

# Sun-Reporter



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

(USPS 526-500)

VOLUME 80 • SPECIAL EDITION • MARCH 2025

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## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH 2025



Deka Dike



Ashlie Kègo



Dr. Asia Cherisse Satchell



Sabrina N. Robinson



Liz Jackson-Simpson



Brigette R. LeBlanc



Supervisor Wanda Williams



Chef Fernay McPherson



Dr. Maisha Gray-Diggs



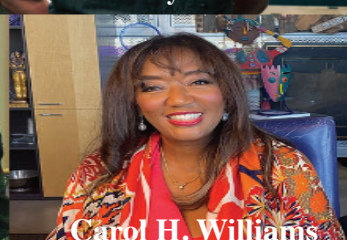
Dr. Glenda F. Newell-Harris



Dr. Cheryl Denise Ward



Tamara G. Sisk



Carol H. Williams



Carol Hood



Commissioner Mattie Scott



Kendra Lewis



Velma Landers



Sabrina Saunders



Shanell Wiliams



Dr. Carolyn Ransom-Scott



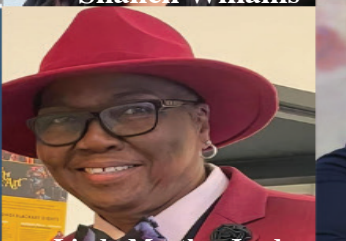
Cheryl Amana Burris



Dr. Latressa Wilson Alford



Adrian Williams



Linda Martley-Jordan



Kimiah Williams



Bivett Brackett



Dr. Nadine Burke Harris



Joi Jackson-Morgan



Belva Davis



Thelma E. Bridges

Sun-Reporter



(ISSN 0890-0930)

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

Published weekly by Sun-Reporter Publishing Co. 1286 Fillmore Street San Francisco, CA. 94115 Periodicals Postage Paid At San Francisco, California

**POSTMASTER:**

Send address changes to - Sun-Reporter Publishing Co. 1286 Fillmore Street San Francisco, CA. 94115 Phone: (415) 671-1000 Fax: (415) 671-1005

E-Mail address: SunReporter@SBCglobal.net Website:

www.SunReporterMedia.com

Subscription Rates: \$20 per year; 30 cents per copy. Member of National Newspaper Publishers Association, Inc., and California Publishers Association. Sun-Reporter has a six-column format, 1.895" per column with .125" between each column.

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

**Amelia Ashley-Ward**  
Editor/Publisher

# Women: The Light Of The World!

*Editorial*

*By Amelia Ashley-Ward*  
*Sun-Reporter Publisher*

**I**'m celebrating my 46th year with the Sun-Reporter newspaper group. I started this journey in 1979 after graduating with a degree in journalism.

My dear Mother suggested that I go and meet Sun-Reporter owner, Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, and ask for a job. Mother always knew what was best for her eldest daughter. He eagerly hired me, and the rest is history and legacy.

I believed that 'Doc,' as I affectionately called him, admired this young journalist and photojournalist who wanted to bring her

experience back to the community. He knew I loved my people, and particularly he knew I loved being an educated Black woman.

He set me free. Pen, pad, and camera in hand, I traveled the community and the country telling our stories and winning awards. I covered young award-winning chess genius Shabazz for us and People Magazine. I told the story of the proud and struggling women in Barbados. I won a national award for telling the story of Dr. Ahimsa Sumchai, who had the audacity to rise above her childhood struggles and become a surgeon. There was the story of Sheila Johnson, in her early 20s,

a third-generation victim of breast cancer.

When I finally took things over, the urgency to champion women's causes became greater. A young SF assistant District Attorney decided to make the bold move to challenge her white male boss to become the first Black and woman District Attorney of SF. I joined forces with Kamala Harris; we were the first paper to endorse her, and the brilliant lawyer won over the Black community.

Then more recently, we helped champion the candidacy of London Breed for SF Supervisor and later for Mayor.

I have continuously used my platform to uplift Black



**Dr. Amelia Ashley-Ward**

women. I wake up every morning knowing that I made a difference.

I salute all the awesome women in this issue. Thank you for working to make the community and the world a better place.

**Here's to Loyalty, Love, Light, and Legacy!**

**D**eka Dike is the Nigerian-American Founder and CEO of Omatochi, a pioneering startup transforming the future of senior care. Inspired by a personal experience with her father, Deka launched the company to provide elderly individuals with the ability to age comfortably and safely at home. Her leadership combines innovation and compassion, aiming to preserve dignity and improve quality of life for seniors through personalized, in-home care solutions.

With an MBA from California State University, East Bay and a strong background in Financial Services, Deka brings strategic expertise to her entrepreneurial ventures. Her business acumen drives Omatochi's growth while ensuring a human-centered approach remains at its core. Beyond business, she serves on the boards of several nonprofits, dedicating her efforts to supporting seniors and underserved communities.



**Deka Dike**

Deka is also a devoted mother of two daughters. Her values—resilience, empathy, and service—guide both her personal and professional life. Whether in her company, community work, or family, Deka remains a powerful advocate for positive change and a source of inspiration to those around her.

**A**shlie Kègo is a Nigerian-American artist whose work explores African heritage, personal experiences, and social advocacy. Her bold, storytelling-driven paintings have been showcased at the de Young Museum, Macy's, West Elm, and various galleries. Featured in the San Francisco Standard and interviewed on Channels TV and CBS, she creates art that sparks conversation and inspires change.

Beyond the canvas, Ashlie advocates for sickle cell awareness, donating a portion of her sales to Sickle Cell 101. She has shared her insights on interactive art at panels for Udemy, Intuit, and NXP Semiconductors, earning recognition as a leading voice in the Bay Area.



**Ashlie Kègo**

An educator as well, Ashlie integrates art into early childhood development, fostering creativity and a love of learning.



**Dr. Asia Cherisse Satchell**

**D**r. Asia Cherisse Satchell was born and raised in San Francisco, where she was deeply influenced by her mother, Lisa Walker, who instilled in her a strong commitment to education and personal growth. She attended St. Emydius and School of the Epiphany before moving on to Sacred Heart High School, where she was an active member of both the track and dance teams.

Asia went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Xavier University of Louisiana, a Historically Black College, graduating Cum Laude. During her time at Xavier, she became a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. After college, she worked at College Track SF, a nonprofit supporting underrepresented high school students in their pursuit of higher education. She later became a flight attendant, traveling to nearly 20 countries before returning to California to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a doctor.

After completing a post-baccalaureate program at UC Davis, Dr. Satchell attended medical school there, where she served as a tutor and was recognized with the Excellence in Family Medicine Award. She is currently a second-year Resident Physician at Sutter Health in Sacramento and will soon step into the role of Chief Resident. Outside of medicine, Asia enjoys spending time with family and friends, crocheting, cooking, traveling, and planning her upcoming wedding with her fiancé, Steve.

Sabrina N. Robinson, FACHE, MBA, CMPE is the Chief Operating Officer at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, overseeing Imaging/Radiology, Support Services, and key partnerships with SFHN Rehab, materials management, and UCSF clinical lab. She brings nearly 20 years of healthcare leadership, specializing in strategic development and operational efficiency.

Previously, she served as Vice President of Physician Operations and COO at a 286-bed safety net hospital in South Carolina, leading initiatives like a regional cardiac catheterization service, Cancer Center accreditation, and behavioral health expansion. She also held regional leadership roles with Advent Health in Florida.

A Bronx native, Sabrina was inspired by her mother's work managing clinics in the South Bronx. She holds an MBA from Florida Southern University, a BS from the University of Phoenix, and is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. Sabrina is married to her high school sweetheart, Richard, and they have three children: Demetrius, Amaris, and Darius.



Sabrina N. Robinson

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Liz Jackson-Simpson is the CEO of Success Centers, leading its expansion from a \$500,000 budget to over \$7 million in seven years through strategic growth and systemic change. Under her leadership, the organization has extended its impact beyond San Francisco into Alameda and San Mateo counties, transforming opportunities for justice-involved individuals through alternative education and workforce development.

A Lowell High School graduate, she earned an Industrial Design degree with honors from San Francisco State University, funding her education through nonprofit work. Raised in the activist culture of Haight-Ashbury, she developed a deep commitment to social justice, which ignited in the 1980s when she saw the struggles of youth in the drug trade and recognized their untapped potential.

With over 40 years of experience, Jackson-Simpson has disrupted systems of oppression as Director of Community Programs for the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department and at the YMCA. Her career is dedicated to empowering marginalized communities, proving that with the right resources, anyone can redefine their future.



**Liz Jackson-Simpson**

A celebratory graphic with a gold and white background and a yellow border. At the top, it reads "Board and Staff of Success Centers Commends" in a small, serif font. Below this, the name "Liz Jackson-Simpson" is written in a large, elegant, gold cursive script. Underneath the name, "CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER" is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Five gold stars are arranged in a horizontal line below the title. A gold circular seal on the left contains the year "2025". In the center, there is a photograph of Liz Jackson-Simpson smiling and holding a bouquet of flowers. At the bottom right, the Success Centers logo is displayed, featuring a silhouette of the San Francisco skyline and the text "SUCCESS CENTERS" below it.

## A SALUTE TO OUR TRAILBLAZERS: CELEBRATING BLACK WOMEN

AS MARCH UNFOLDS BEFORE US, THE SUN-REPORTER CONTINUES ITS COMMITMENT TO TRUTH, POWER, AND LEGACY WITH ITS SPECIAL EDITION HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH—SPOTLIGHTING EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN FROM THE NORTHERN BAY AREA WHO HAVE DEFIED EXPECTATIONS, BROKEN CEILINGS, AND CHANGED LIVES.

ON BEHALF OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH OF THE NAACP, IT IS MY DISTINCT HONOR AS THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT TO EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO EACH OF THE PHENOMENAL WOMEN RECOGNIZED IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE. FROM INDUSTRY TO ACTIVISM, MEDICINE TO THE ARTS, THESE WOMEN REPRESENT THE BRILLIANCE, RESILIENCE, AND LEADERSHIP THAT CONTINUE TO SHAPE THE BAY AREA—AND OUR NATION—FOR THE BETTER.

WE HONOR LINDA JORDAN, AN EDUCATOR, YOUTH ADVOCATE AND 2 ND VICE PRESIDENT OF NAACP SAN FRANCISCO; YOUTH ADVOCATE AND NONPROFIT LEADER JOI JACKSON MORGAN; BRIGETTE LEBLANC OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AFRICAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WHO WE WILL COLLABORATE WITH ON THE 2025 JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION AT CITY HALL; VISIONARY ARTIST ASHLIE KEGO; HEALTH EQUITY CHAMPION DR. GLENDA NEWELL HARRIS; MEDICAL LEADER DR. ASIA CHERISSE SATCHELL; CORPORATE INNOVATOR DR. MAISHA GRAY DIGGS; FORMER CALIFORNIA SURGEON GENERAL DR. NADINE BURKE; SF POLICE COMMISSIONER MATTIE SCOTT; PROFESSOR AND COMMUNITY FORCE DR. CHERYL BURRIS; HEALTH EQUITY WARRIOR SHANELL WILLIAMS; BUSINESS WOMAN TAMARA SISK, AND SF SUCCESS CENTERS CEO LIZ JACKSON-SIMPSON.

WE COMMEND KENDRA LEWIS SUPERVISOR WANDA WILLIAMS, AND DR. CAROLYN RANSOM-SCOTT. WE UPLIFT ADRIAN WILLIAMS, FERNAY MCPHERSON OF MINNIE BELL'S SOUL MOVEMENT (BEST FRIED CHICKEN IN THE BAY), VELMA LANDERS, THELMA BRIDGES, PIONEERING JOURNALIST BELVA DAVIS, LATRESSA WILSON ALFORD OF BWOPA SOLANO/NAPA, DEKA DIKE, REV. CHERYL WARD AND KIMIAH WILLIAMS OF WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SERVICES. YOUR STORIES ARE TESTAMENTS TO WHAT IS POSSIBLE WHEN PURPOSE MEETS PERSEVERANCE.

WE EXTEND OUR GRATITUDE TO AMELIA ASHLEY-WARD, PUBLISHER OF THE SUN-REPORTER, FOR HER EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP IN UPHOLDING THE BLACK PRESS AS A BEACON OF JUSTICE, ADVOCACY, AND CULTURE. YOUR VOICE HAS GUIDED TRUTH-TELLERS AND MOVEMENT-BUILDERS FOR GENERATIONS. WE ARE GRATEFUL.

AND TO EVAN WARD, WHO WILL TAKE ON THE LEADERSHIP FOR THE SUN REPORTER—WE WELCOME YOUR LEADERSHIP AND ENERGY. A NEW GENERATION IS RISING, AND I COULDN'T BE MORE EXCITED TO COLLABORATE WITH YOU AND THE SUN-REPORTER TO AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF BLACK COMMUNITIES ACROSS SAN FRANCISCO AND BEYOND.

BLACK NEWSPAPERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MORE THAN JUST MEDIA OUTLETS—THEY ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF OUR MOVEMENTS. FROM THE HEIGHT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA TO TODAY'S EQUITY-DRIVEN FIGHTS, THE BLACK PRESS HAS BEEN OUR WATCHTOWER, OUR RALLYING CRY, AND OUR MIRROR. THESE PUBLICATIONS HAVE TOLD OUR TRUTHS WHEN NO ONE ELSE WOULD, CONNECTED OUR NEIGHBORHOODS WHEN SYSTEMS TRIED TO DIVIDE US, AND PRESERVED OUR LEGACY AGAINST ALL ODDS.

THE NAACP STANDS PROUDLY WITH THE SUN-REPORTER IN CHAMPIONING BLACK EXCELLENCE AND FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE. TOGETHER, WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE—WITH STRATEGY, WITH BOLDNESS, AND WITH UNSTOPPABLE DETERMINATION.

IN SOLIDARITY,

**JONATHAN BUTLER, PHD**  
**PRESIDENT, NAACP SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH**



**B**rigette Renee LeBlanc, MTA, is the first woman President and CEO of the San Francisco African American Chamber of Commerce (SFAACC), where she leads efforts to grow and empower Black businesses. She also runs LeBlanc and Associates, a global event management firm based in San Francisco.

LeBlanc's career spans corporate, nonprofit, and civic sectors, with clients including the NBA, Sentac, and The Allen Group. She has served as an Event Manager at San Francisco City Hall and taught hospitality at City College. She holds a Master's in Tourism Administration from George Washington University.



**Brigette R. LeBlanc**

A San Francisco native, LeBlanc is an Emerge CA alumna and International Liaison on the State Board of BWOPA. She helped lead Gavin Newsom's first mayoral campaign and has long championed community resources and political advocacy.



**Advancing Black Excellence in Business - Locally & Globally**

**Brigette R. LeBlanc, MTA**

**President & CEO**  
San Francisco African American  
Chamber of Commerce



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# Celebrates Women's History Month with recognition of women in the movement





Supervisor Wanda Williams was elected to the Solano County Board of Supervisors in 2022, becoming its first African American woman member. She serves as Chair Pro Tem and sits on 19 committees. In 2024, she was inducted into the California Black Women’s Trailblazer Hall of Fame. She leads the Black Elected Officials of California and co-founded the Solano Health Equity Committee.



Previously, she served on the Suisun City Council (2018–2022) and as Vice Mayor. She founded several community initiatives, including Suisun City's Black History Month Celebration and Good Neighbor Policy. In 2022, she became an honorary commander at Travis Air Force Base.

Williams holds a B.A. in Political Science from UC Davis and three associate degrees from Solano Community College. She is active in civic organizations, including the NAACP, Rotary, and BWOPA. In 2021, she was named Woman of the Year by Congressman John Garamendi.

Supervisor Wanda Williams

BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS  
**BEO**  
OF CALIFORNIA

**THE BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS OF CALIFORNIA CONGRATULATES**  
*Supervisor Wanda Williams,*  
**ON THIS YEAR'S WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CLASS OF 2025 FOR THE SUN-REPORTER!**

*Your leadership is transformational and an inspiration for many to lead with confidence, integrity, and courage!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE OTHERS BEING HONORED WHO ARE MAKING AN INDELIBLE MARK IN CALIFORNIA

 A larger portrait of Supervisor Wanda Williams, wearing a white blazer and a pearl necklace, smiling. The background is a light blue wall.

## Chef Fernay McPherson



Fernay McPherson, Chef-Owner of Minnie Bell’s Soul Movement, opened her first standalone restaurant in San Francisco’s Fillmore district in April 2024. Known for her signature rosemary fried chicken, Minnie Bell’s has earned spots on The San Francisco Chronicle’s “Top 100 Restaurants” and Eater SF’s “Essential 38 Restaurants.”

A Fillmore native, Fernay launched her catering business in 2010 and joined La Cocina’s incubator program in 2011. She grew from a food truck to a successful pop-up at Public Market Emeryville, which became a permanent location in 2018.

Beyond the kitchen, Fernay is a vocal advocate for Black and female entrepreneurs in hospitality. In 2019, she became a Southern Foodways Alliance fellow, and in 2020, she penned an op-ed for Food & Wine detailing the struggles of Black business owners during nationwide protests. She also served on the board of La Cocina from 2020 to 2023, continuing her mission to uplift underrepresented chefs and restaurateurs.

In September 2024, Dr. Maisha Gray-Diggs (Dr. MGD) joined LiveRamp as the Vice President of Talent, Experience, and Diversity. In this role, she leads initiatives spanning workforce planning, employee engagement, inclusion and belonging strategies, and HR technology. She brings a dynamic, people-centered approach that’s rooted in her experience across tech and consumer goods industries.

Before LiveRamp, Dr. MGD held senior talent and inclusion roles at Microsoft, Twitter, and Eventbrite, building a reputation as a strategic thinker and change agent who drives results. Known for her ability to thrive in ambiguity and respond to evolving needs, she is recognized as a leader who delivers innovative, forward-looking solutions that grow both people and businesses.

Beyond the workplace, Dr. MGD actively supports equity-focused causes, serves as an HR advisor to SemperVirens and Reach Capital, and is President of the Oakland Bay Area Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. A dedicated mother of twins and proud Bay Oaks Soccer Club “Soccer Mom,” she embodies lifelong learning and community



## Dr. Maisha Gray-Diggs

**D**r. Glenda F. Newell-Harris is a physician, author, and health advocate. Appointed in 2024 by President Biden to the U.S. Health and Human Services Advisory Committee, she champions minority health equity. As regional medical director for YesCare, she oversees health care in correctional facilities.

A former Oakland Health Commissioner and National Medical Association leader, she has practiced at Kaiser Permanente, Planned Parenthood, and Alameda Health System. She co-authored Focus On Your Best Health and serves on advisory boards for UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and the Ethnic Health Institute.

The first physician to lead The Links, Incorporated, she has earned honors like the National Medical Association's Scroll of Merit and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Award. Through [www.doctorglenda.com](http://www.doctorglenda.com), she advances health literacy and patient advocacy.



**Dr. Glenda F. Newell-Harris**

**D**r. Cheryl Denise Ward is a dynamic minister celebrating 45 years in ministry. She is an author of several fiction and non-fiction books, including *If You Don't Know Me By Now*, and a sought-after speaker known for her bold, empowering sermons. Her work has been featured at the Essence Festival and in multiple preaching journals.

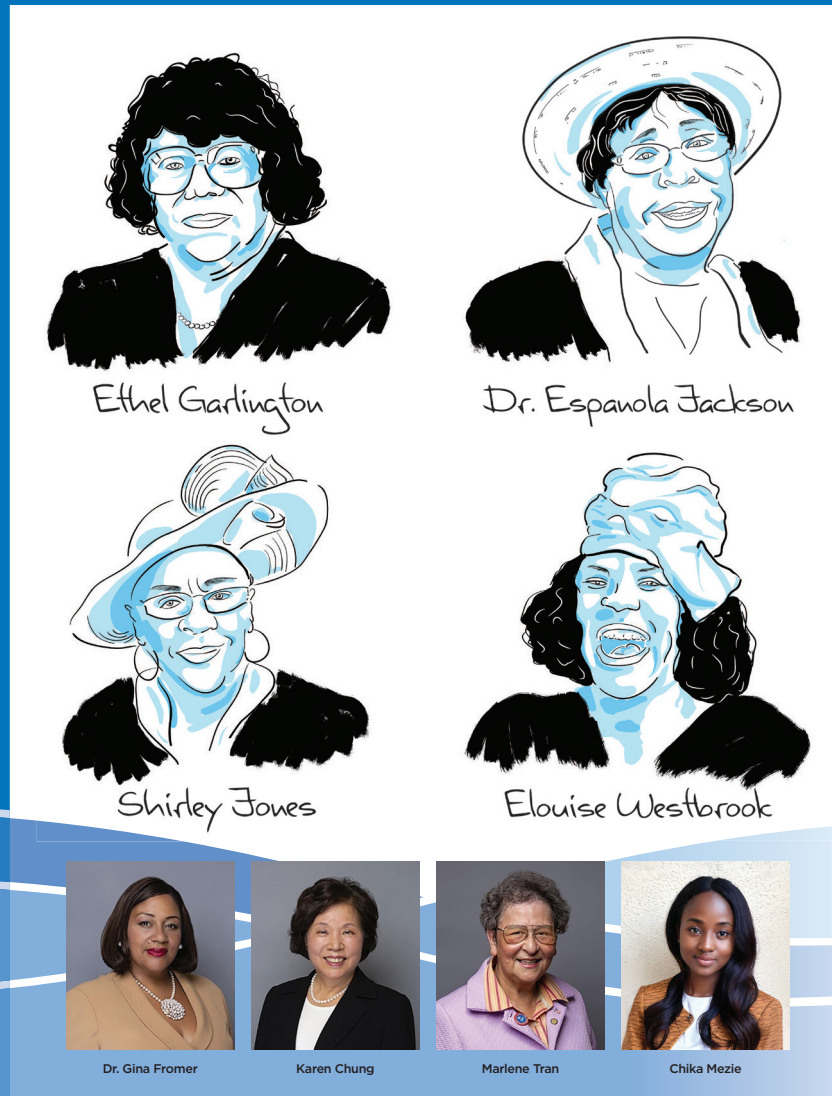
She holds a Master's in Homiletics and is completing a Ph.D. in Pastoral Psychology. Rev. Ward has pastored several churches and continues to speak across denominations and generations, focusing her academic work on authors like Alice Walker and her own novels.

Through Cheryl Ward Ministries, she runs a youth workforce program targeting those impacted by violence and trafficking. The program trains young people in skilled trades, media production, and public health outreach. Her contributions have earned national awards and local proclamations.



**Dr. Cheryl Denise Ward**

## San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Honors Past and Present Women Leaders of the Southeast Community Center



# Southeast Community Center Honors Women Who Helped Found the Southeast Community Center

**A**s we celebrate **Women's History Month**, we honor four extraordinary women whose vision and determination helped bring the Southeast Community Center to reality:

- Ethel Garlington
- Dr. Espanola Jackson
- Shirley Jones
- Elouise Westbrook.

These women were more than activists—they were mothers, grandmothers, and everyday people who fought for the health, education, and the future of Bayview–Hunters Point. In the 1970s, these women leaders stood at the forefront of a movement demanding justice and resources for their community. They fought for clean air, quality education, childcare, and social services, ensuring that young people had opportunities to succeed. Their relentless advocacy was

instrumental in securing the original community center at 1800 Oakdale Avenue in 1979—an agreement that offset the environmental impact of the Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant. The best movements in history have often been led by the women working in the background. In this case, the men held the door open to access resources, so the mamas and the aunties could get down to business. These four women weren't seeking recognition; they were

fighting for the right of future generations simply to exist and thrive. Today, the new Southeast Community Center stands as a testament to their legacy, continuing to provide vital resources, support, and a space for community empowerment. That same spirit lives on through the women who serve on the current Southeast Community Facility Commission:

- Dr. Gina Fromer, President
- Karen Chung

- Marlene Tran
- Chika Mezie

These dynamic leaders continue the work of our founding activists, ensuring that the center remains a pillar of equity, advocacy, and opportunity for all.

- In Community,
- Emily Rogers-Pharr
- Southeast Community Center Executive Director

**T**amara G. Sisk is a San Francisco-based Interior Designer and owner of a boutique firm focused on residential and commercial projects. She recently led a major renovation of her church's sanctuary, social hall, and offices. Her work blends function, style, and budget with a problem-solving approach.

She has been a member of Bethel AME Church for over 30 years, serving on the Trustee Board and as past President of the Missionary Society. Tamara also leads as President of the Peninsula Bay Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, building skills in leadership, fundraising, and collaboration.

Born in Washington, D.C. and raised in Maryland, Tamara earned a Marketing degree from the University of Maryland and later a B.A. in Interior Architecture and Design. She moved to San Francisco after falling in love with the city. She and her husband, Dr. Bobby Sisk, will celebrate 31 years of marriage in June and have four adult children.



**Tamara G. Sisk**

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**C**arol H. Williams is President, CEO, and Chief Creative Officer of Carol H. Williams Advertising, which she founded in 1986. With offices in Oakland, Chicago, and New York, CHWA has created award-winning campaigns for Microsoft, General Motors, Gilead, and the U.S. Army. Notable work includes the 2020 U.S. Census and the “Discover the Unexpected” HBCU fellowship with Chevrolet.

A trailblazer in the ad world, Williams was the first African American female Creative Director inducted into the American Advertising Federation’s Hall of Fame. She’s also received the David Bell Award, AdAge’s Vanguard Award, and was inducted into the One Club Creative Hall of Fame in 2022.

Williams is active in philanthropy, supporting the NAACP, Rainbow/PUSH, and other groups. She holds an honorary doctorate and trusteeship at Meharry Medical College. A Chicago native, she is the proud mother of creative executive and author Carol Hood.



**Carol H. Williams**



**Carol Hood**

**C**arol Hood is VP and Digital Creative Director at Carol H. Williams Advertising, where she’s leading the agency’s “2nd Gen” era with a focus on digital-first strategies, AI, and the metaverse. Named to the San Francisco Times 40 Under 40 and called a “multi-faceted creative” by Black Enterprise, she’s at the forefront of culture and innovation.

A Harvard Business School alum, Carol has also studied at Goldsmiths College and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work for brands like Chevrolet, Disney, and Kaiser Permanente has earned awards from Web Excellence, Ragan, and Macron.

She founded the Chevrolet Discover the Unexpected Fellowship, delivering \$600K+ in support to HBCU students, and created the Amplify Awards through AAF Bay Area. Her COVID-era campaigns drove vaccine awareness in Black and Brown communities.



**M**attie Scott, a nationally recognized gun safety advocate, was appointed to the San Francisco Police Commission in 2025 by Mayor Daniel Lurie. A longtime leader in violence prevention, she brings a survivor's perspective to police reform, shaped by the tragic loss of her youngest son to gun violence. As commissioner, she aims to reduce gun violence and strengthen public safety citywide.

Scott is the founder and executive director of Healing 4 Our Families & Our Nation, and president of both the San Francisco chapter of Mothers-in-Charge and San Francisco Brady California State. Her work spans outreach to incarcerated

individuals, at-risk youth, and faith-based communities. She has also served on the Chief of Police African American Advisory Board and Westside Community Services Advisory Board.

In addition to her advocacy, Scott is board president of Freedom West Housing Corporation, working to address systemic inequities in marginalized communities. With over two decades of experience and personal losses that fuel her mission, she remains committed to stopping the killing and starting the healing in San Francisco and beyond.

## Commissioner Mattie Scott

**K**endra Lewis is Managing Director at the Center at Sierra Health Foundation, where she leads the Community Economic Mobilization Initiative (CEMI), helping nonprofits access state investments in climate, housing, and infrastructure. In 2023, she was elected Chair of the Black Caucus to the California Democratic Party.

Previously, she was Executive Director of the Sacramento Housing Alliance and now holds the title of Executive Director Emeritus. Her work has earned her recognition from the NAACP, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, and the Business Women's Network.

A fourth-generation San Franciscan from Bayview-Hunters Point, Kendra holds a history degree from Fresno State and a nonprofit management certificate from USF. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha and The Links, Inc., and lives in Sacramento with her husband and two children.



## Kendra Lewis

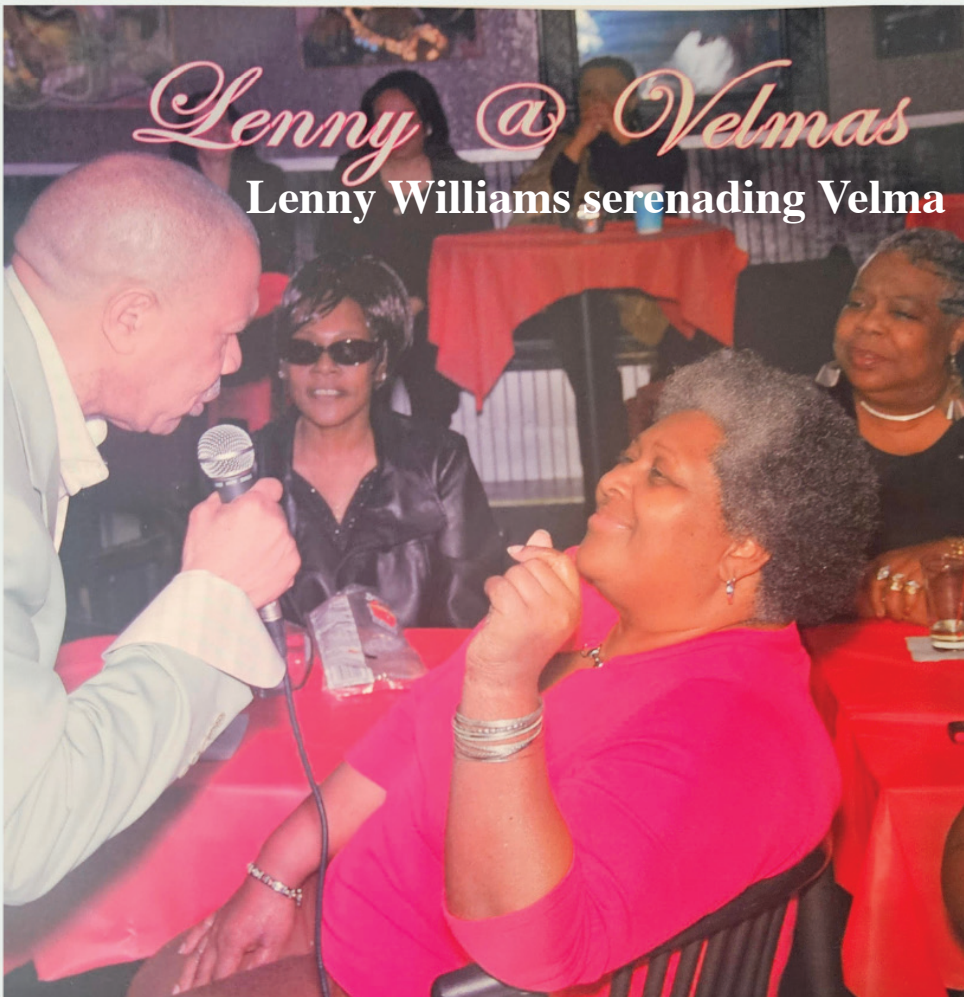
# Congratulations, Velma Landers



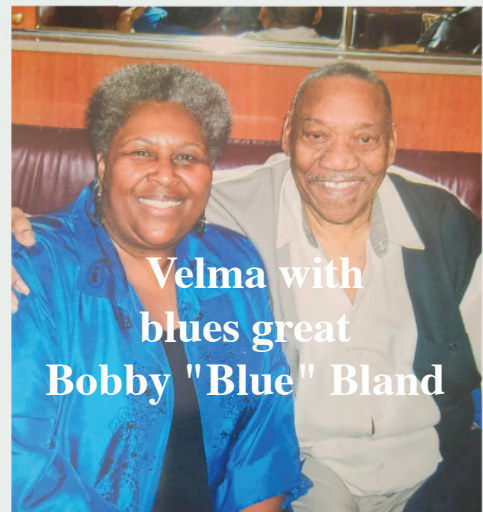
Velma with the incomparable Jerry Butler



Velma with singer Millie Jackson



*Lenny @ Velmas*  
Lenny Williams serenading Velma



Velma with blues great Bobby "Blue" Bland





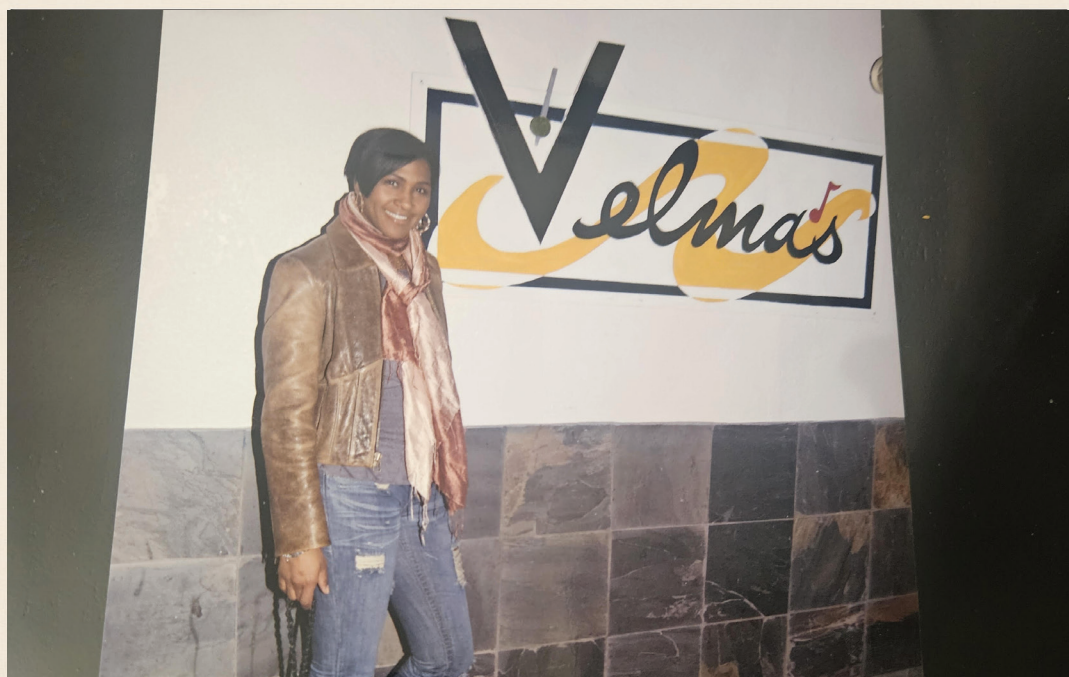
## Velma Landers

Velma Landers has dedicated her career to advocating for affordable and public housing in San Francisco, working closely with HUD to improve living conditions for residents. She successfully secured multiple HUD drug elimination grants and launched on-site Resident Services Programs, including three computer learning centers, that support education, job training, health, and family enrichment.

In 1999, Velma brought her entrepreneurial spirit to life by founding the Sunday Blues “N” Jazz Club. A decade later, she expanded her passion for preserving music and culture with “Velma’s,” a 300-seat club and restaurant that hosted live performances from local and international artists, becoming a hub for jazz and blues in the Bay Area.

Her leadership extended into women’s business advocacy when she joined the American Business Women’s Association in 2016. She founded the Enterprising Women Networking SF Chapter in 2020 and later became District 6 Vice President, representing 13 states. Velma continues to serve on influential boards, including the National Coalition of 100 Black Women and KQED’s Community Advisory Council, championing community empowerment through vision, compassion, and determination.

**Congratulations to my  
amazing aunt,  
Velma Landers.**



**Love, actress Terri J. Vaughn  
and your family**

Ms. Sabrina Saunders leads the One Accord Project (O.A.P.), a nonprofit uniting African American pastors to address health, housing, and civic engagement. Most recently, she launched a mental health program, “Look Up Live, Ask a Therapist,” and led COVID-19 response efforts that vaccinated over 7,000 people in Contra Costa County.

She also operates two schools and an orphanage in Haiti, serving more than 700 children. Under her leadership, O.A.P. has partnered with the White House Faith-Based Office and brought Bay Area clergy to meet with President Obama on key community issues.

A San Francisco native and Richmond resident, Ms. Saunders earned her degree from San Francisco State and began organizing as a child with her late mother. She is also the proud mother of three adult children: Edward, Anthony, and Teresa.



Sabrina Saunders



SABRINA SAUNDERS



Sabrina Saunders is the founder and director of the One Accord Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to working with African American pastors and congregations on critical issues such as health inequities, mental health, housing, economic development and humanitarian efforts in Haiti.

**Programs**

- Look Up And Live
- Ask the Therapist
- Look Up and Live
- Ask the Doctor

**International Efforts**  
Humanitarian work in the country of Haiti

**Website**  
oneaccordproject.org

**LET'S BUILD A LEGACY OF GOOD HEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITY**  
EAT HEALTHY / EXERCISE / GET MEDICAL CARE / NO SMOKING

**LOOK UP AND LIVE!**

**ASK THE THERAPIST**  
Men's Senior Pastor Mental Health Listening Session  
Date: Monday, April 21st, 2025  
Time: 5:30pm - 7:30pm  
Location: Garden of Peace Ministries, 4127 Wall Ave, Richmond CA, 94804

Facilitator: Dr. Ammar Saheli

**Register here**  
<https://bit.ly/MenMH>

**Sponsors:**  
KAISER PERMANENTE  
CONTRA COSTA HEALTH

All Sessions are Confidential  
Dinner will be provided  
Incentives <https://oneaccordproject.org>

**LET'S BUILD A LEGACY OF GOOD HEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITY**  
EAT HEALTHY / EXERCISE / GET MEDICAL CARE / NO SMOKING

**LOOK UP AND LIVE!**

**ASK THE THERAPIST**  
Women's Caregiver/Grief Support Sessions  
February: Saturday 18th, Time: 100pm-2:45pm  
Location: Garden of Peace Ministries, 4127 Wall Ave, Richmond CA, 94804

Facilitator: Dr. Barbara Porter, Clinical Psychologist

**REGISTER NOW**  
[bit.ly/OAw2024](https://bit.ly/OAw2024)

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Lunch will be provided  
Incentives  
All Sessions are Confidential

Due to the nature of these sessions, we kindly ask that no children be present. If you are without children, please let us know ahead of time.

<https://oneaccordproject.org>



Since May 2023, Shanell has served as Executive Director of Rafiki Coalition for Health and Wellness, after joining its Board of Directors in 2021. She's focused on strengthening Rafiki's programs and operations while continuing her work to improve Black maternal and child health. She also served nine years leading community engagement at UCSF's California Preterm Birth Initiative and currently holds citywide office as a Trustee and past President of the City College of San Francisco Board, as well as a member of the San Francisco Democratic County Central Committee.

With over 25 years of experience, Shanell has championed equity as an advocate, nonprofit leader, and community organizer. She's worked with organizations including the Young Women's Freedom Center, Youth Leadership Institute, UNITE HERE Local 2, and Jobs with Justice SF. Her efforts have earned her the Jefferson Award and San Francisco Bay Guardian Local Hero Award.

Shanell holds a B.A. in Urban Studies from SF State and is completing dual graduate degrees—a Master's in Urban and Public Affairs and a Juris Doctor—from the University of San Francisco. A graduate of Emerge California and the Women's Policy Institute, she has served on several oversight bodies, including the Prop C Oversight Committee and Ella Baker Center Board.

## Shanell Williams

Rev. Dr. Carolyn Ransom-Scott is San Francisco's Faith-Based Coordinator and an OCII Commissioner. She curates the traveling "Black Excellence, Black Inventors/Innovators Project," now featured in every SF Public Library. For this work, she received the 2023 National Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award. She also mentors college students and remains active in youth education and community outreach.

Previously, she was the city's first paid Faith-Based Coordinator, organizing over 80 clergy leaders and launching initiatives in jobs, housing, and healthcare. Her work includes the "Breath Mobile" asthma care program and a historic faith-based economic forum with FOX's Kelly Wright and the SF Federal Reserve.

A native San Franciscan, Carolyn has served for decades in prison ministry, youth leadership, and faith-based service. She and her late husband raised 17 children, including her siblings. She holds a Doctor of Theology and lives by the motto: "Building better lives and communities with help for today and hope for a brighter tomorrow."



Rev. Dr. Carolyn Ransom-Scott

THANK YOU TO THE SUN REPORTER

# Rafiki COALITION

***BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES SINCE 1986***

*We are honored to have our phenomenal leaders, Shanell Williams and Dr. Ransom-Scott, featured in the Sun Reporter's edition as we celebrate Women's History Month!*

*Thank you both for your tireless dedication to improving health outcomes for Black people in the San Francisco area and helping Rafiki Coalition continue to offer so many free health and wellness services to the Black community.*



**Shanell Williams**

Executive Director of Rafiki Coalition

**Dr. Carolyn Ransom-Scott**

Religious Leader, Activist & Rafiki Coalition Board Member



Visit [www.rafikicoalition.org](http://www.rafikicoalition.org) to learn more about our services today!

Professor Cheryl Amana Burris serves on the boards of the Alameda County Friends of CASA and the California Law Pathways Program, supporting underrepresented students in law. She teaches Family Law and Torts at Merritt College and was honored as the 2022 CASA Summer Standout for her advocacy.



A retired law professor, she spent over 30 years at North Carolina Central University School of Law, specializing in Family Law and Reproductive Rights. She co-founded the Center for Child and Family Health, a nationally recognized initiative addressing child maltreatment.

Married to civil rights attorney John Burris, they established an endowed trust supporting adolescent parents at NCCU and the CCFH. They share a blended family of nine children, 20 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

## Cheryl Amana Burris

### *Congratulations to Professor Cheryl Amana Burris (Ret.)*

The Law Offices of Burris Nisenbaum Curry and Lacy extend a special congratulations to Law Professor Cheryl Amana Burris for her inclusion in the Sun Reporter's Women of the Month Special Edition. Cheryl is especially deserving of this honor in that after retiring from North Carolina Central University Law School, she continues to educate and inspire young people, especially young girls and women of color, by teaching at Merritt College and participating as a counselor and board member in the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) program for foster children.



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**DEKA DIKE**  
FOUNDER & CEO



**D**r. Latressa Wilson Alford currently serves as Legislative Director for Solano County Supervisor Wanda Williams and is producing a two-day R&B concert in Las Vegas. In 2025, she received the CDC Black Gavel Award and in 2024, the CA Black Women's Trailblazer Hall of Fame Legacy Award. She also serves as president of the Solano-Napa Chapter of Black Women Organized for Political Action and sits on the board of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center.

She is the founder of L. Wilson Alford & Associates, which was contracted by the City of Richmond to manage a green transportation program. Her earlier firm, LWA, presented legendary artists such as John Lee Hooker and Tony! Toni! Toné!. Dr. Wilson Alford has more than 30 years of political experience, including roles as Senior

Advisor to Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Senior Aide to Congressman George Miller, and Urban Planning Graduate Fellow for Santa Clara County Supervisor Rod Diridon.

A graduate of San Jose State University with a B.A. in Journalism and a minor in Economics, Dr. Wilson Alford began her career at Sun Reporter Publications, managing eight Metro newspapers under the leadership of Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett and Amelia Ashley Ward. She holds a Juris Doctorate from New College/JFK University and is the proud mother of three daughters: Nikole, Alyssa, and Justice.

## Dr. Latressa L. Wilson Alford

*Congratulations!!*

*Dr. Latressa Wilson Alford*

- EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS STRATEGIST
- PRESIDENT, BWOPA SOLANO/NAPA CHAPTER
- INFLUENCER
- ENTREPRENEUR

THANK YOU, SUN REPORTER, FOR HONORING PHENOMENAL WOMEN DURING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH. YOU HAVE BEEN A VANGUARD FOR CIVIL RIGHTS SINCE 1944.



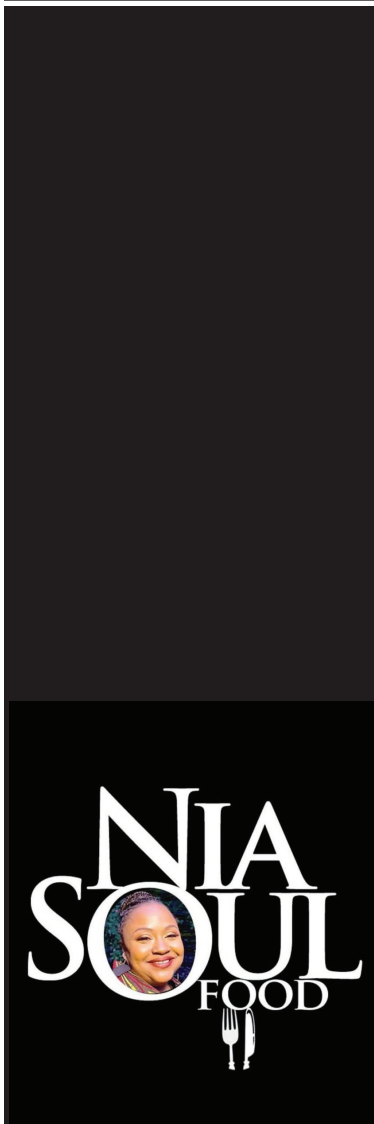
**A**drian Williams is the founder and director of The Village Project, serving San Francisco’s Western Addition since 2006 with youth programs, cultural enrichment, and community events. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she launched a food pantry that continues to serve over 400 residents monthly.

She co-founded the Western Addition Wellness Coalition, addressing trauma from community violence through Family Empowerment Summits. Williams has received numerous honors, including the Jefferson Award and two Keys to the City—one from Mayor Gavin Newsom, who also proclaimed October 5, 2006, “Adrian Williams Day,” and another from Mayor London Breed.



A Northwestern University graduate, Williams broke barriers in sales and marketing and ran several businesses before shifting to community service. She’s a National Achievement Scholar, former SF Mental Health Board member, and proud mother and grandmother.

## Adrian Williams





Linda Martley-Jordan is an educator, community activist, and current Community Liaison at Burton High School, where she also leads SFUSD’s initiative to reduce the overrepresentation of Black students in special education. She is completing a College Counseling degree at UC San Diego and actively supports Queer youth through Soul of Pride and the Bayard Rustin Coalition. She serves as 2nd Vice President of the SF NAACP and holds leadership roles on the SF Pride Board and the African American Arts & Cultural District.



From 2016 to 2022, she helped lead SFUSD’s African American Achievement Initiative, creating programs like the African American Women’s Heritage Course and the Black Star Rising STEM Program. She previously directed African American Student Achievement at Mission High and has worked across several SFUSD schools, developing college and career pathways for Black youth in partnership with organizations like SFABSE and Mo’Magic.

A former media producer turned educator, Martley-Jordan holds degrees from Laney College and UC Berkeley and a CTE teaching credential. Her proudest legacy is her family—her children and ten grandchildren—who inspire her lifelong commitment to education, equity, and youth empowerment.

**Linda Martley-Jordan**



**Congratulations!**  
**Linda Martley-Jordan**

**And Other Honorees**  
**on your Outstanding Leadership**



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# I EARNED MY CHOPS IN SAN FRANCISCO: REFLECTIONS ON BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY

BY JULIANNE MALVEAUX

**W**hen a young sister asked me, just the other day, where I got my audacity from, I told her that it probably came from growing up in San Francisco. Many of us “of a certain age” were movement children—baby Panthers or hangers-on. A Lowell High School classmate who rose high in city government once sold Mao Zedong’s Red Book—I think for a quarter—on campus. I was among those who attended both NAACP meetings and Panther meetings at the Fillmore Street office. The first line of the Panther Ten-Point Program—“We want freedom, we want the power to determine our destiny”—is emblazoned in my spirit. Yes, growing up in San Francisco shaped me.

So did some of my experiences. I will never forget the exhilaration of the May 1, 1969, Free Huey Rally. Thousands of us cut school to stand outside City Hall, singing, “Black is Beautiful, Free Huey, Set our Warrior Free, Free Huey.” A year later, Huey P. Newton was freed. I don’t remember who spoke at the 1969 rally, but I remember the throngs of us rallying together. San Francisco has always been an activist city—activist and audacious. I revel in my roots in my hometown. And though I’ve lived in Washington, D.C., off and on, for 30 years—and

owned a home here for 27—I was born and raised in San Francisco and consider myself a San Franciscan to the bone.

There are so many Black women leaders who have been friends, colleagues, mentors, and influencers. I remember no-nonsense Doris Ward, who annually brought women—mostly Black women—together at her home during the Christmas holidays. The first Black woman elected to the Board of Supervisors, she was a strong proponent of educational access, civil rights, and racial equity. She was the first in 1979, but it wasn’t long before Willie B. Kennedy joined her on the Board of Supes in 1981.

Others followed them, including Sophie Maxwell (whose mother, the accomplished Enola Maxwell, leader of the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House, was a lightning rod for community development), Malia Cohen (who focused on police reform and economic equity), and former Mayor London Breed, who served as President of the Board of Supervisors before becoming Mayor. Supervisors Ward and Cohen also rose from their positions to higher office—Ward as San Francisco City Assessor, and Cohen as President of the California Board of Equalization.

Vice President Kamala Harris cut her political teeth in San Francisco, too. Elected District Attorney in 2004, she went on to serve as Attorney

General, U.S. Senator, and then Vice President. There must be something in the San Francisco water that helps Black women soar. And not all soar through elected office.

If we go way back in history, we must name Mary Ellen Pleasant (1814–1904), who owned significant property, helped finance the Underground Railroad, and supported lawsuits against segregated public transportation. Some called her the “Mother of Civil Rights in California.” I imagine her passing the baton of activism to people like Espanola Jackson, Ella Hill Hutch, Aileen Hernandez (the first Black president of the National Organization for Women), and the renowned poet and activist Maya Angelou, who was the first Black woman to work as a cable car conductor. Activists. Audacious women. Those are the shoulders on which I stand.

Frankie Jacobs Gillette, a Delta soror, national president of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, and a committed local activist, served on several local and statewide boards and commissions, including the Sister City Committee. She and her husband, Maxwell, believed that “service is the rent you pay for living on the planet.” Lulann McGriff, president of the NAACP and a devoted educator, was a dear friend and a dedicated civil rights leader. She had a heart for the community.



Dr. Julianne Malveaux

Legacy. Dr. Carlton Goodlett was a way-maker, and he made a way for the San Francisco Sun-Reporter to tell the whole truth and the whole story. He passed the baton to a Black woman warrior, Amelia Ashley-Ward, who now publishes this paper. She is amazing, audacious, and a community warrior. For more than thirty years, she has been my friend, my publisher, and my editor. Friend first. And the voice for African Americans in San Francisco and across the nation. She has played a major leadership role in the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), amplifying the voice and integrity of the Black press. And she has supported Black women locally and nationally. Her early endorsement of Kamala Harris—then a lone San Francisco lawyer—catapulted our homegirl to national and international fame.

And I stand on my mother’s shoulders. Proteone Alexandria Malveaux (1928–2021) was one of the first Black women to work at the Department of Social

Services in San Francisco. She taught me advocacy (testifying on behalf of divorced women at the Commission on the Status of Women in the 1960s and working with the Welfare Rights Organization alongside Helen Little and George Wiley), activism, curiosity, and the power of research.

There are presently no Black women on the Board of Supervisors, which is unfortunate. There is a South African proverb: “Women hold up half the sky.” Who is holding up our sky in San Francisco? Amelia Ashley-Ward is among them.

**History belongs to she who holds the pen, and too many Black women’s contributions have been swallowed by a patriarchy that does not often recognize or appreciate women. Black women’s achievements are foundational to San Francisco’s history, and our city is at its strongest when we embrace the legacies that shaped so many of us.**



**K**imiah Williams, LCSW, is the Program Director for the Ajani Program at Westside Community Services, where she leads mental health initiatives serving children, youth, and families. With over 15 years of experience in mental health and more than two decades in nonprofit community work, she specializes in crisis intervention, group facilitation, and direct therapy practice.

A proud San Francisco native, Kimiah earned her Bachelor of Science in Administration of Justice and her Master's in Social Work from San Jose State University. Her career reflects a deep commitment to equity and access, ensuring individuals from all backgrounds receive the care and

support they need.

Kimiah is known for her empathy-driven approach and leadership in promoting mental health and wellness. She empowers individuals to overcome challenges, live fully, and thrive—whether through one-on-one therapy, community advocacy, or program development.

**Kimiah Williams**



**Westside Community Services is proud to honor Kimiah Williams, LCSW, a dynamic leader and changemaker whose dedication has profoundly shaped our Ajani Child, Youth, and Family Division. With unwavering passion and expertise, Kimiah has empowered our most vulnerable community members, fostering resilience and creating pathways to brighter futures.**

**Join us in celebrating Kimiah's incredible contributions and leadership this #WomensHistoryMonth!**



Mary Ann Jones, Ph.D.  
CEO, Westside Community Services

**B**ivett Brackett is a Bay Area leader, strategist, and advocate advancing economic equity, housing justice, and community empowerment. In 2024, her nonprofit Big+Black+Brunch launched a capital campaign to open the nation's first Black restaurant incubator and affordable housing for culinary workers. Its Brunch Masters program is currently hosting Sunday brunch at Minnie Bell's Soul Movement (1375 Fillmore St, SF) through June 2025, supporting top Black chefs and food entrepreneurs.



As the first Black woman to chair San Francisco's Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII), Bivett helped pass AB 1584 and SB 593—laws restoring displaced families' housing rights and returning 6,000 units to the city's portfolio. She led reforms that reopened access to the Certificate of Preference program and pushed OCII to adopt equitable development standards, resulting in its first contract with a Black woman developer.

In education, Bivett helped stop SFUSD school closures and secured long-overdue repairs to Malcolm X Academy's playground in 2023. Whether in business, housing, or schools, she continues to drive transformative change for historically marginalized communities.

**Bivett Brackett**





*Congratulations!*



To the Sun Reporter's 2025 Women's History Month Honorees including our very own founder of Big Black Brunch,

*Bivett Brackett*

For their leadership, and dedication to community empowerment!

Join us for brunch every Sunday inside Minnie Bells Soul Movement 1375 Fillmore Street, SF, CA 954115



 @bigblackbrunch  Bigblackbrunch  Info@bigblackbrunch.org

**D**r. Nadine Burke Harris is a pediatrician, researcher, and public health leader who served as California's first Surgeon General. She played a key role in the state's COVID-19 response and led a first-in-the-nation initiative training over 40,000 providers to screen for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

She previously founded a clinic in San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point, where she developed a pioneering ACEs screening protocol based on CDC and Kaiser Permanente research. She holds an MPH from Harvard and completed her residency at Stanford.



Her TED Talk on childhood trauma has over 12 million views, and her book *The Deepest Well* was called "indispensable" by *The New York Times*. Outside of medicine, she enjoys gardening with her four sons and sharing her harvests online.

**Dr. Nadine Burke Harris**

**J**oi Jackson-Morgan is the Chief Executive Officer of 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic, a nonprofit based in San Francisco's Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood that provides comprehensive health services and youth development programs across the Bay Area. She is currently completing the prestigious LEAD Executive Leadership program at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

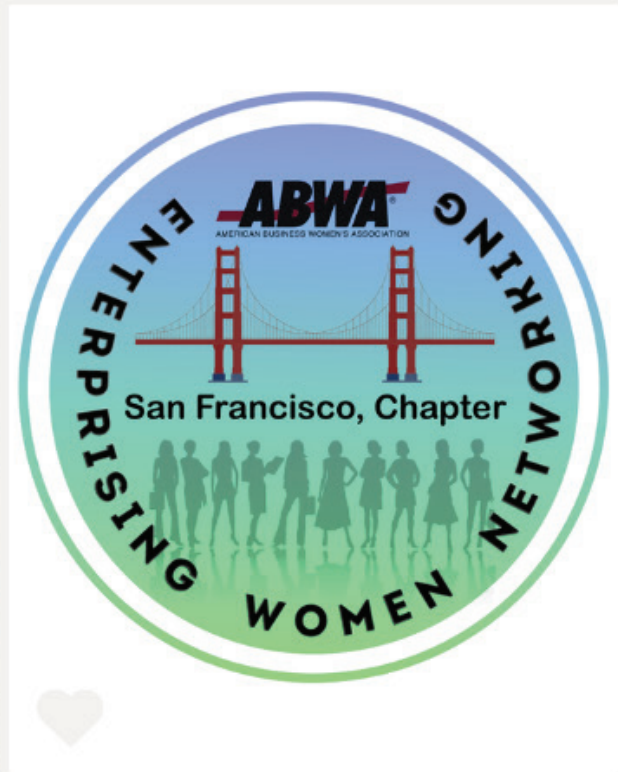
As a Bayview native and seasoned public health practitioner, Joi brings firsthand knowledge and lived experience to her work. Her leadership bridges public health, education, and housing to address the systemic barriers faced by marginalized youth. She champions health equity and youth empowerment, while cultivating a diverse and inclusive leadership pipeline.

Joi's career path includes roles as a teacher and clinical researcher. She holds a Master's in Public Health from Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from California State University. Her compassionate and visionary approach helps young people achieve academic success, personal growth, and long-term stability.



**Joi Jackson-Morgan**

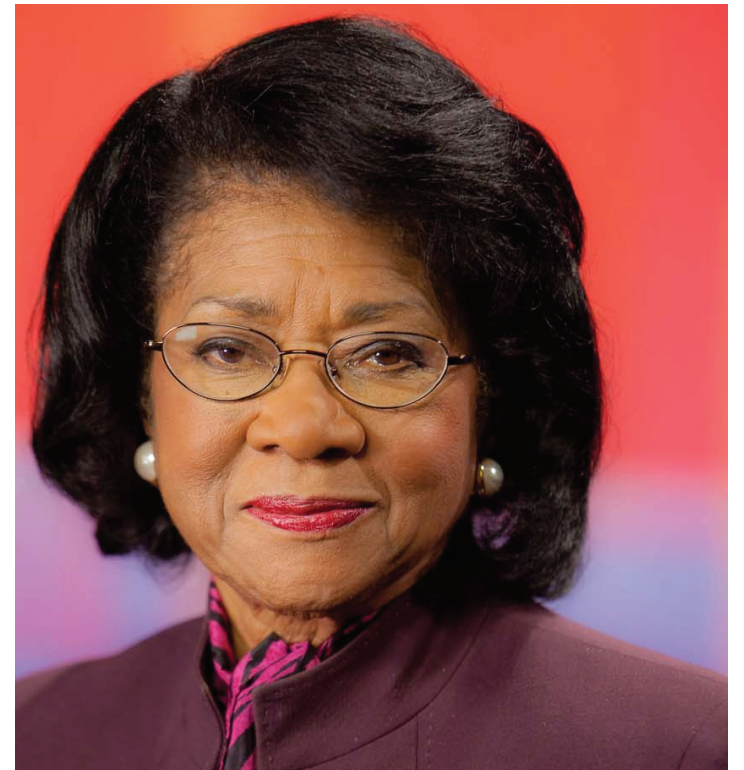
# Congratulations, Velma Landers



**B**elva Davis, the first Black female TV journalist in the American West, broke barriers in a five-decade career covering major events like the rise of the Black Panthers, Jonestown, the Moscone-Milk assassinations, and the early AIDS crisis. Her memoir, *Never in My Wildest Dreams*, was published in 2011.

She served over a decade as National Equal Employment Opportunities Chair for AFTRA, advocating for women, minorities, and people with disabilities in broadcasting. Her reporting brought Black communities' stories into mainstream media.

Born in 1932 in Louisiana and raised in Oakland, Davis earned eight Emmys and numerous honors, including induction into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame and Lifetime Achievement Awards from the International Women's Media Foundation and NATAS.



**Belva Davis**

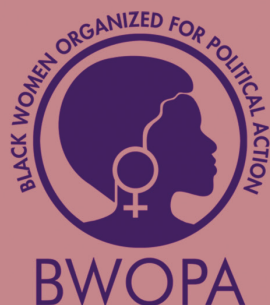
## Thelma E. Bridges



**T**helma E. Bridges is a longtime leader at Third Baptist Church and in San Francisco's community. She manages the weekly Food Bank at The Coronet, helps run the Annual Holiday Turkey Give-Away, and supports groups like The Village Project and Healing 4 Our Families. She's active in the Richmond District Democratic Club, Coronet Seniors Program, and Commonwealth Club, and is a life member of the NAACP and other national organizations.

Known for her generosity, Ms. Bridges mentors others, often sponsoring trips to workshops and conferences. She offers honest guidance—balancing praise and critique—with family and friends alike.

For over 50 years, she's served in the church's Women's and Seniors Ministries, and regularly attends regional and national Baptist conferences. Her service has left a lasting impact on both church and community.



HAPPY  
*Women's History Month*  
TO ALL THE  
PHENOMENAL BLACK WOMEN LEADERS

*Special thanks to  
Queen Amelia  
for your leadership!*



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