



# YOUNG ALUMNI FINALISTS

Wilberforce University Alumni Association  
WUAA 2023 National Conference  
Inaugural Alumni Spotlight Brunch

Biographies



Congratulations to the Inaugural 2023  
WUAA National Conference

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT BRUNCH NOMINEES

**Young Alumni Award Nominees:** Rev. Dr. Albert Bailey Jr., Bryan Scott-Head, Janelle Hocker, Dr. Shamara Hutchins, Tommy Nichols, Sharde Noland, Selvena Brooks-Powers, NaAsiaha Simon, Sarah Muse, and Donnell Wiggins.

**Trailblazer Award Nominees:** Donna Allie, Duane J. Brown, Clayton M. Burroughs, Sunta Harris, Dr. Patricia Lyons, David J. Ragland and Monique Robinson.

**PROMINENT  
CATEGORIES**

**BRUNCH**

**LIVE  
VOTING**

**YOUNG  
ALUMN  
AWARDS**

**TRAILBLAZER  
AWARDS**

**Alumni Spotlight Brunch Committee**

Stacey Hunter Withers, Chair

Brandi DeVeaux, Shannon Tunstall, and Jamonae Scarborough.

*presenting finalist*

## **REV. DR. ALBERT BAILEY, JR. '05**



**Rev. Dr. Albert Bailey Jr.** is a native of Detroit, MI, currently residing in Windsor, CT. He serves as the pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Hartford, CT, and is an adjunct professor of logic and ethics at Wilberforce University. Dr. Bailey holds an undergraduate degree from Wilberforce (2005), a master's degree from Payne Theological Seminary, and a doctorate from United Theological Seminary. He is a lifelong learner and highly educated individual.

In addition to his academic and pastoral roles, Dr. Bailey is actively involved in several organizations. He is a member of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. and the Prince Hall Masons. He is also the founder of the "Little About a Lot" podcast and the Teerific Golf Foundation.

Dr. Bailey is a member of the American Baptist Church, the National Baptist Church, and the NAACP. He also contributes his expertise to the DEEP State of Connecticut Departments of Environmental Energy Protection.

Outside of his professional commitments, Dr. Bailey is happily married to Erica Bailey (class of 2006) and is the proud father of four children. He is involved in various other organizations, further demonstrating his dedication to making a positive impact in his community.

*presenting finalist*

## **SELVENA N. BROOKS-POWERS '05**



**Selvena N. Brooks-Powers** represents the 31st District which includes the communities of Arverne, Brookville, Edgemere, Laurelton, Springfield Gardens, Rosedale, and Far Rockaway. She was elected in a special election in February 2021. She was appointed as the first ever woman to serve as the New York City Council Majority Whip and Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, respectively.

A fierce advocate for equity in city resources, Selvena Brooks-Powers helped to secure \$95 million in restoration to fund the 116th Precinct, expand the Cure Violence program into the 105th Precinct, establish a permanent COVID-19 vaccine site during the height of the pandemic, and secure \$7 million to complete funding to build a new state-of-the-art school. A dedicated public servant for 17 years and lifelong resident of Southeast Queens, Selvena Brooks-Powers is the proud daughter of immigrant parents. and devoted to fighting for what's right and delivering results. As a community organizer, Selvena drove high-impact initiatives on critical issues, including education, voting rights and empowerment, racial and economic justice, relief efforts post-Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy, M/WBE opportunities, and workers' rights.

Immediately prior to elected office, Selvena was a manager for M/WBE compliance, external affairs, and community outreach on the \$13 billion JFK International Airport Redevelopment Program. Previously, Selvena worked for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) family as a communications director for various campaigns, including the Fight for \$15 campaign across numerous states, and on one of the tightest Congressional races to win back the majority in the U.S. Congress. Selvena also helped mobilize and ultimately unionized co-workers under the United Media Guild of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), where she was unanimously elected delegate for the northeast region.

Selvena's prior experiences in government span from the New York State Senate Majority Conference Leader, the New York City Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, and even as a teen volunteer for the first New York City Public Advocate.

She is the recipient of several awards and recognition, which includes: City & State 2023, Power of Diversity: Black 100, 2022 Transportation Power100, Powers Women of Queens, Queens Power 100, Campaign Against Hunger Harvest Hero, Care USA Hunger Hero.

A proud HBCU alumna, Selvena is a graduate of Wilberforce University, the first privately owned and operated HBCU where she was initiated into the Beta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She also holds a M.S. in International Law from New York University. Selvena is a homeowner in Rockaway Beach with her husband, their daughter, and dog.

*presenting finalist*

## **JANELLE HOCKER '04**



**Janelle Hocker** is an inspirational woman of color with a passion for empowering young minds and uplifting her community. Her journey began with volunteering at the Black Family Reunion, where she had the privilege of meeting the late Dr. Dorothy Height, a transformative moment that sparked her aspirations. Dr. Height encouraged Janelle to pursue her dreams and obtain a college degree, a path that she embraced with determination.

Inspired by the remarkable legacy of the late Dr. Mary McCloud Bethune, Janelle set her sights even higher. In 1999, she achieved a momentous honor by standing beside the statue of Dr. Bethune at Bethune Cookman University. The trailblazing spirit of Dr. Bethune, who founded her own school for girls with only \$1.92, motivated Janelle to create "A Step Higher," a college tour program aimed at preparing young students for higher education.

Over the course of 23 years, Janelle's passion for education and philanthropy led her to inspire more than 5,200 high school students across the nation to pursue and succeed in college. Through her efforts, she raised an impressive \$475,000 in scholarships for deserving students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities or their college of choice. Janelle's commitment to personal growth and education led her to graduate from Wilberforce University's esteemed (Climb) Program in 2004. Encouraged by her professors to pursue her dreams fearlessly, she later embarked on a journey to obtain a degree in Mental Health Counseling at Lindsey Wilson Graduate School in 2015.

In 2019, Janelle became a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., embracing sisterhood and a shared mission to impact positive change in society. Her journey took an unexpected turn in 2013 when a generous donation presented her with a red house in Walnut Hills. This gift inspired her dream to create a space for tutoring services, but destiny had bigger plans for her.

In 2015, Nella's Place was born—a home for girls aged 15-21, with a mission to mend their minds, bodies, and spirits. Her dedication to helping others continued with the opening of Nella's Place 2 in 2017 for girls aged 8-14, and Nella's Place 3 in 2018 for boys aged 8-14. By 2023, Nella's Place 4 was established, offering care and support for older boys aged 14-21. These homes provide trauma counseling, drug counseling, tutoring services, and mentoring programs for the children in their care.

Janelle's journey is rooted in her desire to be a positive and conscious Black woman. Inspired by her mother's impactful influence, she carries a torch of strength, motivation, and inspiration to empower others. As a single mother of two sons, Reggie, and Isaiah Revels, who have become entrepreneurs themselves, Janelle's legacy of resilience and community upliftment continues to shine brightly.

With unwavering dedication and a heart committed to making a difference, Janelle S. Hocker leaves an indelible mark on the lives of countless young individuals, shaping a better future for all.

*presenting finalist*

## **DR. SHAMARH J. HUTCHINS '07**



**Dr. Shamarh J. Hutchins** raised by her maternal grandmother. She spent majority of her career in the mental health field focusing her passion on substance use therapy, where she holds a Licensed Independent Chemical Dependency License (LICDC). Her firsthand experience with chemical dependency started with her parents and at 7 years old Dr. Hutchins told her mother, "I'm going to be a doctor."

Defying all odds and determined not to become a statistic, Dr. Hutchins excelled in her academics graduating from Cleveland Heights High School in Cleveland Heights, Ohio and going on to complete undergrad at Wilberforce University, where she was a collegiate athlete, graduating Magna Cum Laude. Dr. Hutchins earned her master's in psychology from Capella University and as she promised her mother, earned her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Walden University.

Currently Dr. Hutchins is a professor at local colleges in Cleveland, Ohio, she's the assistant basketball coach for Maple Heights High School and Dr. Hutchins also serves as a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success, sit as the Program Chair for the TJ Carrie Foundation, the Co-Chair for Black Girls CLE and on the Warrensville Developmental Center Advisory Board. She is also a proud member of the Order of Eastern Star and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.

Out of everything accomplished, the greatest accomplishment of them all is that of wife to Charles Hutchins and mom to Gabrielle and Madison. Dr. Hutchins is grounded in Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) but understands a person-centered approach is needed to build a strong bond between self and client. Dr. Hutchins started Serene Counseling & Wellness, LLC to bring a new wave to mental health.

Her focus is on women's self-esteem, mindset awareness/training for entrepreneurs, and working with athletes to provide an overall healthy outlet to express mental health roadblocks. Dr. Hutchins is led to change the game of mental health in life and sports!

**Dr. Shamarh J. Hutchins is WUAA National Subscribing Life Member.**

*presenting finalist*

## **SARAH A. MUSE '03**



**Sarah A. Muse** is an east coast native of Baltimore, MD. She introduced herself to the state of Ohio over 25 years ago when she began her educational career at Wilberforce University, where she obtained a B.S in Accounting. Sarah matriculated to obtain her M.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from The University of Dayton.

Sarah has two beautiful daughters named Ameera and Amodesty. Sarah manages to devote time to servicing her community through mentoring and active membership with the Alpha Kappa Alpha

Sorority, Inc. Beta Eta Omega Chapter in addition to her multifaceted professional career.

As a multidimensional professional, Sarah embraced one of her many luxurious hobbies and followed in her family's footsteps, by entering the entrepreneurial world as a passionate novice in her trade. She took her exquisite attraction for fragrances, which was inspired and enhanced by her mothers' unique elegance and aromatic style and began selling a variation of essential oils. She introduced oils to the community in 2000s as a vendor at various events, and local Flea Markets; as her clientele began to grow, thus did her products.

Due to high demand, in 2012, the business name of 'Unique Aromas' was endorsed, and Sarah quickly realized that her ability to advise, and introduce consumers to fragrances that complement their body and home was an innovative and therapeutic skill that she was naturally proficient at. Since the start of 'Unique Aromas,' the growth has included a two-store front location, a variety of Aroma Oil Lamps, Soaps, Shea Butters (scented and non), a create your own scent option, and an inventory of over 1200, continuously growing oils.

The Black Women of Wallstreet Movement in Dayton, OH, was founded because of Sarah being inspired by the achievements and pioneering spirit of O.W. Gurley and several of his business partners, who were able to contribute to the success of the "original " 'Black Wall Street' in Tulsa Oklahoma. The Black Women of Wallstreet Movement brings women entrepreneurs together to provide them with a network of women who promote, uplift, support one another. Sarah also hosts The Black Wallstreet Shopping Market at the Central State University West Campus, twice a year. The Black Wallstreet Shopping Market brings 30 Black Owned Businesses together to showcase in the community their business while providing an environment to network, promote, and sell their products. As the Founder of BMORE Ambitious Mentoring group, Sarah is inspired to be like mogul Anne Malone, who was a Black Female Millionaire. Anne Malone owned and operated the first African American orphanage in St. Louis. As well as made donations to the YWCA and other charitable organizations.

Sarah founded BMORE Ambitious to provide programming for women and girls in the city with the tools to live productive lives through educational development, leadership, entrepreneurship, community service, and holistic wellness. Along with that, every year with the help of Holly's Hope and volunteers in the community, Sarah host Soulful Thanksgiving, where she feeds the Men & Women's Shelter. At this present time, Sarah is working to open her group home BMORE Ambition to service girls ages 10 to 19 years of age.

*presenting finalist*

## **TOMMY NICHOLS '06**



A multi-talented creative media and technology professional. Tommy Nichols is the CEO of the Charlotte Black Film Festival [www.charlotteblackfilmfestival.com](http://www.charlotteblackfilmfestival.com), IOCTV, a 24-hour streaming network created to support African American content creators which was selected as the best /virtual event in Charlotte by Queen City Nerve in 2021 [www.ioctv.net](http://www.ioctv.net).

In addition, Tommy founded the Charlotte/Carolina Black Film Collective (which has over 1400 members), an organization that trains and equips African Americans in film, TV Production and digital skills <https://www.meetup.com/charlotte-carolinablackfilmcollective/>.

He is a founding member of Indie Media Arts South <https://www.imasouth.org/>, a subgroup of the National Indie Media Arts Field Group, created by The National Endowment for the Arts and Sundance Institute to continue the collaborations of leaders of independent media arts organizations across the United States. In 2020 and 2021, he was hired by the National Endowment for the Arts to review and recommend \$4 million in grants to media arts organizations across the US. In 2018, the mayor of Charlotte appointed him to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Access Corporation (TV 21) board of directors, and he has been board chair for the past three years.

In 2022 he was hired as a consultant for the inaugural AfroSouth Film Festival in Charleston, SC. The Charlotte Black Film Festival has been a screening partner for Marvel, Sony, Lionsgate and Fox studios. He was the video producer for the winning campaigns of Charlotte City Council women Dimpa Amara, Mecklenburg County Sheriff Gary McFadden and Mecklenburg County Judge C. Renee Little.

With over twenty years of experience in technology, media, and workforce development education, Tommy founder Power Up USA a 5013c organization that helps close the digital divide by providing technology and digital media training to over 2,200 youth, adults and Seniors [www.powerupusa.org](http://www.powerupusa.org) He is the recipient of the Business Journal's 40 under 40, The YMCA Black Achievers award, The Lifesaver award from Kennedy Charter school, The 2019 Charlotte Black History Maker from WCCB TV, and was nominated for the Mayor's Educator Mentor of the year. In addition to his many awards, Nichols has been featured on ABC, NBC, FOX, CBS, the Charlotte Observer, Digital Journal and recently the FEature Cover of Pride Magazine Charlotte, just to name a few.

His experience and reputation in technology, media, and business have made him a sought-after consultant, speaker, and workshop presenter.



*presenting finalist*

## **SHARDÉ NOLAND '16**



My name is Shardè Noland, and I am from Philadelphia, PA. I graduated from high school in 2012 and then became a Bulldog and graduated from the University in May 2016 with my Bachelor of Social Work.

During my time at Wilberforce, I was a cheerleader, Resident Assistance, Student Government Association (SGA) President, Miss. Senior and was involved with all campus activities. My family has a long-standing legacy at the University. My grandparents met at Wilberforce University and graduated in 1972. My cousin will be attending Wilberforce University in Fall 2023.

After graduating I went back to school to receive my master's in social work in 2019 from Widener University. I then started working for the City of Philadelphia as a social worker service manager 2. I am a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. I am a mentor at Committed Community Mentors, serving as a youth development organizer and have helped work the polls MLK community service and more.

I am proud to have served as the chair of the young alum and technology committee with my local Wilberforce University Alumni Association (WUAA) Philadelphia, New Jersey, Delaware Chapter. Where I have also participated in our chapter's Black Voter's Matter recruitment & engagement project, the HBCU Alumni Alliance 5K Run/Walk and Community Day of Service partnerships.

*presenting finalist*

## **BRYAN K. SCOTT-HEAD, JR. '13**



My mother Anita Scott-Head gave birth to me on Wednesday July 13th, 1988. I was named after my father Bryan Kedric Head Sr. I was the first of four boys. We spent the first few years in Pittsburgh before my parents decided that moving to Atlanta, Georgia was best for our family's future. We moved around a lot, my mom, my HERO, did whatever she had to do to provide for my brothers, Desmond, David, and Dikembe, and I.

I watched my mom work until she would reach exhaustion. I think that is what instilled this drive I have. I went to three high schools in four years and ended up not graduating on time. I took credit recovery and what was supposed to take an extra year I finished the first semester. Still at this time college was far from my mind, and I spent the rest of 2007 and 2008 working any job I could find. One day I came home, and my mom mentioned that I should apply to Wilberforce University. After a wonderful conversation and the mention of going to the military I applied for Wilberforce. I was accepted and on August 8th, 2008 I started my journey at The Wilberforce University.

The same journey as my hero, Anita Scott-Head, my future god-parents Debera Hall (roommate), and Lorraine Penn. I had quite the journey while attending Dear Ol' Wu. I made lifelong friends, my best friends Marcel Innis, Leonard Cousin, Brandon C. Scott, Eddie D. Scott, and Donald Madison. I was active on campus, I wanted to leave Wilberforce a better place than what I found it, I joined The Student Government Association, where I became 1st Vice President, I was a Residential Assistant for three years, and Class of 2013 Senior Class President. But being active on campus was not why my HERO called Wilberforce University and begged to accept all her boys, because she did not want the streets of Atlanta to take her boys. I came to work.

I majored in Mass Media and Communications and graduated in 2013 where I would then enroll in Alabama A&M University and receive a Master's in Secondary Education: English and Language Arts. I graduated in May 2016 and in July 2016 I accepted an Adjunct English Professor position at Wilberforce University where I taught for 2 years. This was a dream come true, I got to give back to the school that gave me so much to my brother and I in our darkest hour. Since leaving Wilberforce I have gained teaching experience in the high school and middle education system. Teaching kids beyond the content, teaching them to be good people, inspiring them to be better than they were yesterday.

I realized early on that I have a passion for education, just like my HERO, so I pursue it. She used to say "Bryan, they can take everything from you, but they can't take what you have learned. An educated black man is a dangerous man." I am currently enrolled at Xavier University Principalship Program. And upon completion I will be pursuing administrative roles.

I have a passion for teaching children that look like me. I have a gift for building relationships. My students know that from the first day you walk into Mr. B's classroom, you are going to leave a better person. I one day pray that I can open a school and inspire young black and brown students to live their wildest dreams.

Last, but not least I would not have been able to accomplish any of this without God, and my wife Olivia M. Scott. She saved me at a time where I was lost and was about to give up. I believe that my mother and her mother set us up from Heaven. She is the most important woman to me in this world and I cannot thank her enough for putting up with all of my foolishness.

*presenting finalist*

## **NAASIAHA SIMON '12**



**NaAsiaha Simon**, affectionately known as Ny is the Chief Executive Officer of NaAsiaha Simon & Associates Public Relations and Planning Firm!

Born into a close-knit family, she was always taught to value and support community activism and investment through direct engagement and service. NaAsiaha is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and proud graduate, class of 2012, from Wilberforce University!

Known for taking charge and making a positive imprint through all things public relations and planning NaAsiaha most recent accolades include recently being recognized as the 2023 Outstanding Young Alumni by The UNCF National Alumni Council, TEDxDayton Speaker, Forbes, Top 30 Under 30, Top 40 Under 40, HBCU Impact, Black Girls Rock Recipient, TAFT Women of the Year, and Minority Business of the Year! Simon personifies the new guard of PR strategists and has her finger on the intersection of politics, the trending news cycle, pop culture, and the HBCU sector.

NaAsiaha, a two-time brain tumor survivor, has become a mental health advocate and champion for mental health awareness. It was her own personal battles with physical and mental health that sparked the idea of a new endeavor- the Gem City Selfie Museum! Gem City Selfie Museum is to be a space with interactive illustrations and installations promoting color and phototherapy for social and mental wellness and offering FREE therapy to the community!

*presenting finalist*

## **DONNELL WIGGINS '07**



**Donnell W. Wiggins** as an experienced higher education professional for over 16 years, Donnell W. Wiggins is a passionate visionary leader who knows how education can change lives and futures. His career has spanned a variety of positions at public, private, and research universities, including Urbana University, University of Cincinnati, Miami University, the Ohio State University, and Wilberforce University. He is the Associate Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management and Dean of Admission at the University of Dayton. Donnell has held various professional positions allowing him to cultivate talent and change 10,000 lives.

As a change agent, Donnell has helped to lead significant change at each institution through strategic planning, organizational

leadership/ Enrollment management, diversity, equity and inclusion, and community outreach. Utilizing these skills has allowed Donnell to lend his voice and vision on the national, regional, and local stages as a member of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling(NACAC), the American Talent Initiative through the Bloomberg Foundation, Lumina Foundation, American Association of Collegiate Registrars Admissions Officers, Ohio Association College Admissions Counseling(OACAC), Mason City Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, Columbus Public Schools, Dayton Talent Tub, Etc.

In addition to his incredible career as an enrollment management professional, Donnell has served the higher education community as a former co-chair and member of OACAC's Guiding the Way to Inclusion Committee (2008-2013) and as an instructor/faculty member in NACAC's professional development Antiracist Education Institute (2019-2021). Currently, he shares his talents and expertise as a member of the NACAC Guiding the Way to Inclusion Faculty Advisory Committee for five years, OACAC state delegate for a three-year term, Board Member for Montgomery County Ohio College Promise, and Recently nominated for the board of Director position NACAC Board.

An inspiring visionary strategic leader, Donnell sees the shifts in higher education and has a keen knowledge and perspective on the work needed to shepherd higher education into the future. He is a passionate higher education professional using quantitative and qualitative data to tell the academy's story. Donnell is a motivating and visionary leader who encourages those working with him to think beyond the box and "imagine." He is a passionate higher education professional who believes that being ready for the future requires leaders to not just "think" but to "act" now to craft and create the change needed for the next generation of higher education professionals.

Finally, not afraid to tackle the difficult conversations, Donnell Wiggins recognizes-- and is committed -- to protecting the profession's integrity on the local and national stage as we traverse the many shifts and changes in policies and policymakers. On the national stage, he has been leading, training, and developing to create an inclusive environment and help to break down racist practices. Most recently, Donnell was selected and recognized by the Dayton Business Journal as a 40 under 40 winner for his influence on the greater Dayton community. Additionally, Donnell was selected by the Dayton Business Journal as an emerging leader in the Dayton community. Two years ago, he was chosen to participate in Ted X Dayton for his commitment to education. Donnell earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Wilberforce University in 2007 and a Master of Science degree in Higher Education Administrative Services from McKendree University. He is a doctoral student at the University of Dayton, focusing on Educational Leadership. Donnell is a devoted husband to Dominique and the proud father of their four children.