



GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
DIVISION OF ENROLLMENT  
DEVELOPMENT AND  
EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

# THE BLACK BOYS & MEN SYMPOSIUM

**"Working  
together to  
change conditions  
and elevate lives."**

**#GVSUBBMS**

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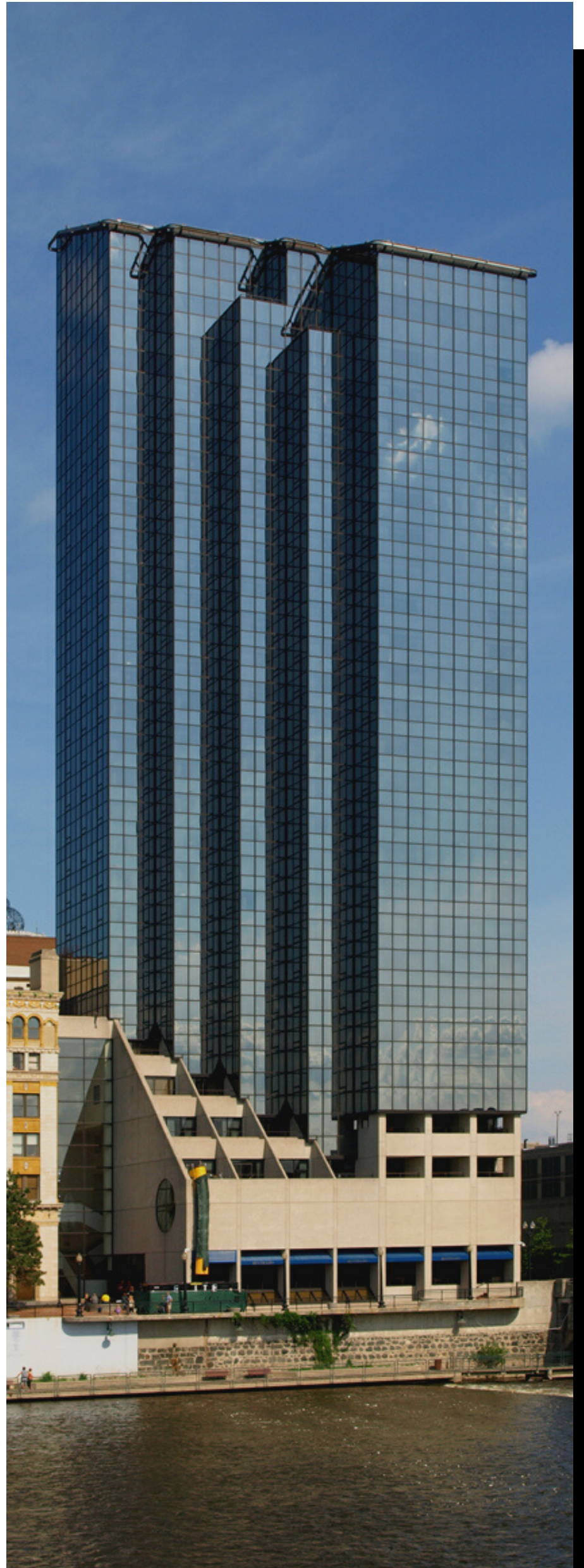
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# welcome



On behalf of Grand Valley State University, I am pleased to welcome you to the inaugural Black Boys & Men Symposium: Working Together to Change Conditions and Elevate Lives. Thank you for your commitment to creating a vision for equitable transformation throughout the educational pipeline, from K-12 to higher education and beyond.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our sponsors for their support and partnership. Your generosity has enhanced this learning experience.

In addition, I extend a special thanks to the conference planning core team and committee for helping to vision and bring to fruition this inaugural symposium. Your hard work allows all of us to be here together as we work to change the conditions for Black boys and men in education.

Recent events across the nation, in our community, and in your communities, highlight the need for continued dialogue, learning, and action to bring about transformational change in education for Black boys and men. No matter where you are on your own journey of personal and professional growth, the keynote speakers, plenary session, and conference programs are designed to deepen your understanding of the systems that impact the lives of Black boys and men and offer ideas to deconstruct those systems and rebuild for their success.

Thank you for choosing to show up to participate in courageous conversations, to walk alongside Black boys and men, and to be change agents. When you return home, I ask that you find ways to implement new ideas learned throughout the symposium. Because together, we can change conditions and elevate lives.

Sincerely,  
B. Donta Truss, Ed.D.  
Vice President for Enrollment Development & Educational Outreach  
Grand Valley State University

# about the conference

Grand Valley State University seeks to bring together youth service providers, K-12 educators, higher education faculty and staff, and community leaders to understand and interrogate the “systems” that impact the lives of Black boys & men in order to deconstruct and rebuild for their success.

Through a lens of intersectionality, the Black Boys & Men Symposium looks holistically at the lives of Black boys & men in a variety of educational and other contexts. The symposium is focused on creating a vision for equitable transformation throughout the educational pipeline, from K-12 to higher education and beyond. The symposium is designed to be a place of personal and professional growth for those who walk alongside Black boys & men to engage in discussion, learning and action.

## goals for symposium

Goal 1: Bring state stakeholders together to begin to outline a plan for success and create a pipeline to include K-12, higher education, and beyond.

Goal 2: Acknowledge the historical realities that have shaped outcomes for Black boys and men in order to create new realities.

Goal 3: Identify systemic barriers in order to generate discussion, ideas, and solutions for equity.

Goal 4: Create change agents by sharing leading practices and creating the capacity to create new and better outcomes.

Goal 5: Deconstruct and rebuild systems to create the conditions for Black boys & men success.

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# session guidelines

As a symposium, we are inviting everyone into the program session spaces as co-creators of the environment. We want it to be conducive to learning, highly engaging, and focused on action!

## basic guidelines

- Be aware of your own social identities in terms of positionality and privilege when speaking.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (use “I” instead of “they,” “we,” and “you”).
- Allow multiple interpretations of others stories to arise, rather than sticking to your first interpretation, to ensure that you are not invalidating the experience of others.
- Listen actively and share air time so a variety of people get a chance to participate.
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions and staying curious.
- To maintain a space for brave dialogue to occur, we ask that you refrain from using recording devices to capture conversations.
- Think about the role that you can play in creating change AND consider the systemic transformation that must happen in order to create more equitable outcomes.

# thursday conference schedule

1:15 pm to 2:15 pm - Choice Session 1

**Grandview A**      **Do YOU believe in us?: Counter-storytelling critical life events to construct positive sense of self for Black boys and men**      **Dar Mayweather**

Black boys who are not athletes, musically gifted, or academically sound, also matter. Yet, most schools have limited strategies to engage Black boys and men who are not seen as exceptional. Many schools have more initiatives that punish Black boys than empower them. Why? Deficit thinking about Black men is the norm, therefore, this session uses counter-storytelling to construct positive messaging that affirm Black boys throughout their life. The theory of nigrescence will help participants frame Black boys' experiences through an identity development lens from boyhood to adulthood.

**Grandview B & C**      **Black Educator Collective (BEC): Education Resource Groups and the Retention of Black Staff**      **Tiffany Lewis  
Dr. Monica Manns**

This session will inform participants on the establishment and implementation of Education Resource Groups as an effort to retain and support Black staff in K-12 education. Such groups offer meaningful opportunities for networking, mentorship, and professional and personal development for staff. Participants will explore the potential structures and extensions of promoting staff morale and retention as it relates to their respective institutions.

**Berkey**      **Building Your Own Brotherhood**      **Michael Harrison**

This session explores adult black males serving in mentoring and youth serving positions need for intentional practices that include mental health support, leadership development, and adult black male community building to maintain and improve the level of mentoring with young black males. Through use of literature like *The Black Male Handbook* (Kevin Powell), *The Gumbo Coalition* (Marc Morial), *The Alchemist* (Pablo Coelho), *Black Faces in White Spaces* (Randall Pinkett), *The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health* (Dr. Rheedra Walker), *Emergent Strategy* (Adrienne Maree Brown), *As a Man Thinketh* (James Allen) and others, participants will be asked to draw from their experiences to identify gaps to improve their quality of service for black boys and their families. Collectively we will identify resources to maintain and enhance the level of support needed to change the systems that dissolve the conditions for Black boys & men success.

**Haldene**      **Put Me in the Game Coach: Establishing Success Coaches in Residence Halls**      **Jonathan Harris**

This session will focus on what it takes for African American males to become successful college students. We will address how to overcome some of the struggles and pitfalls that they may face when planning to attend college. The presenter will provide insights for pre-college students who can use this information as a roadmap to success. By understanding the importance of college readiness, family support and internal motivation, African American males are more likely to succeed in college and make meaningful relationships with a diverse support group.

**Pearl**      **Creating Queer and Trans Inclusive College Environments for Black Men**      **Laila McCloud**

Growing attention to Black men's development and outcomes has encouraged higher education practitioners and researchers to further consider how the intersection of race and gender influence these students' collegiate experiences (McGuire, Berhanu, Davis, & Harper, 2014; Peizer, 2016) However, it is one thing to study Black men's gendered experiences (e.g. gendered racism) and it is another to study Black men as gendered persons (McGuire et al., 2014, p.257). The purpose of this session is to highlight findings of a 2020 study conducted by Drs. T.J. Jourian and Laila McCloud on the experiences of Black transmen in college. In addition to sharing the findings of this study, the session will provide an opportunity for participants to engage in conversation about how to increase queer and trans inclusive policies and practices, and programs for Black men in college.

**Ruby**      **The Black Male Scholar Initiative Program at GVSU \*Youth Friendly**      **Phillip Todd  
Bobby Springer**

The Black Male Scholars Initiative program is specifically designed for students who identify as Black/African American men. Throughout the academic year, students have the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, and student peers to create meaningful and authentic relationships that support their academic, cultural, and emotional well-being. Students are exposed to programming that enhances their university experience with the ultimate goal of improving academic success, retention and successful completion.

**\*Rotate your phone for best experience.**

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# thursday conference schedule

2:30 pm to 3:30 pm - Choice Session 2

## **Grandview A**

### **How Mentorship can support identity development of Black males**

**Dr. Rahjuan Gordon  
Eric Okai**

Black males struggle with identity development which affects growth in their career endeavors, personal lives, and academic spaces. Mentoring is connected to higher retention rates for students of color and as well as self-confidence, especially for those who have similar cultural backgrounds. This session will allow the participants to understand how mentorship relationships can support Black males' identity development which increases their sense of belonging and self-efficacy.

## **Grandview B & C Goal-Oriented Athletes in Education (G.O.A.T.Ed.): From Student-Athletes to Athlete-Educators**

**Tiffany Lewis,  
Dr. Monica Manns,  
Brian Henderson,  
Loren Johnson,  
Johnathan Lewis**

Goal-Oriented Athletes in Education (G.O.A.T.Ed.) is a program designed by the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Opportunity in Henrico County Public Schools that provides existing K-12 staff with a shared background as college and/or professional athletes with the opportunity to connect with current college-level student athletes. These educators have unique experiences as high-level competitors who decided to pursue education as a profession. The goal of the program is to encourage student-athletes to consider education as a field of study, specifically when considering the data indicating underrepresentation in educator staffing, specifically in men and people of color.

## **Berkey**

### **Our Mental Health Matters**

**Kelvin Weathers**

Students in 2021 report unprecedented amounts of fear and uncertainty. Many students find themselves feeling isolated and alone. Such emotional trauma leads directly to no-shows, dropping out, and, ultimately, lower enrollment rates. This session will focus on ways students and staff can fight these thoughts and feelings with affect their mental health as well as useful tips and strategies to overcome these barriers.

## **Haldene**

### **Fostering School Connectedness to improve the educational outcomes of Black Students**

**Charles Pirtle II**

School connectedness is the belief held by students that adults and peers at their school care about their learning and them as individuals. Schools of the future find that they are becoming more responsible for the whole child education of at-risk students. In a post-pandemic educational setting where students are disconnected from their traditional school setting, it is imperative that students now feel safe in a secure learning environment to maximize their learning potential and minimize learning loss. There has been a growing concern that the post-pandemic achievement gap has widened and that learning loss will occur higher for underrepresented youth (Dorn et al, 2021). It is imperative to look at strategies specifically geared toward improving the education outcomes of black students in k-12 school settings. The session will provide an overview of school connectedness and provide an opportunity for application.

## **Pearl**

### **Your Financial Health Check-in \*Youth Friendly**

**Dr. Craig Smith**

Credit is the foundation of building generational wealth! Jumpstart your journey into financial freedom by learning the foundations of credit and how best to leverage your credit in today's economy to create additional streams of income. Participants in this workshop will gain deeper knowledge and understanding about credit, personal/business funding, and ultimately how to add more streams of income to their portfolio.

## **Ruby**

### **It's the Same River! Preparing African American Males to Thrive in College**

**Dr. Darrell King**

This session will focus on what it takes for African American males to become successful college students. We will address how to overcome some of the struggles and pitfalls that they may face when planning to attend college. The presenter will provide insights for pre-college students who can use this information as a roadmap to success. By understanding the importance of college readiness, family support and internal motivation, African American males are more likely to succeed in college and make meaningful relationships with a diverse support group.



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# thursday conference schedule

3:45 pm to 4:45 pm - Choice Session 3

**Grandview A      The Value of the Black Male in Higher Education      Timothy Fields**

In this session we aim to help educate Black families on the College Admission Process and provide them with the information, tools, and knowledge they need for post-secondary success in the college admission process and beyond. The wealth gap continues to grow, disparity in the resources available in public school systems, and the practice of undermatching of black students going to college is at an all-time high. Longtime higher education professional, admission expert, and co-author of the forthcoming book *The Black Families Guide to College Admissions: A Conversation about Education, Parenting, and Race*, Timothy Fields, will examine how to support Black males and families in the college admission process pulling from his personal and professional experiences.

**Grandview B & C      Black males and Systemic Barriers:  
The need for equity      Dr. David Flowers**

This session is designed to address the identified challenges and barriers to the progress and success of Black boys and men in both academic and community settings. The purpose of this presentation is to develop collaborations with the session participants to develop strategies that will equip educators, stakeholders, and community members with real-life applications that will produce positive equitable outcomes for academic, social, and overall life success for Black males.

**Berkey      #BlueConductMatters: An Exploration into  
the History and Current state of Officer  
Conduct during Civilian Interactions      Shomari Tate**

This session will survey and analyze the history of policing of Black men and boys from the inception of 'law enforcement' to contemporary issues of unjust police brutality and violence against Black bodies as a means to add historical context to the current issue of American policing. We will use the history shared in this session to inform our practical and theoretical approaches to the issue of police violence.

**Haldene      Creating A Pipeline To Purpose: Empowering  
educators to better connect with the black  
boys they serve \*Youth Friendly      Honourable  
Raydale Bonivel**

As influencers in authoritative positions, one of the most important responsibilities of being a leader is thoroughly examining ourselves. Our duty is to align our intentions with our actions while cultivating empowering communication about ourselves and those that we are positioned to serve. This session will focus on empowering our educators and community leaders to re-imagine our black boys and men as positive and necessary contributions to the betterment of an overall collective people. We will improve the social-emotional awareness and intentionality of responsible decision making amongst our educators, resulting in better connecting with the black experience to better serve our black boys and men. This is the session where our purpose becomes bigger than our problems.

**Pearl      Being Culturally Responsive - Demystifying  
some of the myths      Ken James**

In this session, the participants will understand what the "culture" in "being culturally responsive" actually means – what it is and is not. Practical examples will be provided so that persons that work with Black youth can better meet objectives through a clearer purpose and understanding of culture. As practitioners, we need to understand culture so that all kids, families and team members have a greater sense of belonging. Recognizing our knowledge gaps around race, class, language, body language, etc., can help us better serve our stakeholders.

# friday conference schedule

9:45 am to 10:45 am - Choice Session 4

## **Grandview A**

### **Afros, Fades, and Razorblades: The Role and Influence of Cultural Factors within the Barbershop That provide Implications on The Academic Performance of African American Males**

**Dr. Edward Hill**

**\*Youth Friendly**

The session will explore and discuss the powerful and affirming breed of socialization that takes place in the African American barbershop that could be instructive to the academic environment. Relating the ethos of the barbershop to tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy, this presentation will illustrate how educators can build on the strengths found in the Black community to effectively connect with and teach African American male students. Void in many academic programs is the emphasis on developing an emic (inside) understanding of communities that students come from and how to view the community through a lens, which illuminates existing best practices even when they differ from mainstream conceptions.

## **Grandview B & C Leading Change by Leading Yourself**

**Dr. Jason McGhee**

**\*Youth Friendly**

This session will focus on increasing the authenticity of leadership in our sphere of influence and the center of influence. Men, as leaders, in any capacity that we may serve, have the duty and responsibility to properly self-assess. We lead most effectively when we operate as our authentic selves. This session will allow men the ability to leverage our leadership strengths and examine our leadership blind spots. Participants will leave with specific words, strategies and a plan of action to enhance self-awareness and communication within themselves and those around them. This is the session where we change the way we interact with others by changing the way we interact with ourselves.

## **Berkey**

### **Your Organization Needs More Black Men: Here's How You Attract, Hire, and Retain Them**

**Cortney Smalley**

Black men professionals bring unique attributes to any workplace setting. This presentation will introduce the benefits of having Black men and diverse professionals on your staff and the increase in productivity that comes with it. Participants will also learn applicant attraction strategies to attract Black men to your organization and learn ways to hire and retain this talent pool.

## **Haldene**

### **The Black Male Educators Alliance: Establishing Authentic Relationships to Liberate Learners**

**Brandon Lane & Michael Payne**

Session participants will engage in content focused on drawing connections between neuroscience, the trauma informed paradigm and attachment theory in order to better understand how educators can establish healthy, secure and authentic relationships with students. To close the session participants will engage in the Transforming Harm into Healing Protocol to gain an understanding of the self-work needed to support their efforts in cultivating and sustaining authentic relationships.

## **Pearl**

### **Identity Development and Intersectionality: Black Male Students at the Intersection of Race and Multiple Marginalized Identities**

**Dr. Mary "MJ" McConner**

Identity development is critical for adolescents and young adults as it allows them to understand themselves within the context of social and cultural norms. For Black male students and learners with historically minoritized and marginalized identities, identity formation often requires having to establish "who they are" while simultaneously navigating inequitable systems that were often not designed with their success in mind. Intersectionality, a term coined by civil rights activist and leading critical race theory scholar, Kimberle Bradshaw, is a concept that describes the interaction between race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, disability, and other social categories and how these overlapping identities contribute to specific forms of discrimination and oppression. As educators, it is important for us to understand the synergies between identity development and intersectionality in order to best support the diverse needs of our students.

## **Ruby**

### **Widening the Opportunity Pipeline: Creating Access to Careers through Collaborations with HBCUs & HSIs**

**Dr. B Donta Truss  
Dr. Paul Plotkowski**

Through the creation of articulation agreements with minority serving institutions, GVSU is working to widen the STEM pipeline by creating clear pathways for students wishing to transfer in order to complete an engineering or computing degree. While this approach began with Engineering and Computing, it is rapidly spreading to other disciplines. In addition to course and curriculum articulation, the agreements provide support in order to ensure student success upon arrival at GVSU. This includes opportunities to visit the campus prior to program enrollment, access to in-state tuition for participating students, scholarships, graduate assistantships, mentoring, and more. Through these innovative agreements, GVSU, our HBCU/HSI partners, and our employer partners are able to improve access to STEM careers for underrepresented students and remove barriers to student success. This in turn will result in development of the highly educated, diverse workforce needed in the STEM industries to propel innovation and advancement.

# friday conference schedule

1:15 pm to 2:15 pm - Choice Session 5

## **Grandview A**

### **Hitting the Reset Button: Let's Talk Financial Literacy**

**Tae Lee**

This session will provide an overview of financial literacy. Financial literacy is a subject that many talk about, but never learn. We will give background information on financial education, how to close the financial literacy gap, and how to implement financial tools into the classroom to align with standards.

## **Grandview B & C Early Socialization & Educational Trauma of the Black Child**

**Javonte Tubbs**

Our children face educational trauma from various facets of our educational system stemming from a number of factors that include: Lack of early educational socialization leading to a lack of preparation for Pre-K and Kindergarten, culture and bias stereotypes impacting the perception of behavior and achievement, navigating a foreign school culture, and police infiltration of the public school system. This session will focus on a number of ways to repair educational trauma. Participants will learn the importance of parental engagement in education, the importance of positive parent/teacher/student relationships, the educational effect on Black students who are taught by Black teachers, and removing police from inside the public schools.

## **Berkey**

### **Breaking Down Barriers, Preparing for the Future**

**Wayne Lynn**

This session would provide program ideas and practices that position young men and their families for future success. This session would include: mentoring practices, parent mentoring, mental therapy, and job search and retention. Also, there will be discussion about providing historical perspectives of what has happened as a mean to propel our community into the future success.

## **Haldene**

### **Mentoring Men by Turning Dreams Into Reality \*Youth Friendly**

**Dr. B. Donta Truss,  
Tyrish Garrett  
Tim Fields**

Participants will gain insight on impactful mentoring strategies that incorporates reality-based concepts to increase resiliency, grit, and degree and career attainment for Black boys and men. Further, session attendees will learn about how to be an effective mentor and change agent, while exploring how to strengthen, through mentorship, the communities in which they live, work, and engage. This session also includes a powerful group discussion where attendees can lend their voices and expertise by responding to a provided topic that allows honest, open discourse regarding the lived experiences of Black boys and men in America.

## **Haldene**

### **Overcoming Challenges for 1st Generation Black & Brown Students: Determining The College Path**

**Rodney D. Brown**

Explore some of the complexities and issues that Black and Brown students face on the college path. How does our students "feel" about or perceive themselves in context to society and in-relation to school systems and classroom environments? Do they belong? Do they feel "othered"? Imposters? Perceptions can significantly impact academic success and school related positive outcomes. Assessing influences of Natural Mentors, Role Models and Peer Impacts is very important. The environments where students live and go to school can too often negatively influence the college path. What can parents, families and the community do better? How can our students be better prepared? And what role does the Educator play in the equation? Join this presentation and ideate with Mr. Brown around strategies, solutions and resources that parents, and families and our students can take to better determine a successful college path for 1st Generation Black & Brown students.

# keynote speakers



## **DR. MICHAEL ERIC DYSON**

10:45 am to 12:15 pm, Pantlind Ballroom

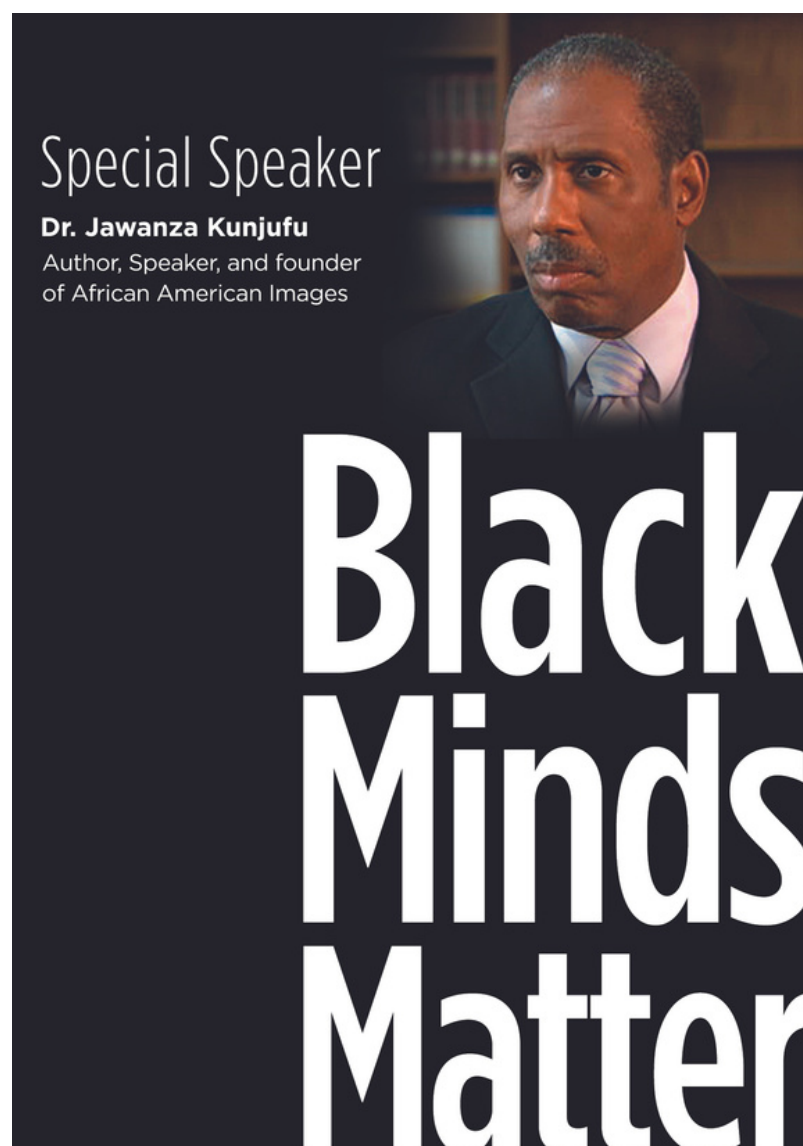
Dr. Michael Eric Dyson is the Centennial Chair at Vanderbilt University and serves as University Distinguished Professor of African American and Diaspora Studies in the College of Arts and Science and University Distinguished Professor of Ethics and Society in the Divinity School. He is also a New York Times contributing opinion writer, and a contributing editor of *The New Republic*, and of ESPN's *The Undefeated* website. His rise from humble roots in Detroit to his present perch as a world class intellectual, noted author of 21 books, prominent leader and national media fixture testify to his extraordinary talent. Dyson has also taught at other elite universities like Georgetown University as a sociology professor, Brown University, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Columbia University and The University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Dyson has won many prestigious honors, including an American Book Award and two NAACP Image Awards. *Ebony* magazine cited him as one of the 100 most influential African Americans, and as one of the 150 most powerful blacks in the nation.

Dyson's influence has spread far beyond the academy in his roles of renowned orator, highly sought-after lecturer, and ordained Baptist minister. For the last quarter of a century, Dyson has also enlivened public debate across the media landscape on every major television and radio show in the country, from *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* to *Real Time with Bill Maher*, from *Good Morning America* to *The Today Show*, from NPR's *All Things Considered* to its *Talk of the Nation*, from the *Tavis Smiley Show* to *Def Poetry Jam*, from *This Week with George Stephanopoulos* to *Meet the Press*, and *Face the Nation* -- and several programs on ESPN.

Dyson's pioneering scholarship has had a profound effect on American ideas. His 1994 book *Making Malcolm: The Myth and Meaning of Malcolm X*, was named one of the most important African American books of the 20th century and was also named a "Notable Book of the year" by the *New York Times*. According to book industry bible *Publisher's Weekly*, Dyson's 2001 book, *Holler if You Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur*, helped to make books on hip hop commercially viable.

# keynote speakers



## **DR. JAWANZA KUNJUFU**

2:30 pm - 3:45 pm, Pantlind Ballroom

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu was educated at Morgan State, Illinois State, and Union Graduate School. He has been a guest speaker at most universities throughout the U.S. and has been a consultant to most urban school districts. He has authored 40 books including national best sellers, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*; *State of Emergency*; *Keeping Black Boys Out of Special Education*; *Reducing the Dropout Rate*; *Adam Where Are You? Why Most Black Men Don't go to Church*; *Developing Strong Black Male Ministries*; *Raising Black Boys*; *Understanding Black Male Learning Styles*; and *Changing School Culture for Black Males*.

His latest book is *COVID 1619*. His work has been featured in *Ebony* and *Essence Magazine*, and he has been a guest on *BET*, *MSNBC* & *Oprah*. His work is being used in online courses nationwide.

Dr. Kunjufu is proud to say that he is a husband, father, and grandfather. He's also a vegetarian and an avid tennis player and has not missed a speech in 49 years.

# Plenary Speakers

Friday, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm, Pantlind Ballroom



## DR. KHALID MUMIN - FACILITATOR

For over 25 years, Dr. Khalid N. Mumin has served in various capacities as a teacher, dean of students, principal and central administrator. He is committed to promoting and sustaining student achievement, equity and access to educational programming for all students, as well as creating plans that are fiscally responsible. Dr. Mumin maintains a keen focus on fostering collaboration with stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, community, public officials, business partners, and higher education institutions. He has been recognized nationally as a "School Board Savvy Superintendent", and is the author of the book entitled, *Problem Child: Leading Students Living in Poverty Towards Infinite Possibilities of Success*.



## DR. PHILOMENA MANTELLA

President Mantella is the first woman and the fifth president to lead Grand Valley State University, the fourth largest university in Michigan. She has an impressive 30-year career in higher education marked with success propelling universities forward into new markets, expanded relationships, and countless new program innovations. In the last two years, she has expanded the university's offerings and potential learners with programs aimed at non-traditional and underrepresented students. Dr. Mantella developed a national alliance to raise underserved student voices, improved pathways to graduation, and brought student insights forward in institutional transformation. She has worked at public and private institutions in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Michigan.



## DR. QUINTON ROSS, JR.

Dr. Quinton T. Ross, Jr., serves with distinction as the 15th President of his alma mater, Alabama State University. Dr. Ross is a three-time graduate of Alabama State University. Under the leadership of Dr. Ross, ASU saw its retention and graduation rates increase. According to the U.S. News and World Report 2022, ASU is in the Top 25 of HBCUs, moving up in rank by 10 spots since 2021, now ranked at 22. Recently, President Ross was appointed to the Board of Advisors of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by President Joe Biden. He also has been appointed to the HBCU Financing Advisory Board by U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel A. Cardona.



## DR. BILL PINK

Dr. Bill Pink became the 10th president of Grand Rapids Community College in May 2017 and was the first African-American appointed to the post in the institution's 100-plus years. He is soon to be the President of Ferris State University. With more than 30 years as an educator and leader at the national and local level, Dr. Pink is focused on building on GRCC's strong history of service to all students, guiding the college to be relevant and responsive to its community. Dr. Pink is involved in governance and policy development at regional and national levels. He also serves on the Community College Advisory Panel for The College Board and was appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation executive committee. He was most recently elected to the American Association of Community Colleges board.



## KEVIN POLSTON

Kevin has served as superintendent of Kentwood (MI) Public Schools since 2021. His previous superintendent experience included four years at Godfrey-Lee Public Schools in Wyoming, Michigan. Prior to becoming a superintendent, he served as a teacher, coach, and administrator at Grand Haven Area Public Schools (MI) for 15 years. In June, 2020, Kevin was appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to the Return to School Advisory Council that advised on the MI Safe School Return to School Roadmap that created the conditions for students to return to face to face learning during the pandemic. Polston serves as a trustee on the Board of Trustees of KConnect, a collective impact organization in Grand Rapids, MI, whose mission is to ensure all children in Kent County have a clear path to economic prosperity through quality education, family, and community support.

THUR JUNE 09

# SNEAKER Ball

SOLEFUL PARTY WITH A PURPOSE!

DOORS OPEN AT 6:30PM

PROGRAM BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 7:00PM  
FORMAL ATTIRE WITH YOUR FAVORITE SNEAKERS

AMWAY GRAND PLAZA

187 MONROE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

PURCHASE TICKETS

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