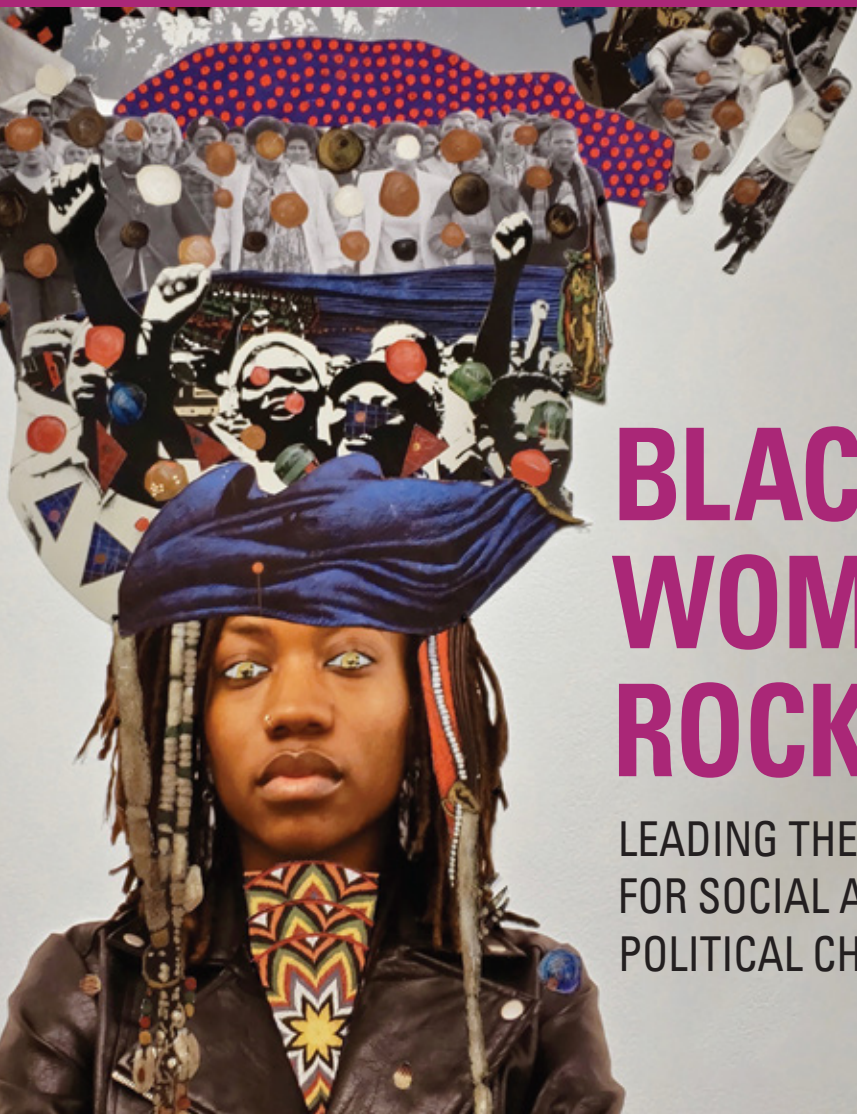


14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BLACK NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE



# BLACK WOMEN ROCK

LEADING THE CHARGE  
FOR SOCIAL AND  
POLITICAL CHANGE

A Virtual Conference Presented by the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire  
in Partnership with Southern NH University

September 25 & 26, 2020

FEATURING KEYNOTE ADDRESSES & SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTATIONS BY:



Ayanna Pressley



Susan Taylor



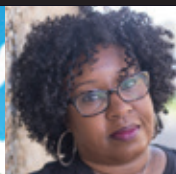
Sheryl Lee Ralph



Pat Spearman



Andrea Jenkins



CaShawn Thompson



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A man wearing a blue hat, a dark coat over a blue shirt, and dark boots is sitting at a blue table. On the table is a glass vase with yellow and pink flowers. He is looking directly at the camera. The background shows a blue door and a blurred interior.

# IT'S TEA TIME

2021 ELINOR WILLIAMS HOOKER TEA TALK SERIES

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LANDSCAPE

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WRITER

RACE & CARE OF THE SOUL

THE POWER OF PLACE; MARTHA'S VINEYARD  
AND THE GROWTH OF THE BLACK ELITE

IT HAPPENED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE: BLACK  
HISTORY IN THE GRANITE STATE

ON SHAKY GROUND: BLACK STUDENTS IN  
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

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

## ~ Welcome ~

On behalf of our conference directors, organizers, and volunteers, we welcome you to the 14th Annual Black New England Conference. We look forward to robust discussions, engaging keynote addresses, and recognition of individuals who have made and continue to make valuable contributions to our communities.

This year's conference, ***Black Women Rock: Leading The charge for Social and Political Change***, centers on the leadership of Black women, an extraordinarily prescient topic in 2020. From Sojourner Truth calling for the abolition of slavery and for women's rights to Tarana Burke coining "Me Too" in 2006, Black women have long stood on the front lines, leading the charge for social and political change.

As artists and activists, politicians and pundits, Black women play vital roles in these struggles, even as their leadership and activism has historically been eclipsed and erased. Our panels celebrate the vital work of Black women's leadership and activism past and present—in classrooms and courtrooms, businesses and the economy, science and the arts, religion and government, and more.

This year, due to the many challenges posed by COVID-19, we moved our conference online, with assistance from our partner, Southern New Hampshire University. Our conference is unique, merging academic scholarship with a joyful celebration of Black lives, culture, and history. Our goal this year, is to preserve the community engagement feel of the conference even in its new "virtual" format.

We thank each of you for being here and for bringing your voice and expertise to our gathering. We could not accomplish what we do without your support. Throughout this conference, we ask you to be active participants, stay engaged, join the discussions, and feel free to offer suggestions that will help us shape next year's Black New England Conference.

Sincerely,

JerriAnne Boggis

BHTNH Executive Director

~ Introducing Keynote Presenters and Special Guests ~



*Bithiah Carter, Director  
New England Blacks in  
Philanthropy*



*Nadine Thompson*



*US Senator from NH  
Maggie Hassan*



*Nadine Petty*

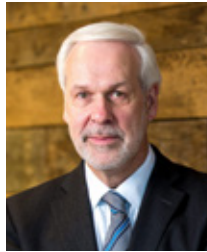
~ Evening Keynote Address Presenters ~



*JerriAnne Boggis*



*Dennis Britton*



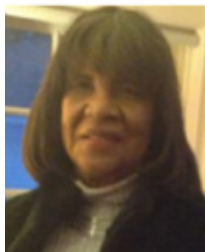
*Paul LeBlanc*



*Jada Hebra*



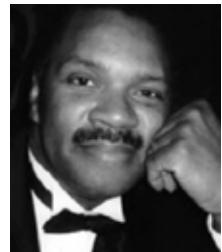
*Mabelle Barnette*



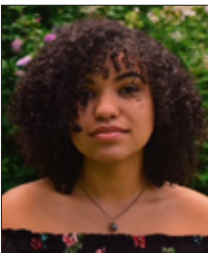
*Claudette Williams*



*Stasia Millett*



*Alvin Terry*



*Layne Davis*



*Robert Thompson*



## ~ 2020 Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire ~ Citizen of the Year

*"I was determined to create figures of Black people... that was my mission."* – **Fern Cunningham-Terry**



The legendary American sculptor **Fern Cunningham-Terry**, who died in August, is the recipient of the 2020 Citizen of the Year Award from the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire.

Cunningham-Terry entered a world where there were no African American sculptures. She wanted Black children to look at her sculptures in the future and say, "Oh wow, someone remembered us...wow, we're beautiful." That has been the experience

of both adults and children who visit New Hampshire's first public statue of African Americans, created by Cunningham-Terry to memorialize the famous author Harriet Wilson and her son, at Milford's Bicentennial Park.

Determined to create public art with figures of Black people, she attended Boston University, majored in sculpture, and became a part of Boston's artistic fabric. She taught at the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts and at the Park School in Brookline MA, while she practiced and exhibited her work.

Perhaps her best-known sculpture is "Step on Board," erected in 1999 in the Harriet Tubman Park in Boston's South End. This was the first statue on city-owned property to honor a woman and is also a stop on the Boston Women's Heritage Trail. Cunningham-Terry's last sculpture, celebrating Black veterans, is slated for installation in Boston's Nubian Square at a forthcoming date.

In recognition of her service to the greater community, Cunningham-Terry received numerous awards: the Beta Beta Boulé Award; an Appreciation Award from the Roxbury Action Program for incorporating African American history into her art; a Drylongso Award, which honors African Americans for combating racism; and the Renaissance Living Legend Award from the Boston Renaissance Charter School.

Through her work, Cunningham-Terry has made an indelible mark on public spaces, from Milford, NH to Boston's South End, that are graced by her sculptures, as well as on all who interact with her artistry.

## ~ Awards Event Program ~

**6:30 - 9:00 pm, Friday, September 25, 2020**

### WELCOME

JerriAnne Boggis, Executive Director, BHTNH  
Dennis Britton, Vice-President, Board of Directors, BHTNH

### UNIVERSITY WELCOME

Paul LeBlanc, President  
Southern New Hampshire University

### UNIVERSITY WELCOME

Paul LeBlanc, President, Southern New Hampshire University

### BHTNH & SNHU PARTNERSHIP

Jada Hebra, Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer,  
Southern New Hampshire University

### BHTNH CITIZEN of the YEAR AWARD

Presenters: The Harriet Wilson Project

JerriAnne Boggis, Mabelle Barnette, Claudette Williams and Stasia Millett

### **Award Recipient: Fern Cunningham-Terry,**

Activist and Sculptor

### MUSICAL PRESENTATION

“I’m Here” Layne Davis, NH High School South, Nashua NH Class of 2021

### 7:00 PM KEYNOTE SPEAKER INTRODUCTION

Nadine Thompson, Owner, Soul Purpose, Exeter NH

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“Black Women; Fierce Angels”

Susan Taylor

### Q&A

### CLOSING REMARKS & SONG

Rev. Robert Thompson

President, Board of Directors, BHTNH

# 2020 Black New England Conference Schedule

## BLACK WOMEN ROCK:

### Leading the Charge for Social & Political Change

Hosts: JerriAnne Boggis, Dennis Britton, Jada Hebra,  
and Maria Aguirre

~ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 ~

Available Throughout the Conference

**VIRTUAL TOUR – Concord, NH**

**THE UNBRIDLED TRUTH: BLACK HISTORY IN  
CONCORD, NH**

**Sankofa Scholar: David Watters With Special  
Guest Melanie Levesque & Rogers Johnson**

Concord's history reveals complex connections with displaced and enslaved African and Indigenous people of the Atlantic and Caribbean colonies. People of color served in the Revolutionary War and would play significant roles in the new state capital as military honor guards, musicians and caterers during musters and Election Day festivities. This tour includes a site where native people attacked the early settlers' garrison; stories of enslaved Black construction and agricultural workers, and free craftspeople. Hear how anti-abolitionist President Pierce opposed anti-slavery leaders like John Parker Hale and Frederick Douglass, frequent guests on the local speakers' circuit. To acknowledge unmarked graves of unidentified enslaved and free people of color, we will see North Cemetery and the potter's field of the Asylum for the Insane. Our tour ends at the gravesite of Mel Bolden, a twentieth-century African American civil rights activist, artist and illustrator, well known for his portrait of Christa McAuliffe. The tour will conclude with a conversation with African American state legislators.



*NH State Senator  
David Watters*

8:45 AM

**WEBINAR WAITING ROOM OPENS (VIDEO & OPEN REMARKS)**

~ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 (continued) ~

9:00-10:30 AM

## PANEL 1, BLACK WOMEN AS PURVEYORS OF CHANGE

### IN HONOR OF FRANCES HARPER

*“I find, by close observation, that the mothers are the levers which move in education. The men talk about it . . . but the women work most for it.” –*

Frances Harper



*Frances Harper*

From 19th century trailblazer and suffragist Sojourner Truth declaring “Ain’t I a woman?” to Fannie Lou Hamer registering Black Mississippians to vote during the Civil Rights Era, to the current global Movement for Black Lives—Black women have always been at the forefront of social and political change. Black feminist leaders have a long legacy of advocating from within and agitating from outside entrenched systems, employing a diversity of tactics and approaches—including popular music—to convey messages of dignity and human rights that systems of racism and sexism deny them. Too often Black feminist contributions are overshadowed or presented in one-dimensional fashion. Panelists will excavate and explore Black feminism’s historical contributions to America’s struggle, progress, and potential.

### PANELISTS

- **L’Merchie Frazier**, Director of Education & Interpretation, Museum of African American History, Boston, MA  
*No Rights Which The Laws Would Acknowledge*
- **Elizabeth Salas Evans**, Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, NH.  
*Phyllis Ann Wallace: A Black Woman’s Labor*
- **John Berst**, Independent Scholar, Durham, NH.  
*Strange Fruit, Stormy Weather, and the National Anthem: Black Women Entertainers/Activists Change the World*
- **Moderator: Dottie Morris**, Associate Vice President for Institutional Diversity & Equity, Keene State College, Keene, NH

10:30 AM

### VIDEO PRESENTATION



~ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 (continued) ~

10:45 AM-NOON

**PANEL 2, BODY POLITICS & MOVEMENTS TOWARD THE SACRED  
IN HONOR OF AUDRE LORDE**

*"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."* –Audre Lorde

Oppression of Black women in the United States is and always has been enforced on physical and emotional planes, and so these same women's resistance necessarily engages both body and spirit to move toward liberation. Panelists share their lived experience and critical analysis of how Black women's bodies move in, through, and beyond spaces delineated by white male dominance. And they explore the ways movement, ritual, and spiritual practices sustain Black women. To resist a culture so deeply entrenched in racism and misogyny, Black women connect to ancestors and powerful legacies of creativity and resistance.



Audre Lorde

**PANELISTS**

- **Courtney Marshall**, Instructor in English, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH.  
*"If You Can't Run, Then Walk": Girl Trek and Black Women's Fitness Activism*
- **Karen DeAnn Dorough-Adams**, Ed.S., Retired Assistant Special Agent, Drug Enforcement Administration, Washington, DC.  
*Secrets of my Success as an Executive in Federal Law Enforcement*
- **Loretta Bradey**, St Anslem College, Manchester, NH  
*Black Women Who Rock: Employing Womanist Oriented Leadership Strategies*
- **Moderator: Kabria Baumgartner**, Assistant Professor English Department, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

•

12:15 PM

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

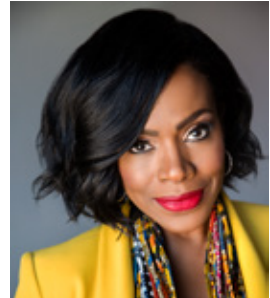
~ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 (continued) ~

12:35 PM

## LUNCHTIME KEYNOTE ADDRESS FEATURING SHERYL LEE RALPH

### Divinely Inspired Victorious Activism!

The Black woman...A supernatural force – proven by 400 years of enslavement, back-breaking work, inequality, misogyny, inequity, and sexism; and yet still found ways to smile, to create, to rise, and to raise children and still give them hope! Our voice changes atmospheres, gives life to the world, and calls for change. The DIVA: Divinely Inspired, Victorious Activist Sheryl Lee Ralph shares her journey of using her platform to raise her voice and fight the good fight!



Sheryl Lee Ralph

1:20 PM

## VIDEO PRESENTATION

1:30-3:00 PM

### PANEL 3, BLACK WOMEN'S PRESENT-DAY LEADERSHIP & ACTIVISM

#### IN HONOR OF IDA B. WELLS

*"One had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or a rat in a trap"*—Ida B. Wells

Black women's leadership and activism today deeply engage the framework of intersectionality originally put forth by the Combahee River Collective in the late 1970s. Widespread criminalization of Black Americans— with Black women the fastest growing prison population in the country—makes the criminal legal system a natural place for Black women's leadership and activism to bloom. Panelists discuss Black woman-led projects that foster leadership and fellowship among those who experience criminalization, providing real-life models of Black women's leadership and activism.



Ida B. Wells

## PANELISTS

- **Erin Corbett**, Co-Founder and CEO, Second Chance Educational Alliance, Hartford, CT.  
I didn't have to be thrown away.

~ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 (continued) ~

- **Brea Willingham**, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, State University of New York, NY
- **Bahiyyah Muhammad**, Assistant Professor of Criminology, Howard University, Washington, DC
- **Chaquanzha Stephenson**, founder, DOPE INC., a youth advocacy and empowerment organization
- **Moderator: Lowell Matthews**, Organizational Leadership, Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, NH

7:00-8:30 PM

**EVENING KEYNOTE ADDRESS FEATURING  
SUSAN TAYLOR**

**“Black Women; Fierce Angels”**

The power and strong voices of Black women over the centuries cannot be overstated. From the warrior women in African nations, to those who defied their enslavers throughout the Americas and Diaspora, resistance and advancement is a proud legacy of Black women. It is time for that history to be known.



*Susan L. Taylor*

~ SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 ~

8:45 AM

**WEBINAR WAITING ROOM OPENS (VIDEO & OPEN REMARKS)**

9:00-10:15 AM

**PANEL 4, ART SPEAKS: ACTIVISM THROUGH  
THE CREATIVE**

**IN HONOR OF NINA SIMONE**

*"I'll tell you what Freedom is to me. No fear."* —Nina Simone



*Nina Simone*

Black women's artistic expression has been foundational to all movements for social justice and uplift. Our society confronts Black women with racism, colorism, hyper sexualization, caricature, stereotyping, and erasure. Yet Black women's creative culture remains the most copied and least credited in mainstream media and discourse. This panel explores ways Black women artists make their truths seen, felt, and heard.

### **PANELISTS**

- **Cashawn Thompson**, Creator Black Girl Magic, Washington, DC. What I Know of Womanhood.
- **Dorothy Clark**, Editor, Historic New England, Boston, MA. 360 Degrees of Power: Revisiting Sister Souljah's Sphere of Change
- **Karen Dade**, Professor of Secondary Education, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA. Black Women Activism through the Lens of Critical Art Pedagogy
- **Moderator: Shari Robinson**, Director Psychological And Counseling Services, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

10:25 AM

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**



~ SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 (continued) ~

10:30-11:45 AM

**PANEL 5, FIRED UP & READY TO GO: BLACK WOMEN AND ELECTORAL POLITICS  
IN HONOR OF SHIRLEY CHISHOLM**



*Shirley Chisholm*

*"If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." –Shirley Chisholm*

Electoral politics remain a powerful avenue for change in U.S. society and an arena where Black women are vastly underrepresented. Today Black women are running for elected seats at municipal, state and national levels in higher numbers than ever before. Once elected, Black women carry forward the hopes and expectations of entire communities, while also facing extreme public scrutiny. This panel showcases Black women leaders currently holding elected office, as they speak to us from inside the world of representative democracy.

**PANELISTS**

- **Andrea Jenkins**, City Councilor, Minneapolis, MN
- **Pat Spearman**, Nevada State Senator, North Las Vegas, NV
- **Kiah Morris**, Former Vermont State Senator, Bennington, VT
- **Moderator: Melanie Levesque**, New Hampshire State Senate, Concord, NH

12:00 PM

**LUNCHTIME KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
FEATURING CONGRESSWOMAN AYANNA PRESSLEY  
LEGISLATING HEALING, PROTECTING  
BLACK JOY**



*Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley*

12:45 PM

**VIDEO PRESENTATION**

~ SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2020 (continued) ~

1:15-2:30 PM

**PANEL 6, MOVING IT FORWARD: THE NEXT GENERATION OF BLACK FEMALE ACTIVISTS IN HONOR OF MARI COPENY “LITTLE MISS FLINT”**



*Mari Copeny*

Young Black women activists and leaders of today inherit a rich legacy of struggle, innovation, and pioneering thought from generations of courageous Black women who came before them. Today’s leaders also face unprecedented challenges of climate change, a global pandemic amidst a globalized economy, and massive student loan debt—as well as opportunities, including a groundswell of support for defunding police and abolishing prison systems that disproportionately harm Black Americans. During this panel, we will hear reflections on activism from young Black women advancing environmental, racial and gender justice in the midst of widespread political, social and economic upheaval.

**PANELISTS**

- **Ronelle Tshiela**, BLM, Manchester NH
- **Tanisha Johnson**, co-founder, Black Lives Matter Seacoast
- **Julian Maduro**, UNH class of 2021
- **Sonja Moffett**, Early Engagement Partner, SNHU
- **Moderator: Victoria Adewumi**, Department of Political Science and International Affairs, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

5:00 PM

**CLOSING EVENTS**

**SPOKEN WORD POETRY by Kiah Morris**

**DANCE PERFORMANCE by Bring It Dance Team**

**“On a Mission to Empower Women”**

**INTRODUCING ANDREA JENKINS**

**Nadine Petty, Chief Diversity Officer, University of New Hampshire, Durham NH**

**“Quarantine Soul” by Andrea Jenkins**

**Conference Closing Remarks**

**JerriAnne Boggis**

## Keynote Speaker Sheryl Lee Ralph



**Sheryl Lee Ralph** is a multifaceted artist who continues to blaze trails in the entertainment industry. Whether she appears on TV, film, or the Broadway stage. Sheryl Lee Ralph also sparkles as a director, voice and screen actor, author, singer, philanthropist, community activist, wife, and mother.

She can be seen in the Freeform series *Motherland: Fort Salem*, performing as US President Kelly Wade and closing out the last season of *Ray Donovan* as Mickey's love, Claudette. Sheryl recently launched "DIVA Defined," a podcast featuring

powerful women making moves in their various career paths, and a new digital talk series, "DIVAS Simply Quarantined," on Facebook Live.

Sheryl is a fierce voice in the activation of citizens to vote and has designed her own line of 'VOTE' and 'POWER' Activism Apparel at [www.shopwithsherylleer.com](http://www.shopwithsherylleer.com). Ralph also produces the annual benefit concert, DIVAS Simply Singing! which raises awareness for HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases, hunger, poverty, and the health disparities in communities of color exposed by COVID-19. This year will mark the 30th year of the event and 31 years of her foundation, The DIVA Foundation. The week-long events will be held virtually during the first week of December and will culminate with the 30th Annual DIVAS Simply Singing! Televised concert on KTLA 5 Los Angeles and on [www.diva.foundation](http://www.diva.foundation).

Sheryl Lee Ralph has received numerous community awards for her commitment to service. In February 2020, Sheryl Lee was one of seven creative legends honored for her contributions to the arts and entertainment in the City of Los Angeles. Ralph was inducted as an honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in July 2004 for her HIV/AIDS activism at the 47th National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. She was also awarded the first Red Ribbon Award at the UN for creating "The Red Ribbon DIVA" T-Shirt for HIV/AIDS awareness.

Ralph was awarded Honorary Doctorates in Humane Letters for her HIV/AIDS activism from Houston Tillotson University and Tougaloo College. Sheryl resides in Los Angeles and Philadelphia with her husband, Senator Vincent Hughes.

## Keynote Speaker Susan Taylor



Susan Taylor is founder & CEO of National CARES Mentoring Movement and Editor-in-Chief Emerita of *Essence Magazine* as well as best-selling author of four books, and editor of eight others.

Susan is a fourth-generation entrepreneur, who grew up in Harlem working in her father's clothing store. At 24, she founded her own cosmetics company, which led to the beauty editor's position at *Essence*, the publication she would go on to shape into a world-renown brand with more than 8 million readers.

It was that enterprising spirit wedded to a deep love for her community that led to the founding of the National CARES Mentoring Movement in 2005 as *Essence CARES*. With local affiliates in 58 cities, National CARES has recruited, trained, and deployed more than 150,000 mentors to schools and youth-support and mentoring organizations like Big Brothers, Big Sisters, as well as to its own culturally rooted, academic and social-transformational initiatives. A community-mobilization movement, National CARES is the only organization dedicated to providing mentoring, healing, and wellness services on a national scale for Black children.

Susan is a recipient of more than a dozen honorary doctorates and hundreds of awards, including the Phoenix Award, which is the highest honor given by Congressional Black Caucus. A lifelong activist who has worked to ensure people across the globe, from South Africa to those who struggled in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Susan says that securing our vulnerable children is her highest calling and the big business of our nation and Black America today.



## Keynote Speaker Ayanna Pressley



U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley is the first Black woman elected to the Boston City Council in 2010 and the first Black woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts in 2019. She represents the 7th Congressional District of Massachusetts in Congress where she defeated incumbent Michael Capuano, campaigning with the slogan “change can’t wait”

and promising she would bring “activist leadership: to the House of Representatives. As senior member and spokesperson for “The Squad,” Ayanna she supported the Green New Deal and Medicare-for-All.

In November 2019, Ayanna introduced a House Resolution called The People’s Justice Guarantee which provides for the decriminalization of consensual sex work, abolition of cash bail, legalization of marijuana, abolition of capital punishment and solitary confinement, and shrinking the US prison population.



**The Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire** works to open hearts and minds for a deeper understanding of who we are as a collective and to recognize that we share a uniquely American heritage. The statewide Black Heritage Trail documents and makes visible the stories of New Hampshire's rich African American history.

Guided tours and public programs, along with educational materials and teacher workshops, will continue to be developed by the Black Heritage Trail to promote awareness of African American culture and to honor all the people of African descent whose names may not have been included in previous town histories.

For example, history starts at the door of our new home at 222 Court Street in Portsmouth. Jesse and Pompey were enslaved here in the home of the Reverend Arthur Browne, first rector called to serve Queens Chapel. And we are not alone. We are building a strong network of statewide historical societies dedicated to shining the light on their own colonial-era African Americans and telling their stories to provide a truer picture of the history of our state and towns.

This year has offered its challenges. We found our way through COVID-19 with a host of new online programming. Juneteenth featured a cooking demonstration with Selina Choate; African drumming at the African Burial Ground with Akwaaba Ensemble; a community dialog with special guest Adrian Miller; and ending with a virtual concert featuring Burgundy Williams, Michael Andreaus, Joy Brown and Sean Mason. A few weeks later, on July 4<sup>th</sup> NHPTV in partnership with BHTNH presented a virtual reading of the Frederick Douglass speech "What to the slave is your fourth of July?" Fifty readers, fully representative of the diverse family that is New Hampshire, read Douglass' stirring words to thousands from all over the state who tuned in to experience the true meaning of this national holiday.

We hope you enjoy this year's Black New England Conference offered for the very first time in an online only format. We are proud to present to you a roster of extraordinary scholars, thought leaders and public figures who also happen to be extraordinary women. It seems almost prescient that this year's conference focus on Black women would happen at a moment when this country lost Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, its foremost jurist advocate for women. May we rise and endure as the struggle continues.

## ~ Special Thanks to Our Conference Volunteers ~

### **Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire staff and volunteers**

Anne Arnold, Kirsten Barton, Dan Comly, Valerie Cunningham, Jeanine Jacques, Angela Matthews, Kristen Oliveri, Grace Peirce, Terry Robinson, Carolyn Saunders, Nur Shoop, Kathleen Solidari, Valerie Sousa, Brian Vawter, Nancy Vawter, David Watters, Rita Weathersby.

### **University of New Hampshire volunteers**

Nadine Petty, Janice Pierson, Stephen Trzaskoma, Katie Umans

### **Southern New Hampshire University staff and faculty**

Maria Aguirre, Jarrod Campbell, Jessy Duque, Jada Hebra, Michael Krupa, Lowell Matthews, Crispin Stanbach.

### **Conversation Room Facilitators**

LaRue Rame, Nadine Petty, Sabina Melendez, Sonja Moffett, Michelle-Ann Charles, Elana Zabar, Taryn Duncan, Brianne Morneau, Elza Brechbuhl

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## 2021 BHTNH Schedule of Events

**Elinor William's Hooker Tea Talks**, Sundays, February 7 to March 14, 2021

**Spring Teacher's Symposium**, Saturday, May 15, 2021

**Juneteenth Celebration**, Saturday, June 19, 2021

**Frederick Douglass Community Reading**, Saturday, July 3, 2021

**Black New England Conference**, October 23, 2021

**BHTNH Guided Tours** are available throughout the year.

Visit

[www.blackheritagetrailnh.org](http://www.blackheritagetrailnh.org) for updates and details

# 2020 Black New England Conference - Presenters Biographies

## Panel #1— Black Women as Purveyors of Change



**Elizabeth Salas Evans** is the President and Chief Compliance Officer of Cayena Capital Management, LLC, a registered investment firm located in Weare, NH. A native of New Hampshire, Elizabeth received a Bachelor of Science in Business Finance and Master's in Applied Economics from Southern New Hampshire University. She has recently been accepted to the American Economic Association (AEA) mentorship program, where she is diligently preparing for this fall's application cycle to a doctoral program to study law and economics.



**John Berst** is an independent scholar and theatre historian and practitioner, specializing in the fields of musical theatre and actor training. He has presented at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, the Mid-America Theatre Conference, the Black New England Conference, the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and the New England Theatre Conference. Berst holds a Master of Fine Arts in Acting from Purdue University's Professional Actor Training Program and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in music and theatre from the University at Buffalo (SUNY). He has extensive professional experience as a stage director, music director and actor, and is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association and an associate member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.



**Dottie Morris (moderator)**, is Associate Vice-President for Institutional Diversity and Equity at Keene State College. She serves on the president's cabinet, providing support and direction to the executive, academic, student affairs, advancement, and finance and planning divisions of the college.



## PANEL #2 — Body Politics & Movements Towards the Sacred



**Courtney Marshal** teaches English at Phillips Exeter Academy and teaches Black feminist exercise classes under the title “Jump at the Sun Fitness.” Her classes are rooted in Black feminist teachers and she brings Black feminism to many spaces in New Hampshire.



**Karen DeAnn Dorough-Adams, Ed.S.** is a retired assistant special agent in charge of the Office of Training for the Drug Enforcement Administration.



**Kabria Baumgartner, Ph.D., (moderator)** is an associate professor of American studies and English at the University of New Hampshire. She is the author of the award-winning book, *In Pursuit of Knowledge: Black Women and Educational Activism in Antebellum America* (New York University Press, 2019), which tells the story of African American girls and women who fought to democratize public and

private schools in the nineteenth-century Northeast. She is currently writing a biography of Robert Morris, one of the first African American lawyers in the United States.

## PANEL #3 — BLACK WOMEN’S PRESENT-DAY LEADERSHIP & ACTIVISM



**Erin Corbett, EdD EdD** is a senior research analyst at the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). Her research interests include higher education in prison as well as higher education policy for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. With experience in independent school admission, enrichment programs, and postsecondary financial

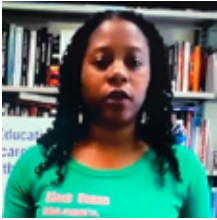
aid, Erin’s commitment to expanding postsecondary opportunities for all populations served as the foundation of her professional endeavors.

While pursuing her doctorate, Erin launched a nonprofit that provides not-for-credit, postsecondary level courses in two correctional facilities in Connecticut and also taught in two correctional facilities in Rhode Island. Corbett holds a BA in Psychology and Education from Swarthmore College. She earned her Master of Business Administration from Post University (CT) and her doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania.



**Bahiyah M. Muhammad**, Ph.D., Franklin Fellow, is an assistant professor at Howard University's Department of Sociology and Criminology. Dr. Muhammad received her Ph.D. from Rutgers University's School of Criminal Justice, where she specialized in families and communities affected by mass incarceration. Dr. Muhammad has spent the

last decade of her criminal justice career conducting ethnographic work about children ages seven to 18 years old living in urban communities throughout New Jersey, who experienced the loss of one or both parents to the prison system. She is currently founding a non-profit organization to address the dynamic concerns faced by children of the incarcerated.



**Dr. Breea Willingham** joined the criminal justice department in the fall of 2014. Prior to beginning her academic career in 2005, Dr. Willingham worked as a newspaper reporter for 10 years covering crime, murder trials, and school board meetings in the Carolinas and upstate New York. She also taught journalism at St. Bonaventure University

and sociology and criminal justice at the State University of New York at Oneonta. Dr. Willingham earned her Ph.D. in American Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo.



**Chaquanzha Stephenson**, originally from Stamford CT, is a community activist and youth advocate. She graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 2013 with a dual degree in Political Science and Justice Studies. Chaquanzha birthed DOPE INC. (Don't Oppress People, Educate!) in 2014.

DOPE INC. is a youth advocacy and empowerment organization that educates and mentors youth domestically and internationally. She has traveled to Ghana, Jamaica, and the Ivory Coast to empower youth around the topics of leadership & individuality, self-love, higher education, financial & investment education, suicide prevention, corporate etiquette, goals setting, and more. Chaquanzha is

very passionate about community building and engaging the younger generation because they bring forth the future. [www.dopeinccs.com](http://www.dopeinccs.com)



**Dr. Lowell C. Matthews (moderator)** joined Southern New Hampshire University in 2012 and currently serves as Director of the University Honors Program, Associate Professor of Global Business and Leadership, and team lead for Project AIM. Matthews currently serves on the board for the Endowment for Health, Granite State Gay Men

Association, Names Project, and volunteers as a “Big Brother” for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Manchester.

#### **PANEL #4 — Art SPEAKS: ACTIVISM THROUGH THE CREATIVE**



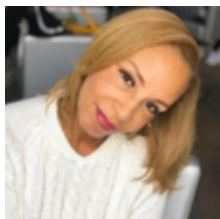
**CaShawn Thompson** is a proud third-generation native of Washington, D.C. She is an early childcare development expert, working as a Head Start teacher at Bright Beginnings, in addition to being a trained doula. CaShawn is a well-known social media influencer in D.C. and across the country.

She is a writer who first got her start about beauty and lifestyle topics on her award-winning blog, *Little Dirty Pretty Things*. CaShawn is also a Black cultural pioneer, creating the concept of “Black Girls Are Magic,” which sprung from her life as a little girl growing up with her mother, grandmother, and aunts. Black Girls Are Magic became wildly popular in 2013 after CaShawn began using the phrase online (which was later shortened to the hashtag #BlackGirlMagic) to uplift and praise the accomplishments, beauty, and other amazing qualities of Black women.



**Dorothy Clark** is a journalist and historian, and editor of *Historic New England* magazine, an independent researcher and an adjunct history instructor at the Boston Architectural College, where she is a member of the Presidential Advisory Council for Social Justice. She is a fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society and a member

of the board of directors of the Loring Greenough House in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, and Girls Rock Campaign Boston. Ms. Clark holds master’s degrees in historic preservation and American history and a bachelor’s degree in journalism.



**Karen McLean Dade** is a full professor in secondary education at Western Washington University in the fields of creative intelligence and multicultural education. Her doctoral dissertation from the University of Massachusetts and subsequent related book publications and journal articles focused on combating racism through the eyes of students. She

is recognized as a leading scholar in multicultural education and has held significant positions in academic professional associations. She is the founder/director of Multicultural International Development Company and focuses on consulting in areas of equity and diversity, social justice art education, and women of color empowerment. To date, she has traveled, worked, and presented in over 40 countries. She is available for cross-cultural and women's empowerment education consultancies, speaking engagements and curriculum development.



**Shari Robinson (moderator)** is the Director of Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS) at the University of New Hampshire. Her professional interests include counseling, diversity, multiculturalism, first-generation college students, spirituality/religion, Student Veterans, and mentoring people of color. Shari considers herself a

social justice change agent working toward equity, inclusion, and diversity in all of her professional and personal settings. Shari Robinson earned her Ph.D. at West Virginia University.

## **PANEL #5 — FIRED UP & READY TO GO: Black Women AND Electoral Politics**



**Andrea Jenkins** is an American policy aide, politician, writer, performance artist, poet, and transgender activist. She is known for being the first Black openly transgender woman elected to public office in the United States, serving since January 2018 on the Minneapolis City Council. Besides a Master of Fine Arts degree from Hamline University, Andrea also earned an Master of Science in community

economic development from Southern New Hampshire University.



**Senator Patricia Ann Spearman** has served in the Nevada Senate since November 2012, representing District 1. After her re-election to a second term in 2016, she became part of the Democratic leadership as co-majority whip. She was the first openly lesbian member of the Nevada legislature. She currently serves as Chair of the Commerce and Labor

Committee, Vice-Chair of Health and Human Services Committee, and member of the Growth and Infrastructure Committee. Senator Spearman has introduced multiple bills including bills that provide equal pay for women and minorities, support for LGBT rights, and support for veterans. She also supported gay marriage and abortion. In 2016, she was named a member of the New Energy Task Force newly created by Governor Sandoval. Patricia volunteered for Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008 and was a member of advisory boards for Harry Reid and Steven Horsford. In 2016, she supported presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and gave a speech at the Democratic National Convention.



**Kiah Morris** lives in Bennington, Vermont on the southwestern end of the Green Mountain State where she served in the general assembly as a State Representative from 2014-2016 and 2016-2018. She is the first African American and person of color elected from Bennington County and the second African American woman to be elected to

the legislature in Vermont history. In that capacity, she served on the House Judiciary Committee and Vermont Judicial Nominating Board and is co-chair of the tripartisan Legislative Women's Caucus. Her story of success and struggle have been covered in over four dozen media outlets including CNN, *The Huffington Post*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Hill*, *Essence Magazine*, Canadian Broadcasting Company, British Broadcasting Corporation, and Vice Media.



**Melanie Levesque, (moderator)**, has been a member of the New Hampshire State Senate, representing Senate District 12 since 2018. She is the first African American to serve in that body and currently the only senator of color. Melanie serves on the following committees: Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee, chair, Judiciary

Committee, member, Transportation Committee, member. Melanie earned her Master of Business Administration from Southern New Hampshire University.

## PANEL #6 — MOVING IT FORWARD: THE NEXT GENERATION OF BLACK FEMALE ACTIVISTS



**Ronselle Tshiela** is co-founder of Black Lives Matter Manchester and a student at the University of New Hampshire. An activist since high school, Ronelle serves as a public member of the Governor's state-level Commission on Law Enforcement, Accountability, Community, and Transparency.



**Tanisha Johnson** is a powerful advocate for empowering Black lives. In July 2020, Tanisha cofounded with another seacoast resident the Black Lives Matter Seacoast Chapter. Tanisha serves on the Racial Unity Team Board and is the Program Chair for the organization. The Racial Unity Team is a racial justice organization that identifies and works to dismantle systemic and individual racism. The Racial Unity Team facilitates these changes by working with government, schools, businesses, and our communities.



**Julian Maduro** is a senior at the University of New Hampshire pursuing a bachelor's degree in English and Justice Studies. In the past two years, she conducted research on the importance of multicultural children's literature and involved herself in advocacy work at University of New Hampshire. She has a passion for social justice and once she graduates, plans to work on prison reform.



**Sonja Moffett** is currently an Early Engagement Partner at Southern New Hampshire University. Her role includes the creation and facilitation of business cases and management training programs for our MBA learners. She serves on the DEI Core Team Community of Practice and has been awarded a grant for her leadership training "DEI700: Leading Beyond the Conversation." An agent of change, Moffett routinely facilitates information sessions domestically and internationally - recently facilitating training in collaboration with the SNHU's Global Education Movement (GEM). She not only makes an international impact on others, her domestic work to influence change is evident in her political passion outside of work. Moffett is the founder of [www.Bolitical.com](http://www.Bolitical.com), a



politically-motivated site (not affiliated with SNHU) that informs people about how politics work, basic civics, historical relevance of voter rights, and the civic responsibility of African American citizens to impact voter outcomes.”



**Victoria Adewumi (moderator)** is an equity communicator and a public health network leader, supporting neighborhood-based interventions for community health and wellbeing. Victoria works to link New Hampshire residents with social, physical, and environmental supports. She currently serves on the board of the Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success and the NH Health & Equity

Partnership. A New Hampshire native, she holds Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees in Political Science and International Affairs from University of New Hampshire. Victoria is a member of the Bloomberg Fellows Program 2020 and a current Master in Public Health candidate in the focus area of Adolescent Health at Johns Hopkins University.

## 2020 Black New England Conference Hosts



**JerriAnne Boggis** is the executive director of the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire, an organization that preserves, celebrates, and honors African-American history in the state. She is a writer, educator, and community activist whose work corrects the historical record on the racial complexity and richness of New Hampshire's diverse past. Through the development of community programs, exhibits, and tours, Boggis has raised the awareness of New Hampshire's

people of color and increased the visibility of Black history in the state. She believes that sharing a truer, more integrated history can change the way our country understands human dignity when it is free of historical stereotypes.

Her publications include: *Refugee Resettlement in New Hampshire, Reflections and Memories; Footsteps; Harriet Wilson's New England: Race, Writing and Region.*

Boggis was named in 2015 by the New Hampshire Humanities Council as one of the 40 most influential New Hampshireites who have vastly enriched human understanding and whose original works and passion for excellence have put New Hampshire on the cultural map.



**Dennis Britton, PhD** is an associate professor in the English Department at UNH and a 2011 graduate from the Research and Engagement Academy. He spent the 2012-2013 academic year researching at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, after receiving a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities. *The Folger Magazine* featured Dr. Britton and his research in the Spring 2013 edition. He also was awarded an Excellence in Teaching Award in 2013. The focus of his research is early modern English

literature, especially Shakespeare and Spenser, reformation theology, race theory, and an examination of how theological constructions of race shape interactions between Christians, Muslims, and Jews.



**Jada K. Hebra** in 2016 became the first Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). Prior to SNHU, and after a stint in broadcast news at ABC in New York, Hebra spent 25 years working in the private secondary school sector designing and supporting diversity and inclusion initiatives while also serving in leadership roles such

as Humanities teacher, Associate Dean of Students, Director of College Advising, Director of Admission, Dean of Faculty, and Assistant Head of School. A restorative practice trainer, project manager, and leader with the National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project, Hebra works with university stakeholders to advance strategic diversity and inclusion goals. With a BA in sociology from Vassar College, an MS from Columbia University School of Journalism, and an MS in industrial and organizational psychology from Southern New Hampshire University currently underway, she draws on her lifelong passion for people and storytelling to deepen her own and others' understanding of bias and beauty across difference.

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*Thank you Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw,  
Andrea J. Ritchie, and the many Black  
women activists & scholars behind the  
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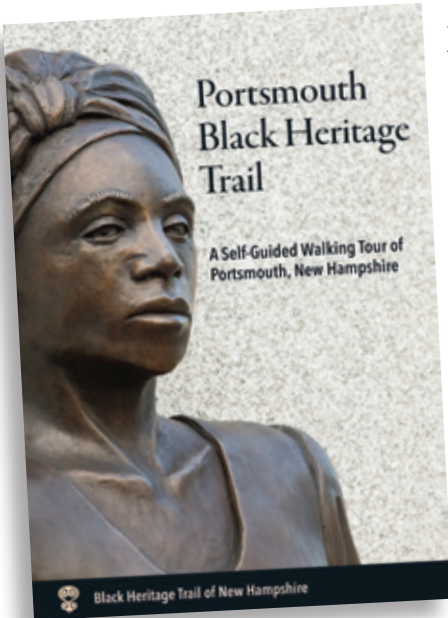
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