better more sustainable environment where no one else has to endure similar tragedies.

Email: trenellergabay@gmail.com

**Richard E. Green** is a fifty (50) year Brooklyn Resident who graduated Erasmus Hall High School, served in The US Marine Corps, and is a veteran of the Vietnam War - Intelligence Unit. Green is an Adjunct/Lecturer in Social & Behavioral Sciences at Medgar Evers College. Green Met with President Clinton and Attorney General Reno on Community Youth and Police Relations in 1995 and 1999. He is also a member of the National Advisory Board, Police Executive Research Foundation (P.E.R.F). Mr. Green attributes his success to a strong relationship with God, wife, family, five children, two grandchildren, a great grand-daughter and loving circle of friends and a supportive community.
**Pamela Jackson** is Director of Student Success for a private college in Brooklyn and the Co-owner of She Thrives, a women's leadership training company. As Director of Student Success, Pamela provides resources to students that address self, relationships, and community. She creates programming and partnerships with local organizations which nurture student wellness. Her work addresses a student's holistic needs, personal and professional life outside of the classroom, that when left unaddressed distract from their education. She has led large-scale partnerships between private universities, high schools, and middle schools, creating curriculum for students to influence institutional culture. Pamela has taught her original curriculum of therapeutic personal storytelling at The New School, CUNY, and social service agencies throughout NYC. As co-owner of She Thrives, Pamela designs and facilitates a leadership intensive teaching students and professionals Leadership Wellness, how to value and empower yourself and others at the same time. The Mother-Daughter is her founding leadership tool teaching mothering and daughtering as leadership styles, a conflict resolution strategy that balances communication in any setting. Pamela has a Bachelors from The New School, a Masters in Fine Arts from Sarah Lawrence College and a Masters in Clinical Social Work from Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College. She currently resides in Brooklyn, New York.

Email: pamelasjackson@gmail.com  
Facebook: pamelasjackson  
Instagram: @shethrivesleadership

**Dominic Joseph** was born and raised in Jamaica. He moved to Brooklyn and is now a Hunter College senior with a major in Mathematics and a minor in African, Puerto Rican and Latino studies. He aspires to be an educator at every level and ultimately becoming a college professor with a PhD in mathematics. At Hunter College, he holds a position with the Black Male Initiative as a Team Leader, Peer Mentor and Marketing Strategist. Through the support of BMI, he has found an opportunity to intern as a Teaching Fellow at Breakthrough New York, and as a teaching assistant at the Harlem Children Zone. He has seen the power of effective mentoring, so he and strives to be an effective mentor and positive influence like those who have come before him.

Email: Dominic.Joseph39@myhunter.cuny.edu

**Joyann Kershaw** is a sophomore of Medgar Evers College and a proud resident of Brooklyn, New York. In her first year, she became a volunteer for the student government association and a mentee in the PBI program. By her second semester, she joined the Center for Women's Development under the mentorship of Lisa Evelyn. With Evelyn's help, Joyann received the CUNY Students in Service to Women Award. Joyann believes without a doubt that the road to excellence is more productive when it is shared with those who mentor.
Kia Lowe currently serves as Vice President National Accounts for the Lancôme cosmetics brand. In this capacity, she is responsible for the sales and marketing of Lancôme at the fast growing retailer, Sephora. She has been with the Lancôme brand for 4 years. Prior to her current role, she was AVP of Trade Marketing responsible for bringing Lancôme makeup, skincare and fragrances to life at Sephora. She previously managed the Eye Category on the makeup team, overseeing such launches as Grandiôse mascara. In her 6 years at parent brand, L’Oreal USA, she has worked on the Interactive Marketing team for the International Designer Collections portfolio and Ralph Lauren Fragrances International Product Development team. Kia leveraged her MBA from Columbia Business School to make the transition into Beauty. She was selected from a pool of over 500 applicants to participate in L’Oreal’s Management Development Program. Prior to business school, she was an Investment Banker with Banc of America Securities and Updata Advisors (now Signal Hill).

Email: kia.lowe@gmail.com

Thomas Martin, LinkedIn
TMartin@linkedin.com

James B. Milliken is Chancellor of The City University of New York, the nation’s leading urban public university. Mr. Milliken, a lawyer by training, was appointed Chancellor and distinguished professor of law at the CUNY School of Law in 2014. He previously served as president of the University of Nebraska for a decade, where he held faculty appointments in the schools of law and public administration, and as senior vice president of the 16-campus University of North Carolina. At CUNY, Mr. Milliken has developed and implemented initiatives to improve access to higher education in New York City, especially for underrepresented groups and the city’s most vulnerable youth, helped scale up innovative programs to ensure that more students attain graduation in a timely manner, and expanded efforts that provide workplace experience and advance the opportunities for successful careers. The Chancellor has also increased significantly support and scholarships to a number of important groups, including undocumented students, known as “DREAMers,” students who have been in the foster care system, students from the corrections system who are reentering their communities and military veterans. Under his leadership, CUNY launched its first School of Medicine, located on the City College campus in Harlem, which will increase access to an academically intensive medical education and train physicians for underserved communities across the state. The same year CUNY also opened its new Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy. Chancellor Milliken is a member of the Executive Committee of the Council on Competitiveness, the Business-Higher Education Forum, the Council on Foreign Relations, and The Economic Club of New York. He has also served in leadership positions at the American Council on Education and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.
Alan Newton came to be aware of the criminal justice system through the eyes of an innocent man after being Wrongfully Convicted in 1985, and finally exonerated on July 6, 2006, after serving twenty-two years in New York State prisons. After initially requesting DNA testing in 1988 and again in 1994 (testing was denied because evidence had presumed to be lost). In 2005, at the Innocence Project’s request, the Bronx county district attorney’s office found the rape kit after an exhaustive search with the help of the Innocence Project, who secured DNA testing for Mr. Newton that proved his innocence. Soon after his exoneration in August of 2006, he enrolled at Medgar Evers College with the support from the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund and has since obtained his bachelor degree in Business Administration. Mr. Newton has also testified before the New York City Council on evidence preservation and identification issues, spoken out on Criminal Justice Reforms in Albany, assisted in training students at the Innocence Project and has spread the word about wrongful convictions at universities, colleges and civil groups throughout the country. Mr. Newton is the former Research Associate for CUNY’s Black Male Initiative.
Email: anewton81@aol.com

Chika Onyejiukwa is the CUNY USS President and Chairperson of the 2016-2017 USS Steering Committee. Ms. Onyejiukwa parents immigrated to New York City from Nigeria and she is the third of five children. Their tongue of Igbo is spoken at home and within family circles. Ms. Onyejiukwa plans to pursue her doctorate degree after graduating in May of 2018. Ms. Onyejiukwa is a senior at Hunter College pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Community Health Education. Ms. Onyejiukwa is a member of the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women (JFEW) scholarship cohort. Ms. Onyejiukwa proudly served the students Hunter College as Undergraduate Student Government President during the 2015-2016 academic year and as Vice President and President during 2014-2015. Ms. Onyejiukwa also served as a member of the CUNY Board of Trustees Committee on Academic Policy, Program and Research during the 2015-2016 academic year.
Erika Pearson, Management Consultant, Advisory Services, Customer and Growth Strategy, Ernst and Young
Erika Pearson is a native of Richmond, VA, though feels right at home in New York, where she has resided for the last 6 years. Erika has over 15 years of financial services experience, helping companies increase customer loyalty and engagement by delivering superior experiences. She has a passion for servant leadership in her personal and professional life, and has led personal brand and financial programs for her employers’ Black Employee Networks and served as a Board member for Hip Hop 4 Life, a non-profit focused on developing strong youth leaders who are committed to their personal growth and academic achievement. Erika is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and lives by the principles of scholarship, sisterhood, and service. She credits her parents for instilling in her the importance of faith, authenticity, and education. Erika earned her B.S. in Commerce from The University of Virginia and her M.B.A from Virginia Commonwealth University. As a management consultant for Ernst & Young, she also finds time in and out of the office to mentor colleagues, family, and friends on the importance of financial responsibility and creating a future that allows you to live your best life.

Email: erikalpearson@gmail.com
Twitter: @empire_stofmind

Chad Pennington, Photographer and Member of the ExceptionAL Project
NOT PICTURED
Email: chadp23@gmail.com

Makeba Pinder is the Acting Director of the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services at Medgar Evers College, CUNY. She worked with numerous students dealing with challenges ranging from severe psychosocial issues to development of college-readiness skills. She believes that students need to embrace healthy coping strategies in order to be successful in college and in life. In her 10 years at Medgar Evers College CUNY, Ms. Pinder has developed collaborations with other Student Affairs units, Academic departments, has mentored and supervised graduate and undergraduate Social Work students, participated in college-wide Strategic Planning committees while coordinating the activities at the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services. Ms. Pinder is a graduate of City College of New York, CUNY. She completed her Masters at University of Michigan School of Social Work and she is in the process of completing her doctorate at Fordham Graduate School of Social Service. Her focus is the Responsible Fatherhood policy and young African American noncustodial fathers.

Email: mpinder@mec.cuny.edu
Mr. Sean Pryor is the Founder and Executive Director of Guns Down Inc which is a non-profit organization that brings awareness and crime prevention strategies to at-risk youth and young adults. Currently, Mr. Pryor is a Young Adult Career Advisor at Brooklyn Bridge Academy. While at Medgar Evers College, Mr. Pryor was awarded the 2012-2013 The Vice Chancellor’s Excellence in Leadership Award. In 2012, he was elected President of Enactus MEC for his leadership qualities and hard work. Mr. Pryor was a college assistant for the Male Development and Empowerment Center and a member of Pi Eta Kappa. He later became a Student Ambassador for CUNY Medgar Evers College, in addition to serving as a student representative on the Black History Committee and Student Disciplinary Committee. Mr. Pryor, a writer, a poet and visionary is on a mission to save the youth. His success is fueled by his hardship past of being a victim of gun violence, when he was shot in the back of his head at the age of 19 years old. In 1993, he was sentenced to 19 years in prison for shooting someone. Upon his release in 2003, Mr. Pryor has published a book entitled “Ills of the Game” which warns the reader about the destructive lifestyle that drugs and violence have on a community. He also is the Executive Producer of the film “Before I Go.” When asked about his evolution, Mr. Pryor stated “Life is a journey through the good and bad times but never lose focus - You are here for a reason! Now go seek it and do it.” To learn more about the Guns Down organization, please contact Mr. Sean Pryor at www.gunsdown.org

Email: gunsdown@gmail.com; seant.pryor@aol.com

Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, 43rd Assembly District in Brooklyn

Diana C. Richardson represents the 43rd Assembly District in Brooklyn, which includes the neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Wingate and East Flatbush. This fearless leader is a first generation native of Crown Heights, Brooklyn and of West Indian descent. With a strong passion for community, Richardson has worked to improve the overall welfare of her neighbors through raising awareness on key issues such as housing, juvenile justice, and criminal justice reform. Richardson is a member on the Assembly standing committees on Banks, Children and Families, Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, Mental Health, Small Business, the Women’s Caucus, and the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus where she holds an executive role on its Women of Color Sub-Committee as Secretary.

Email: RichardsonD@nyassembly.gov

Emond Richardson
Emond Richardson is an entrepreneur with over 10 years of experience leading teams, account management, and identifying potential pitfalls and solutions for businesses and individuals. He is the agent & owner of the Richardson State Farm Agency. Through relationship building, he helps his customers protect what they care about most. Emond manages a dynamic group of folks, whose mission is to help people manage the risks of everyday life, recover from the unexpected and realize their dreams. Prior to opening his own business, Emond built a career in sales and management at Bloomberg, L.P. He was inspired to strike out on his own after Mike Bloomberg returned as CEO and gave several talks proclaiming his firing at Salomon as the best thing to happen because it gave him the push he needed to start his own business. Emond earned his Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Binghamton University in 2005. He regularly attends continuing education classes and industry seminars to stay abreast of the latest insurance and finance trends. Emond lives in Bronx, N.Y. with his loving wife, Jenai, and brand new baby girl, Eden. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family & friends, weight training, and traveling.

Email: EMOND.RICHARDSON.F21D@statefarm.com
Website: www.WeInsureNYC.com
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/emondrichardson/
Facebook: WeInsureNYC
Instagram: WeInsureNYC

Angel Seda, Alumni of Medgar Evers College, Class of 2017
NOT PICTURED
angelseda@gmail.com

Shawn Rux is the Director of School Renewal for the NYC Department of Education. Before that he spent 6 years as the Principal for Middle School 53 in Far Rockaway, Queens. Rux has been nominated for a Daily News Hometown Heroes in Education award for his extraordinary efforts to turn around the troubled school and instill pride in his young students.

Devon Simmons, John Jay College Urban Male Initiative and College Initiative, Senior at John Jay College
Devon Simmons is a Harlem native who currently resides in the Bronx. He made his way to John Jay in 2012 by way of the Prison to College Pipeline program (P2CP). During his freshman year at Otisville Correctional Facility his work was selected into John Jay’s Finest the yearly published book of literary works selected by faculty in the English department. After his release serving 15 ½ years, he immediately enrolled at Hostos Community College where he graduated with Honors becoming of the first from the P2CP program. He also is a part-time student at Columbia University's Justice-in-Education Scholars program. As a Criminal Justice major and English minor, his goal is to change the narrative of those formerly incarcerated and promote the importance of education to empower communities worldwide.
Esmeralda Simmons
Esmeralda Simmons is the founding Executive Director of the Center for Law and Social Justice, a community-based legal institution, based at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, which conducts racial justice legal and public policy campaigns. Ms. Simmons is a prominent attorney who specializes in racial justice issues such as voting rights, educational inequity, and human rights violations in the US. She has led many major impact legal victories, e.g., for voting rights and fair redistricting, against police violence, for education reform, against employment discrimination, and for due process for parents in the child welfare system. During her career, she has served as New York State’s First Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights, as Vice-Chair of the NYC Districting Commission, as a citywide member of the NYC Board of Education, and as a civil rights attorney for the city, state, and federal governments. She is politically active and a frequent community volunteer. The mother of three adult sons and the grandmother of seven, Ms. Simmons resides with her husband, Lesly Jean-Jacques, in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community of Brooklyn, New York.

Email: esimmons@mec.cuny.edu

Rev. F. Romall Smalls has been described as a dynamic preacher, public thinker, educator and social commentator. He is a Senior Affiliate Chaplain at New York University (NYU), Pastoral/Spiritual Care Counselor at the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) the nations' larger HIV/AIDS service center and Associate Minister for Social Justice at Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, NY. Through his work with the Student Christian Movement of NYC (@SCMnyc), Rev. Smalls seeks to link student’s faith with Christ's call for social justice on campus and throughout the global village. As both an ordained Affirming and Welcoming Baptist minister, professional journalist and media consultant he loves to express himself and share encouraging messages and prayers on social media. You can find some of his current and past work from Religion News Service (RNS), The New York Times, Gannett Newspapers and Scholastic News on-line. He earned his Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree from Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York where his multi-media thesis project, "Living Water: Reflections of Faith" was awarded the prestigious Malcolm Boyd Veritas Award for his work in social justice on behalf of the SGL/LGBTQ community. Rev. Smalls regularly seeks to put his faith into action and has participated in #BlackLivesMatter sit-ins, anti-gun violence marches, and Queer and Trans rights protests.

Twitter and Instagram: @romall06
Devante Tate, Black Lives Matter NYC Coalition

Devante Tate is a native and resident of Brooklyn, NY. He is the co-founder of a grassroots organization called Afrikans Helping Afrikans which provides security and know your rights training and he is also apart of the Black Lives Matter NYC Coalition. He has been organizing since November of 2014 focusing his organizing around police brutality, mass incarceration, education and rezoning. He is heavily passionate about the attacking the issues that tends to plague the black youth in inner cities and bringing attention to them. He also does many work on Rikers Island with the youth from 16-24 years old.

Email: dev.tate93@gmail.com
Facebook: Devante Tate
Instagram: BlackOnBothSides_

Saundra Thomas

Saundra Thomas, Vice-President of Community Affairs at WABC-TV, has made community service the center of her life. Thomas celebrates nearly 3 decades at Channel 7. Thomas oversees all on-air public service announcements, community outreach and station community partnerships and projects for the tri-state. A recent candidate for City Council and an active board member, Saundra has served as a board member of Jazz Reach and Global Action Project; is the current Board Chair for Council for Unity, Chair Emeritus for Dancewave and sits on the boards of the New York Women in Communications Foundation, advisory boards of NYC Young Men’s Initiative and Services for the Underserved as well as the Communications Committee for the YMCA of Greater New York. Saundra is a recent recipient of an honorary doctorate in humane letters from St. Francis College (Brooklyn), holds a B.A. in Journalism from Rutgers University and an M.A. in Media Studies from the New School. She is a proud and enthusiastic resident of Ditmas Park, Brooklyn, where she lives with her family.

Email: Saundra.P.Thomas@abc.com
Facebook: Saundra Thomas
Instagram: @spthomas126
Twitter: @abcsaundra and @citycouncilsaun

Rev. Conrad Bennette Tillard Sr., M.Div. Th.M., is the immediate past Senior Minister, of the Nazarene Congregational Church a 140-year-old United Church of Christ Congregation (UCC) in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn where he served from 2006 to 2016. Rev. Tillard is a Baptist and United Church of Christ (UCC) minister, licensed and ordained at the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church of the City of New York. He is affiliated with the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., The American Baptist Churches USA and holds dual standing
with the Metropolitan Association of the United Church of Christ, New York Conference. Rev. Tillard is always very active in his community, serving on boards and in organizations in the parishes that he has served. Currently he preaches frequently in churches throughout the New York metropolitan area, and host a radio program, Conversations with Conrad on WHCR 90.3 FM. He is also completing his memoir which chronicles his extraordinary journey to the Gospel ministry. Selected in 2015 to receive the Humanitarian Community Leadership Award, The Culvert News Community Awards and in 2009 as "Pastor of the Year" in Brooklyn, New York, by Church Women United and in 2005 and 2006 by Beliefnet.com as one of “The Most Influential Spiritual Black Leaders,” in the United States, the Reverend Conrad B. Tillard is an important ecclesiastical voice growing in America. He has been a student activist, minister and community activist for over 25 years. Rev. Tillard has had an ecumenical and interfaith journey. He has also served congregations in Harlem and Roxbury in Boston; and he is the recipient of many awards and citations, he recently explored the holy land. He resides in Harlem, and he is a proud father Amir, an artist, Najmah, a Howard University Graduate, Conrad Jr, a soon to be Fisk University graduate. and Barack, a second grader.

Email: cbtnewyork@yahoo.com

Dr. Judy Touzin has served as an educator for the past 14 years. She began her career as an elementary school teacher in the Harlem section of New York City in 2003. It was that experience that helped to reaffirm her commitment to working in under resourced and underserved communities. In 2009, Judy went on to found the East New York Elementary School of Excellence, where she served as principal until July 2015. In her experience as an elementary school teacher, principal and now coach for aspiring principals, there has been one constant—her desire to help create affirming learning environments for young men of color. In August of 2016, Judy self-published her first book titled, ExceptionAL: Black Men Leading, Living, and Loving to help counter the prevailing image and narrative concerning Black men and boys in America. In February 2017, Ms. Touzin launched The ExceptionAL Project, an extension of that book. The book and project are devoted to highlighting the positive stories, images, and contributions of Black men and boys across the country. For more information about The ExceptionAL Project, visit: www.theexceptionalproject.net

Dr. Michael A. Wiltshire is currently the Principal of Medgar Evers College Preparatory School. He was appointed Principal at Medgar Evers College Preparatory School in August 2001. Under his leadership, Medgar Evers College Preparatory School has been transformed from a high school of 600 students to a premiere college preparatory secondary school (grades 6-12) with a population of over 1260 students. He has put in place a unique secondary school model at Medgar Evers College Preparatory School. In this model, there are three distinct components, Early High School (grades 6-8), high school (grades 9-10), and Early College (grades 11-12). In the early high school, students undertake a rigorous course of study that includes some of the most difficult high school courses. Some of these courses include Chinese, Algebra 2/Trigonometry and
Physics, among other regents courses. In high school, students choose from 19 AP courses and in Early College, (grades 11 and 12) qualify students can take between 6-16 college credits at Medgar Evers College each semester. Dr. Wiltshire received many awards including the William U. Harris Award of Excellence from College Board, The African Spirit Award, and The Pinnacle Award for Educational Excellence from Medgar Evers College. Dr. Wiltshire received his doctorate in Mathematics and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. He earned a Master’s Degree in Government and Politics from St. John’s University, MS in Agricultural Economics from the University of Maryland at College Park, Maryland, BS in Microbiology and Mathematics for Howard University. Dr. Wiltshire is married to Sheron also a graduate of Howard University and Columbia University. They have four children, Dr. Jelani Wiltshire, Omari Wiltshire, Imani Wiltshire and Sadiki Wiltshire.

Email: MWiltsh@schools.nyc.gov

Dr. Jermaine Wright is currently the University Director of the City University of New York Black Male Initiative (CUNY BMI), where he is responsible for leading the progress of 31 campus-based BMI projects across the CUNY system dedicated to increasing, encouraging, and supporting the inclusion and educational success of underrepresented groups in higher education. Before CUNY, Dr. Wright worked at the National Urban League as a Program Manager for the Urban Youth Empowerment Program (UYEP), a comprehensive workforce development model for disconnected and adjudicated youth between the ages of 18 -24. Dr. Wright has over a decade of experience in organizational effectiveness, leadership, performance measurement and improvement, diversity and inclusion, management and operations, and fundraising/development. His educational background includes a dual Bachelor’s in Political Science and Sociology from Binghamton University/SUNY, a Master’s in Public Administration from John Jay College/CUNY, and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Public Administration with a focus on Performance Measurement and Improvement from Rutgers University-Newark School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA). In his spare time, he serves as a mentor to young people through Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., an international service organization predicated on achievement and the uplifting of underserved low-income communities.

Email: jermaine.wright@cuny.edu
Facebook: Jermaine Wright
Twitter: @drjwrightphd
Instagram: @drjwrightphd
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/jermaine-wright-ph-d-63151013