

BLACK  
EXCELLENCE  
Awards

ACDC  
BALTIMORE

*The Forum Caterers*  
4210 Primrose Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21215

**FEBRUARY 22ND, 2026**  
**12:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

In Support of the Michael W. Potts Education Fund and  
the Alice C. Thomas Memorial Scholarship Fund



## *Dear Friends and Supporters,*

Thank you for supporting our Inaugural Black Excellence Award Brunch. We are excited to have you join us for brunch as we celebrate five leaders from the fields of Athletics, Business, Education, Entertainment, and Public Service, who inspire us by their service, leadership, and achievement. They are:

- Mr. Ricardo Gamble – Athletics
- Dr. Frances “Toni” Draper – Business/Religion
- Mr. Talven Pearsell – Education
- Ms. Kelly Swoope – Entertainment
- Dr. John Bullock – Public Service

This celebration also has additional purposes. Recognition of our HBCU volunteers for their dedication and service while maintaining a high GPA, and providing vital support to the Ashland Community Development Corporation Education Fund which consists of the:

- *The Michael W. Potts Workforce Development Scholarship* which assists students with GED preparation and workforce development training stipends.
- *The Alice C. Thomas Scholarship* which supports scholars pursuing higher education.

We are sincerely grateful for the hard work of our dedicated members and supporters who made this affair possible.

Peace and Blessings,

### **ACDC Baltimore Executive Team**

Phillip P. Young, Executive President and Chairman  
Keitha N. Robinson, Vice President Development, Campaign Chair  
Jonathan A. Mangana, Chief Executive Officer, Co-Chair  
David A. Parker, Chief Operating Officer  
JeNelle R. Parker, Chief Financial Officer  
Tiffany J. Jones, Vice President Communications  
Shekia N. Caldwell, Board of Directors Executive Administrator





Ashland Community Development Corporation

## **Building Baltimore Better!**

### *Mission & Purpose*

The City of Baltimore has long faced complex challenges, including vacant properties, limited access to quality education, food insecurity, unemployment, declining life expectancy, and persistent poverty. These issues have constrained growth and reduced opportunity for many families and neighborhoods. In response to these realities, a group of committed community leaders came together in 1997 with a shared vision to confront these challenges directly and create meaningful, lasting change.

From that vision, the Ashland Community Development Corporation was established in the Church Square community of East Baltimore, operating as ACDC Baltimore. Founded as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, ACDC Baltimore was created to deliver quality community services designed to address socio economic disadvantages affecting Baltimore residents and surrounding populations. The organization remains focused on strengthening neighborhoods, expanding opportunity, and improving quality of life for individuals and families across the city.

ACDC Baltimore advances its work through five core focus areas: housing; economic and workforce development; revitalization; education; and health and wellness. These interconnected areas reflect a comprehensive approach to community development, ensuring that families have access to stable housing, employment pathways, educational support, and essential health resources. The organization embraces collaboration as a guiding principle and, under renewed leadership beginning in 2018, expanded partnerships with churches, schools, businesses, and community stakeholders to increase its reach and effectiveness.

ACDC Baltimore's mission is to provide quality community services that help end socio economic disadvantages for Baltimoreans and surrounding populations. Its vision is to foster a vibrant, prosperous, and growing Baltimore through extraordinary community development solutions and activities. Through strategic partnerships, strong leadership, and a continued commitment to service, ACDC Baltimore works to build a more resilient city where individuals, families, and communities can thrive.

# ACDC Baltimore Executive Team



Phillip P. Young

**Executive President  
& Chairman**



Jonathan A. Mangana

**Chief Executive  
Officer**



David A. Parker

**Chief Operating  
Officer**



JeNelle R. Parker

**Chief Financial  
Officer**



Keitha N. Robinson

**Vice President  
Development**



Tiffany J. Jones

**Vice President  
Communications**



Shekia N. Caldwell

**Executive  
Administrator**

# Board of Directors



Fandreia Bowman



Frances L. Campbell



Bruce S. King, Esq. J.D.



Dr. Jehnae J. Linkins



**EMCEE**

*Randall Newsome*

Randall Newsome is a journalist, host, and storyteller whose work reflects a passion for meaningful connection and community focused reporting. Before joining the Good Morning Maryland team in Baltimore, he served as a host and reporter at WISH TV in Indianapolis, where he anchored All Indiana and Life Style Live!.

A native of Texas, Randall was born in Houston and raised in Fort Worth. His journey into journalism began as a student athlete in high school and continued at Texas Southern University. Initially drawn to sports journalism, he earned a graduate degree from the University of Southern California with a specialty in sports journalism and began his professional career at KTVE in West Monroe, Louisiana. There, he discovered a broader calling for storytelling across a wide range of topics.

While at WISH TV, Randall created and led The Gr8 Comeback, a segment turned series that highlighted and supported local businesses during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic. Known for his engaging energy in the studio and authentic presence in the field, he brings warmth and relatability to every story he tells.

Randall is a member of the Delta Theta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. He is the proud father of his daughter, Riley Grace Newsome, and the oldest of four siblings. Outside of work, he enjoys connecting with the community and welcomes a friendly hello wherever he goes.



**HONOREE**

*Councilman John T. Bullock, Ph.D.*

Councilman John T. Bullock, Ph.D. represents Baltimore's 9th District, which includes West and Southwest Baltimore. He serves as Chair of the Education, Youth and Older Adults Committee and is a member of the Planning Commission and the Commission on Historical and Architectural Preservation.

Dr. Bullock is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Political Science at Towson University, where his work focuses on urban politics and metropolitan studies. His professional experience includes serving as Executive Director of the Baltimore Family Alliance and as Board President of the Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation. He currently serves on boards including the Baltimore Curriculum Project and the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives Foundation.

A respected political analyst, Dr. Bullock is a frequent contributor to local and national media outlets, including major television networks, public radio, and leading print publications. He holds a doctorate in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland College Park, a master's degree in City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Hampton University.

Dr. Bullock is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, a Prince Hall Mason and Shriner, and the proud father of two sons, Thomas and George.



**HONOREE**

*Dr. Frances Toni "Draper"*

Dr. Frances Murphy Draper is a fourth generation publisher, educator, author, and faith leader whose career reflects a deep commitment to journalism, education, and service. Since February 2018, she has served as publisher of The Afro American Newspapers, the nation's longest running family owned Black newspaper, continuing the legacy of her grandfather, Carl J. Murphy.

Affectionately known as Toni, Dr. Draper began her career as a foreign language educator in Baltimore City Public Schools. She holds a bachelor's degree from Morgan State University and master's degrees from Johns Hopkins University, the University of Baltimore, and Loyola University Maryland, along with a doctorate in leadership from United Theological Seminary. She served on Morgan State University's Board of Regents for 25 years, including service as vice chair.

A respected leader in the Black press, Dr. Draper is first vice chair of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and board chair of Word In Black. She is the author of several books, including *Prayer and Pen*, released in January 2025. She is also a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Her leadership has earned numerous honors, including Maryland's First Citizen Award and the Featherstone Foundation Changemaker Award.

Ordained in ministry, Dr. Draper served as senior pastor of Freedom Temple AME Zion Church for 20 years. She and her husband, Andre Draper, are the proud parents of four children, grandparents of twelve, and great grandparents of one.



**HONOREE**

*Ricardo Gamble*

Ricardo Gamble is a Washington, D.C. native whose life reflects excellence in athletics, education, mentorship, and faith. A two sport All Star at Calvin Coolidge High School, he made history as the only athlete in Washington, D.C. high school history to be named MVP of both the Baseball and Football All Star games in the same year.

Mr. Gamble attended Ellsworth College in Iowa before transferring to Coppin State College, where he earned All Conference and All American honors as a center fielder. During his time at Coppin State, he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and later chose to forgo professional baseball opportunities to pursue his calling. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Psychology.

For 30 years, Mr. Gamble served as a Juvenile Counselor at Northwest Baltimore Youth Services, providing individual, family, group, and substance abuse counseling. He founded the Fashionable Gents Middle School Male Mentoring Program, which received local and regional media recognition. He also created the Northwest Middle School Basketball League for Baltimore City Public Schools, helping develop student athletes who went on to compete at elite levels.

Mr. Gamble spent 12 years at Coppin Academy as a varsity basketball and baseball coach, long term substitute teacher, and co athletic director, leading the basketball program to two Maryland State Regional Championship appearances. He retired from Coppin Academy in June 2022 and currently serves as an Area Representative for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Baltimore City. He is married to Sharon Gamble and is the proud father of three adult children.



**HONOREE**  
*Talven Pearsell*

Talven Pearsell is a dedicated middle school mathematics educator with Baltimore County Public Schools, where he is known for his commitment to academic excellence, student engagement, and leadership development. Through intentional instruction and mentorship, he works to create learning environments that encourage critical thinking, confidence, and long term success for students.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Morgan State University and a Master of Arts degree in Education Leadership and Human Resources from Towson University. His academic background reflects a strong foundation in both classroom instruction and educational leadership, equipping him to support students, families, and colleagues with purpose and professionalism.

Beyond the classroom, he is an active community and professional leader. He is a member of Gentlemen of Quality, Incorporated, a Life Member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, and a Life Member of the Morgan State University Alumni Association. Through these affiliations, he remains committed to service, mentorship, and the advancement of educational and community focused initiatives.

His dedication to the teaching profession has been recognized with several honors, including Baltimore County Public Schools Middle School Teacher of the Year for the 2023–2024 school year and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated's Inaugural International Teacher of the Year award for 2023–2025.



**HONOREE**  
*Kelly Swoope*

Kelly Swoope is an award winning news anchor with WMAR-2 News, where she has been a trusted voice in Baltimore since joining the station in July 2003. She currently anchors the evening newscasts at 5, 6, 7, and 11 and is known for her calm presence, credibility, and commitment to delivering news that informs and connects the community.

Kelly earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Broadcast Journalism with a minor in Business from Bowling Green State University. Her career with the E.W. Scripps Company began in Cincinnati, where she worked on the assignment desk before being promoted to associate producer. She later gained reporting experience in Milwaukee and served as a reporter and weekend anchor at a Scripps station in Florida before returning to Baltimore, where WMAR-2 has remained home.

Throughout her career, Kelly has remained deeply engaged in community service, volunteering with organizations such as Casey Cares, Johns Hopkins Medicine, the Baltimore City Health Department, and Komen Maryland. She is also active in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and the Jack and Jill of America Baltimore Chapter, supporting initiatives that uplift families and strengthen communities. Kelly is especially passionate about highlighting positive community stories and helping local businesses shine, bringing authenticity and warmth to every story she tells.

Kelly lives in Baltimore County with her husband, Tim, and their daughter, Taylor, and continues to build meaningful connections.

# Agenda

Master Of Ceremonies

*Mr. Randall Newsome*  
News Anchor - WMAR News

- Welcome .....
- Awardee Processional and Introductions .....
- The Occasion and Purpose .....
- Who We Are – The Ashland Community Development Corporation .....
- Acknowledgement of Board Members and ACDC Baltimore Advocates .....
- Blessing of the Meal .....

## Brunch

- Awardee Bios and Awards Ceremony .....
- Recognition of HBCU Students .....
- Acknowledgement of Special Guests .....
- Recognition of the Steering Committee .....
- Remarks from the Executive President and Chairman .....



*Congratulations on making a difference*

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**BALTIMORE**

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THE BLACK MEDIA AUTHORITY



**Dr. Frances Murphy (Toni) Draper**  
**Publisher & CEO**

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MECU is proud to support the **Ashland Community Development Corporation** in recognition of **Baltimore's Black leaders.**

We celebrate our shared mission to uplift our communities, and our mutual investment in the future of **Baltimore**



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# Congratulates the **BLACK EXCELLENCE**

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Congressional Media Group proudly congratulates the **Black Excellence Awards Banquet** for honoring outstanding leadership, service, and achievement. As a full-service production house based in Washington, DC, CMG celebrates excellence that uplifts our community and inspires future generations.



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## ACDC BALTIMORE

Ashland Community Development Corporation

Founded in 1997, ACDC Baltimore is a community based nonprofit committed to improving the quality of life for Baltimore residents through

- Housing
- Workforce Development
- Education
- Health & Wellness
- Neighborhood Revitalization



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*Building Baltimore Better*



# Acknowledgements

The Ashland Community Development Corporation gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and partners for their valued contributions, which helped make this event a success. Their time, talent, and commitment added to the quality and experience of this celebration.

- Capture Your Narrative – Photography and Videography
- The Forum Caterers
- Mel Crockett – Musician
- Mixable Moments – Deidre Connor, Balloons and Photo Booth



Ashland Community Development Corporation

**Building Baltimore Better!**

[www.acdcbaltimore.org](http://www.acdcbaltimore.org)