



Office of Multicultural Advancement

**CBT BUSINESS  
CONFERENCE**  
**2024**

**Friday, March 1 | 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, March 2 | 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.**

Joseph I. Lubin House, 11 E 61st Street, New York, NY



Syracuse University

## CBT Business Conference Presented by:



The CBT Business Conference, sponsored by **Achieve More LLC**, presents a unique opportunity for alumni to leverage their Orange connections for the advancement of their careers and businesses. This exclusive two-day event is designed to enhance alumni success by fostering awareness of University career and entrepreneurship resources, facilitating crucial discussions on workplace trends and providing impactful networking opportunities.

Accomplished members of the Orange community will share entrepreneurial insights, offer tips for investment and wealth building, and contribute to the realization of professional goals. Additionally, we are pleased to offer **complimentary headshots** this year to registered attendees on a first-come, first-served basis.

# Hello, Conference Attendees:



It is our pleasure to welcome you to Lubin House for the second CBT Business Conference. This year's conference is sponsored by **Achieve More LLC**, a corporate training and consulting firm led by **Mariama Boney '96, G'98**.

Based on your feedback, the Office of Multicultural Advancement is thrilled to offer two days of business-related programming and networking opportunities featuring Syracuse University multicultural alumni. This year, alumni speakers and panelists will address topics such as entrepreneurship, wellness at work, the successful business

pitch, diversity and inclusion, artificial intelligence, hotel ownership and private equity. Also, we will share many of the ways that the Career Services team supports alumni in their professional pursuits. And there will be plenty of casual networking opportunities with your fellow Orange alumni.

Thank you to all of the incredible alumni who will share their experiences during the conference. And thanks to those of you who continually make time to participate in Multicultural Advancement events and lift up our Orange community.

Let's dedicate time this week to ensure our collective successes, as we share knowledge, ideas, information, professional contacts and business acumen with one another and to the benefit of our greater community.

Thank you for being with us!

**Go Orange!**

**Rachel Vassel '91, G'21**

Associate Vice President

Office of Multicultural Advancement



# SCHEDULE:

## FRIDAY, MARCH 1 DAY ONE

- Noon-2 p.m. Entrepreneurship Roundtable**  
Pergament Room
- Danielle Douglas '88**, President, Inspire Enterprise Inc.  
**Tony Martinez '89**, Managing Partner, BarrioBX  
**Keith Moody '89**, President, LinkVisum Consulting Group  
**Craig T. Williams '89**, President and CEO, Pride Enterprises Inc.;  
President, American Power Electrical Supply Company
- Moderator:*  
**Tamekia Flowers-Ball '97**, CEO Epiphany Blue
- 2:30-4 p.m. Entrepreneurship Master Class**  
Pergament Room
- Vaughn D. Irons '93**, CEO, ADP Solutions
- 2:30-4 p.m. Owning Your Career Journey**  
Classroom
- Jessica Pitcher G'14**, Associate Director,  
Alumni Career Services, Syracuse University
- 4:15-5:30 p.m. Networking Reception and Keynote**  
1870 Room
- Deryck A. Palmer '78**, Chairman, West Lane Partners;  
Life Trustee, Syracuse University



## SATURDAY, MARCH 2

### DAY TWO

- 10-11:15 a.m.**      **Wellness at Work**  
Pergament Room  
**Jasmine Bellamy '92**, Founder, Love 101 Ministries  
**Tara Favors '95**, Executive Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, Mutual of America  
**Aisha Thomas-Petit '98**, Chief Human Resources Officer, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey  
  
Moderator:  
**Patricia "Trisha" Griffith '04**, Chief Experience Officer, Experiences On Demand
- 11:30 a.m.-  
12:45 p.m.**      **Leveraging AI**  
Pergament Room  
**Valerie Capers Workman '86**, Chief Legal Officer, Handshake (virtual)  
**Jason Mills '95, G'96**, Vice President of Engineering, Snowflake  
**Ronald J. Taylor '15, G'16**, Global Youth Safety and Well-being Issue Policy Team, Tik Tok  
  
Moderator:  
**Rachel Vassel '91, G'21**, Associate Vice President, Office of Multicultural Advancement, Syracuse University
- 1:30-2:45 p.m.**      **Developing Your Pitch for Success**  
Pergament Room  
**Cha McCoy '07**, Founder, Cha Squared Experiences LLC  
**Jena B. Singleton '09**, Founder, Coach Jena B. LLC  
**Phaedra Stewart '91**, Owner, Seriously Positive LLC  
  
Moderator:  
**Mariama Boney '96, G'98**, President, CEO, Achieve More LLC
- 3-4 p.m.**      **Speed Networking**  
Library
- 4:15-5:30 p.m.**      **Closing Reception with Keynote Address**  
1870 Room  
**Doug Melville '98**, CEO, Jodi AI; DEI leader; author of *Invisible Generals*

Keynote Speaker, Friday, March 1

## Deryck A. Palmer '78



**D**eryck A. Palmer '78 is the founder and chairman of West Lane Partners, a private equity firm focused on distressed companies. He has restructured businesses for some of the largest corporate clients in America as a bankruptcy law partner at three firms: Weil Gotshal & Manges; Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft; and Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw.

Palmer was the lead lawyer for the U.S. Department of Treasury on the General Motors and

Chrysler bankruptcies, the largest bailouts in American history, and founded an international bankruptcy practice in China. He served as lead counsel on the restructuring of the biggest private bailout loan in the LyondellBasell Chapter 11 case.

Palmer received a B.A. in political science from Syracuse University and was a University Scholar. He received a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. He was co-chair of the \$1 billion Campaign for Syracuse University and is a Life Trustee of the University.

Keynote Speaker, Saturday, March 2

## Doug Melville '98



**D**oug Melville '98 is chief executive officer of Jodi, an AI-powered digital assistant for diversity, equity and inclusion. He is a three-time TEDx speaker and the author of *Invisible Generals: Rediscovering Family Legacy, and a Quest to Honor America's First Black Generals* (Simon & Schuster, 2023).

He was formerly chief diversity officer, North America, for TBWA Worldwide and was founder and CEO of Red Carpet Runway. He previously served

as president of ZMagic and vice president of business development and marketing for Magic Johnson Enterprises, developing online, nontraditional and branding strategies for the Magic Johnson brand. He was also founder of the marketing agency Off The Bench Marketing.

Melville's family has worked under 10 presidential administrations to advance the safety, equality and fair treatment of all Americans. Melville's great uncle was Gen. Benjamin O. Davis Jr., commander of the Tuskegee Airmen and son of the first Black general in the Army.

He received a degree in marketing from Syracuse University, has been featured on *CBS Saturday Morning*, *The Daily Show* and *The Breakfast Club* and in *Time* magazine, *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* and is also a *Forbes.com* contributor.



## Jasmine Bellamy '92

Jasmine Bellamy '92 is the founder of Love 101 Ministries, which is dedicated to the theology and practice of love, and hosts Love 101's signature program, The Call to Love Experience. She is the former vice president of merchandising, planning and allocation and head of community and culture at Reebok and the creator and co-facilitator of Courageous Conversations, a platform that inspires communal culture transformation.

She was named by *Sports Illustrated* as one of the Top 100 most influential Black women in sports.

Bellamy received a B.S. in marketing management from Syracuse University, an MBA from Fordham University and an M.A. in theology from Fuller Seminary, where she is pursuing a doctorate in global leadership focusing on the redemptive imagination of the marketplace.



## Mariama S. Boney '96, G'98

Mariama Boney '96, G'98 is president and chief executive officer of Achieve More LLC, a certified Small, Women-owned or Minority-owned business consultancy that helps companies and organizations solve leadership challenges, develop goals and build positive cultures and work environments that embrace well-being, diversity, equity, inclusion and access.

A licensed social worker, she has often served as the first Black/African-American female executive director and has advanced associations, nonprofits and S&P 100 or 500 corporations in over 50 industries to flourish through the transformation process. She is the author of *VENT* (Volunteer your Emotions and Needs through Talking), a series of three solution-focused guides; the last one is *VENT: Our Resilience Is Enough*.

She received a B.S.S.W. and M.S.W. from Syracuse University and serves on Syracuse University's Office of Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council. In honor of her father, a longtime associate vice president for undergraduate studies at Syracuse University, she established the Robert L. Boney Endowed Undergraduate Social Work Scholarship through the Our Time Has Come Scholarship Program and created a scholarship in her own name for social work students.



## Valerie Capers Workman '86

Valerie Capers Workman '86 is chief legal officer at Handshake, a platform linking students with potential employers, where she is the head of the legal, global support, and global trust and safety teams. She previously spent four years at Tesla, serving as head of legal compliance and then vice president of people, reporting directly to the CEO; in 2020 she published the company's first DEI report. Her combination of understanding consumer brands, regulatory compliance, HR and legal expertise has steered companies through economic, social and political headwinds.

At Handshake, Workman is guiding its journey to \$100 million annual average return and \$3.5 billion valuation. Handshake connects students to more than 650 million employers. She has also been vice president, legal at Focus Brands and vice president of compliance and government relations at Wyndham Hotels & Resorts.

She earned a B.S. in television, radio and film from Syracuse University and a J.D. from St. John's University School of Law.



## Danielle Douglas '88

Danielle Douglas '88 is a New York-based business advisor, capacity builder and advocate for minority and women business enterprises. Over the past three decades, she has worked in both the private and public sectors in a broad range of professional capacities.

She is president of Inspire Enterprise Inc., a boutique business advisory firm focused on building the capacity of Minority and Women Business Enterprises to sustain, grow and scale their businesses to have greater impact on their clients, families, employees and communities. She is also the host of the Black Business Owners Forum and founder of The Council for Black Business Enterprises.

She earned a B.A. in psychology and marketing from Syracuse University.





## Tara Favors '95

Tara Favors '95 is an executive vice president and chief human resources officer for Mutual of America, responsible for all aspects of human resources strategy for the firm's 1,000 employees. This includes talent acquisition, development and retention, diversity, equity and inclusion, organizational learning and development and total rewards.

Before joining Mutual of America, she was a vice president in human resources at American Express and was awarded the title of managing director, human resources at Morgan Stanley. In both organizations, she held significant leadership roles.

She is also active within her community, as a member of Syracuse University's Office of Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council and a board member of NJ-LEEP. She was named one of *Savoy Magazine's* Power 300 (2022), most influential Black executives in corporate America.

Favors holds a B.A. in psychology and human resources from Syracuse University and an M.S. in human resources from The New School University.



## Tamekia Flowers-Ball '97

Tamekia Flowers-Ball '97 is the founder and chief executive officer of Epiphany Blue and a certified yoga instructor. Epiphany Blue is an event production company whose clients include Black Entertainment Television, NAACP, Toyota, Tide, McDonald's, NBA legends Kenny Smith and Dwyane Wade, and the New York City Department of Education.

She received a B.S. in business administration and marketing from Syracuse University and is a member of the Syracuse University Office of Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council and the board of Scholarship Plus. In 2023, Flowers-Ball was among 50 Syracuse alumni honored for their entrepreneurial success as recipients of the inaugural 'Cuse50 Alumni Entrepreneur Awards.





## Patricia "Trisha" Griffith '04

Patricia "Trisha" Griffith '04 is the founder and chief experience officer of Experiences On Demand (EOD), which curates events across the country from intimate gatherings to large-scale summits with over 1,000 attendees. In response to the pandemic, she evolved EOD's services to include virtual event planning and has organized in-person and virtual experiences that include professional development conferences, climate justice summits, staff retreats and executive leadership convenings.

Before founding EOD, Griffith served in senior leadership roles at two national education nonprofit organizations. She was vice president for development at the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and senior managing director in the Latino Community Initiative at Teach For America, where she started with three years as a Corps member.

Griffith received a B.A. in sociology and public policy from Syracuse University, a master of education in curriculum and instruction from the University of Nevada and an Event Management Certificate from George Washington University School of Business. She serves on Syracuse University's Office of Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council.



## Vaughn D. Irons '93

Vaughn D. Irons '93 is chief executive officer of APD Solutions, a national community economic development firm providing advisory, program management and development services. He is responsible for APD's strategic direction, operations, financial performance and implementation activities.

He served for nearly 12 years at Freddie Mac, most recently as national director of housing and community investment, and was director of housing for Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Greater Atlanta. He began his career in consumer banking for Syracuse Savings Bank and later for Fleet Bank of New York before working for the Human Rights Commission of Onondaga County, New York.

Irons received a B.A. in urban policy from Syracuse University, an M.S. in commercial real estate from Georgia State University, an MBA from the University of Maryland and a graduate-level certification in housing and community development, also from the University of Maryland. He serves on the Syracuse University Office of Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council.



## Tony Martinez '89

A serial entrepreneur, Tony Martinez '89 has over 25 years of building businesses and growing brands with two common denominators: love of culture and community.

In 1995, Martinez co-founded *Stress*, a New York-based magazine covering urban and hip-hop culture. *Stress* is still remembered for its unconventional guerrilla marketing efforts and being the launching platform for artists such as Jay-Z, Eminem, Daddy Yankee and The Roots. He went on to found *latinflava.com*, a portal focused on Latino lifestyles and entertainment that offered a platform for self-generating content and social media. When the *New York Post* created "Tempo" for its editorial team and advertisers to reach the Latino demographic, Martinez was tapped to lead its marketing and promotional initiatives.

He has launched Kinetix, a boutique experiential marketing agency, and in 2020 opened BarrioBX, a restaurant in the Bronx. With a passion for travel, he started UR Brand Inc., a travel accessories and custom merchandising company.

Martinez is an active life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.



## Cha McCoy '07

Cha McCoy '07 is a sommelier, public speaker and founder of Cha Squared Experiences LLC, a beverage consulting company focused on events, tourism and education. She is the owner of The Communion, a boutique wine and spirits shop located in downtown Syracuse. She is a certified sommelier with the Court of The Master Sommeliers and has been recognized by *Wine Enthusiast* magazine as a Top 40 Under 40 Tastemaker, by *Wine & Spirits* magazine in the Rising Black Voices in Wine and appeared on the Netflix documentary *High on the Hog*.

McCoy's list of clients includes the James Beard Foundation, *Cherry Bombe* magazine, the Charleston Wine + Food Festival and a selection of wine and spirit brands. She is an adjunct professor teaching wine history and appreciation at Syracuse University. Her wine dinner series, The Communion, has evolved into the book *Communion: Pairings for the People* with publisher Harvest/Harper Collins.

She received a B.S. in engineering from Syracuse University and an MBA from St. John's University.



## Jason Mills '95, G'96

Jason Mills '95, G'96 is vice president of engineering at Snowflake, an enterprise data warehouse company in cloud computing. He has held a series of technology executive jobs with increasing responsibility and scope at firms such as Citigroup, JPMorgan Chase and Google.

At JPMorgan Chase he led the first artificial intelligence, machine learning center of excellence.

At Google he built and led the first sales engineering industry vertical business in artificial intelligence, machine learning, enterprise cloud infrastructure for the top 250 customers at Google Cloud. At Alphabet he served on the Capital G Technology Advisory Board and consulted on several key investments for the growth equity venture capital firm.

Mills earned a B.S. in information management and technology and an M.S. in telecommunications and network management from Syracuse University. He has served on the iSchool Board of Advisors and, as a student, co-founded the Black and Latino Information Studies Support Group (BLISTS).



## Keith Moody '89

Keith Moody '89 is president and co-founder of LinkVisum Consulting Group, a management consulting firm that provides services to the federal government. His professional area of focus has centered on providing consulting services in technology, process improvement and organizational change. Previously, he was a senior manager at Booz Allen Hamilton, PricewaterhouseCoopers and American Management Systems. At these organizations, he led large consulting teams in transforming organizations by applying process improvements, leveraging technology and facilitating change management.

Since 2015, Moody has participated in youth mentoring as a member of 100 Black Men of Greater Washington D.C. He has been instrumental in the Saturday Leadership Academy, the organization's flagship program that provides mentoring to young men ages 13 to 18. In 2020, he was appointed to the Board of Directors for Loudoun County Water, where he provides oversight to the organization's leadership.

He received a B.S. in management information systems and marketing from Syracuse University and an MBA from the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina.



## Jessica Pitcher G'14

Jessica Pitcher G'14 serves as associate director of Alumni Career Services at Syracuse University, overseeing virtual and in-person professional development programs for alumni. She previously served as career counselor for students at the David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics for four years. She learned in an earlier role as the HEOP admissions counselor at Cazenovia College that she most enjoyed supporting people through periods of transition, whether that be from high school to college or college to career.

Pitcher received a B.A. in English and psychology from SUNY Geneseo and an M.S. in higher education administration from Syracuse University.



## Jena B. Singleton '09

Jena Burgess Singleton '09 is a growth-minded strategist with 15 years of experience helping companies create the workplace of the future. She has focused her career on employee experience, and diversity, equity and inclusion best practices. She has led teams at Fortune 500 companies, nonprofits, education institutions and small- to mid-sized growth companies. She started her entrepreneurial journey in 2014 when she founded her consulting firm, Coach Jena B. LLC, which supported companies with complex cultural and diversity topics. Most recently, she has leveraged her understanding and passion for wellness and founded The Rest Spot, which seeks to create a world where rest is accessible, transformative and life-changing for all. She is the author of *Super Qualified*.

Singleton received a B.S. in television, radio and film from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.





## Phaedra Stewart '91

Phaedra Stewart '91, a retired human resources executive, is the owner and operator of Seriously Positive LLC. She retired after a 25-year career in human resources as vice president of human resources for LifeBridge Health, one of the largest health providers in Maryland. She oversaw HR operations for the largest hospital in the system and led workforce development, employee health, and employee and labor relations for the entire system.

Seriously Positive is a multi-faceted company with a mission to uplift individuals and neighborhoods in Baltimore, and Stewart has started purchasing and renovating vacant buildings with the goal of improving neighborhoods one city block at a time.

She received a B.A. in economics from Syracuse University and an MBA in human resources management from the University of Baltimore. In recognition of her gift supporting renovation of the Barner-McDuffie House, formerly 119 Euclid, the house's meeting room is the Phaedra R. Stewart Meeting Room.



## Ronald J. Taylor '15, G'16

Ronald J. Taylor '15, G'16 is an experienced professional in K-12 education, program design and evaluation, in addition to the child development and safety spaces. As a member of the Global Youth Safety and Well-being Issue Policy team at TikTok, he works on enhancing content moderation policies to support the healthy growth and development of young people online.

He began his teaching career at Harlem's Children Zone and Horace Mann School. He has experience working with boards and leveraging resources to drive interventions to support students through high-stress situations and circumstances, as evidenced through his record leading through the COVID-19 pandemic and building suicide and self-harm reduction strategies for vulnerable student populations.

Taylor received a B.A. in political science and policy studies, with a minor in African American studies, from Syracuse University and an M.S.Ed. in history education (7-12). He served as a Senior Class Marshal, was an Our Time Has Come Scholar and Coronat Scholar and participated in the Renée Crown University Honors Program. In 2021, he earned an Ed.M. in private school leadership from Columbia University, Teachers College.



## Aisha Thomas-Petit '98

Aisha Thomas-Petit '98 serves as the chief human resources officer at Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, overseeing all human relations functions, including compensation, talent acquisition, leadership development and employee engagement. Previously, she held roles as chief people and diversity officer at AMC Networks and chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer at ADP. With over seven years at Barclays Capital and eight years at JPMorgan Chase, she has extensive experience in global HR leadership. She has been honored by *Cynopsis* and *Cablefax The Magazine*. Thomas-Petit is involved in various boards, including the New Jersey City University Foundation and The Opportunity Network.

She received a B.S. in marketing from Syracuse University and an MBA from Rutgers University and serves on Syracuse University's Office of Multicultural Advancement Advisory Council.



## Craig T. Williams '89

Craig T. Williams '89 is president and chief executive officer of Pride Enterprises Inc., a full-service general construction firm, and American Power Electrical Supply Company, a full-service, full-line electrical supply wholesale and retail company with Minority Business Enterprise certification that services Greater Philadelphia.

He has more than 30 years of experience in construction management, getting his start by working for his uncle when he was home from college. He helped his father cultivate and develop his own construction business, eventually founding Pride in 1996 and American Power in 2018.

He has expanded the reach and growth of both companies, contracting with organizations such as Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Drexel University on large-scale projects. He received a B.S. in management from Syracuse University.





# A LOOK AT THE 2022 CBT BUSINESS CONFERENCE













# Save THE DATE

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TOGETHER/2024

SEPTEMBER 12-15



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