



WrightChoice  
Mentoring

*A Jazzy*  
**EXPERIENCE**  
**FUNDRAISING GALA**

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FEBRUARY 28, 2026

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MUSIC, MELODY & MENTORSHIP

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# Agenda

## Opening Remarks

Council Member Tiara N. Ross

## Welcome

Host Rodney Dunigan, WSYX ABC 6

## Legacy of Impact Awards

Presented by Wright-Patt Credit Union

## Award Honoree Recognitions

### The Rising Star Award

Sponsored by: Diversified Systems & National Center for Urban Solution

### Entrepreneur Legacy of Impact Award

Sponsored by: The Robert Weiler Company

### Healthcare Legacy of Impact Award

Sponsored by: Wright-Patt Credit Union

## Dinner & Live Jazz Performance

Featuring Vocalist Meredith Evans

## Award Honoree Recognitions

### Mentor of the Year Award

Sponsored by: Sylvia Garrett & Associates and Nationwide Insurance

## A Moment to Give

Jimmie Bell and Rodney Dunigan

## The Justice Lifetime Legacy Award

Sponsored by: Baker Hostetler and Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority

## A Message from our Founder & Chief Mentor

TyKiah Wright Wilson

## "The Jazzy Experience"

Featuring Saxophonist Rhoda G.

Entertainment Sponsored by: The City of Columbus Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Become a  
Mentor or  
Mentee



Scan me!



**Rodney Dunigan**, co-anchor of "Good Evening Columbus" on WSYX ABC 6, will serve as the host for the evening.



**Jimmie Bell**, former Ohio State (1997 Rose Bowl champion) and NFL defensive lineman (New York Giants, San Diego Chargers), and owner of Jimmie Bell Empowers.

# Featured Performers

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## Rhoda G.

Our featured artist, Rhoda G., embodies the transformative influence of mentorship and the journey to greatness.

Born and raised in St. Louis, MO, Rhoda's musical roots were nurtured early on by her parents, who introduced her to legends like Anita Baker, Luther Vandross, The Temptations, and The Whispers. Her father, Fred Graham, Jr., performed with the local group The Migrations, and her mother, Viveca Graham, filled their home with music that shaped Rhoda's artistry.

Rhoda's story is a testament to mentorship in action. From playing her saxophone humbly at church, practicing on the sidelines until she was ready to shine, to becoming a celebrated saxophonist in St. Louis and beyond, her journey reflects the transformative power of guidance, encouragement, and resilience.

Her talent has graced stages worldwide, including performances in Dubai at the Dusit Thani Hotel, the Bahamas, and the prestigious Apollo Theater in Harlem, NY, where she soared to the finals of Amateur Night at the Apollo. Along the way, Rhoda has shared stages with icons such as Donnie McClurkin, Vickie Winans, Chante Moore, Freddie Jackson, and After 7, leaving audiences captivated by her soulful melodies.

At WrightChoice Mentoring, we celebrate stories like Rhoda's that illustrate the profound impact mentorship can have on unleashing potential and achieving dreams. As we aim to empower the next generation of leaders and changemakers, this evening promises to be a testament to the harmony between mentorship and success.

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## Meredith Evans

Vocalist Meredith Evans has been performing throughout the Columbus area since 1999, delivering dynamic and engaging musical experiences for a wide range of events. A graduate of Wright State University, where she studied music and theater, Meredith began singing in church and developed a passion for performance at an early age. She performs as a soloist or alongside ensembles up to a five-piece band, tailoring each performance to the occasion.

Meredith has shared the stage with renowned artists including Yolanda Adams, Donnie McClurkin, Fred Hammond, and John Legend.



## *Justice Lifetime Legacy Honoree*

**Judge James E. Green (retired)**

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Coach James, formerly known as Judge Green, is entering a new season in life. Soon to be seventy years young, he recently retired for the third time and now wishes to build a practice as a certified life coach.

James retired in December after spending the past thirty-one years serving as a Franklin County Municipal Court Judge, having won 5 consecutive countywide elections. In 2020, Professor Green retired from teaching after serving as an Adjunct Professor for thirty-two years. In 1981, Tradesman Green retired from working as a carpenter/cabinetmaker for ten years.

James grew up in Akron, Ohio and after attending an inner city public vocational high school, he decided to further his education and enrolled at the University of Akron. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and rather than follow his dream of becoming a clinical psychologist, he matriculated into law school and earned a law degree from The Ohio State University College of law. He later obtained a Post Graduate Certification in Law from the Northwestern School of Law.

Attorney Green began his legal career as an Assistant Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney, where he served for five years before accepting an appointment as Administrator of the Ohio Supreme Court's Client Security Fund where he also served for five years. He was then appointed to a seat on the Franklin County Municipal Court.

James has been married to Rhesa for almost twenty-five years. He is father to three and grandfather to five. He and Rhesa are avid certified motorcyclists and have cycled through thirty-five states and abroad. He has been active in his community for over fifty years, largely mentoring youth. He enters this next chapter wanting to assist others with becoming their best selves.



## *Healthcare Legacy of Impact Honoree*

### **Dr. Laura Espy-Bell**

**Founder/President,  
Made for Medicine Program**

Laura Espy-Bell, MD, MHA, FACEP is a board-certified Emergency physician who is committed to diversity in medicine and addressing health disparities. She is a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, GA where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics and a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received her Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA). Dr. Espy-Bell later completed a graduate fellowship in Healthcare Administration at Emory Healthcare in Atlanta, GA in 2006 prior to entering The Ohio State University College of Medicine where she completed her medical training and residency in Emergency Medicine.

As an Emergency Physician with Mid-Ohio Emergency Services, Associate Medical Director of OhioHealth's Free Standing Emergency Departments in Reynoldsburg and Obetz, and System Medical Chief of Health Equity at OhioHealth, she not only delivers high-quality patient care but also drives systemic change. In her leadership role, she provides clinical guidance and coordination of health equity initiatives across the OhioHealth system, ensuring that equitable care is both prioritized and measurable. She assists in the design and implementation of evidence-based programs that advance equitable care delivery, while collaborating with service lines, care sites, and enterprise programs to embed health equity principles throughout the organization. Through this work, she is dedicated to addressing health disparities, improving access to care, and creating sustainable improvements in health equity for the communities she serves.

Dr. Espy-Bell is the Founder of The Columbus Black Physician's Network, created to promote networking, mentorship, and volunteerism among African American physicians. She has mentored countless physicians and students all the while living out her mantra "to lift as you climb." During the pandemic, she lead an advocacy campaign entitled "Our Community vs. Covid," speaking directly to the Black community about the impact of Covid-19 and the importance of getting vaccinated. She is persistent in her pursuit to save lives and continually shares her expertise. Dr. Espy-Bell is well known as a regional public speaker and expert on healthcare topics, such as emergency care, the opioid epidemic, health disparities in the African American community, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout 2020, Dr. Espy-Bell was featured in several statewide television commercials, radio interviews/ads, national and local webinars, sharing her expertise on emergency care and mitigation strategies to stop the spread of Covid-19 which ultimately saved lives.

Her current work includes a strong collaboration with The Columbus Medical Association, where she serves as the Founder and President of Made for Medicine, a groundbreaking pipeline initiative designed to inspire and prepare African American students for careers in medicine. Today, the program engages more than 140 students, offering them hands-on exposure to medical careers, opportunities to learn clinical procedures, mentorship from minority physician faculty, and enrichment in science and math. Through Made for Medicine, she aspires to change the face of medicine by increasing representation and addressing the significant disparity of Black physicians across the country. Dr. Espy-Bell is deeply committed to authentic leadership and to investing in the next generation. She embraces the belief in allowing God "to use you for a purpose greater than yourself" and continuously challenges others to do the same.

Dr. Espy-Bell was selected as one of the honorees for Columbus Business First - Top 40 Under 40 in 2018, Women in Economic Leadership Development (WELD) Honoree in 2018, Columbus CEO Future 50 Honoree in 2023, and a 2022 YWCA Woman of Achievement. Dr. Espy-Bell resides in Blacklick, OH with her husband Stephen and three children, Kendall, Jackson, and Ellis Bell.



## *Entrepreneur Legacy of Impact Honoree*

### **Derrick Pannell**

Founder, Columbus Center for  
Entrepreneurial Development (COED)

Derrick Pannell is a Columbus-born serial entrepreneur, author, real estate developer, and cultural visionary whose journey from adversity to influence continues to inspire. With more than 40 years of entrepreneurial experience in business development, the restaurant industry and entertainment management, he has helped companies grow their reach and scale into multimillion-dollar enterprises. Known for his resilience and practical wisdom, Derrick has built a reputation as a mentor and advocate for entrepreneurship and community growth.

In 2022, he founded the Columbus Center of Entrepreneurial Development (COED), transforming a 40,000-square-foot warehouse into a thriving hub for minority-owned businesses. Today, COED supports more than 75 entrepreneurs and is expanding into Cleveland, Cincinnati, Atlanta, and Los Angeles—advancing Derrick’s mission to create equity and sustainable economic opportunity.

A passionate jazz preservationist, Derrick has owned and operated the Blu Note Jazz Café in Columbus since 2019. Building on its success, he expanded his vision downtown with Blu Note on Town in the Discovery District (2025) and is set to open Blu Note on Rich in Franklinton’s emerging Music and Art District in 2026. This three-story venue will feature a rooftop and outdoor amphitheater, offering a cultural hub where music, art, and community intersect. Across all locations, Derrick’s venues demonstrate how jazz transcends cultural, professional, and generational divides—anchoring neighborhood revitalization through the arts.

As an author, Derrick has written several books on entrepreneurship, leadership, and wealth-building, including *The Best Entrepreneur’s Guide to Understanding Wealth and Developing the Entrepreneur Mind*. His direct, experience-driven approach resonates with readers and audiences seeking practical strategies for growth and success.

Derrick Pannell is more than an entrepreneur and developer—he is a mentor, cultural steward, and urban catalyst whose passion for business, music, and community continues to shape the future of Columbus and beyond.



## *Mentor of the Year*

### **Rae Holloway-Collins**

Personal Brand Photographer,  
Purple Star Photography

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Rae Holloway-Collins is a Columbus, Ohio based photographer and the founder and lead creative behind Purple Star Photography. With a lifelong passion for visual storytelling, Rae has built a career centered on helping entrepreneurs, leaders, and creatives show up confidently and authentically through powerful imagery.

Her journey began at Fort Hayes Career Center, where she first studied photography in high school. She went on to earn her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from the Columbus College of Art and Design, strengthening both her technical skills and artistic voice.

In 2016, Rae joined Premier Health as a staff photographer, where she captured more than 1,500 professional headshots, covered over 150 corporate events, and supported marketing campaigns across print and digital platforms. This experience sharpened her ability to work efficiently, connect with clients, and produce consistent, high-quality work in fast-paced environments.

Today, Rae works primarily with small businesses, entrepreneurs, and corporate teams throughout Central Ohio, specializing in headshots and personal brand photography. Through Purple Star Photography, her mission is to help women and professionals celebrate their confidence, beauty, and individuality while building strong, recognizable brands.

The name "Purple Star" reflects both Rae's favorite color and her belief that every client deserves to feel seen, valued, and celebrated. Her sessions are known for being intentional, supportive, and empowering, creating space for clients to feel comfortable and truly shine.



## *Rising Star Honoree*

### **Kelsi Weaver**

Services Specialist, Clearwater Council of Governments (COG)

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Kelsi Weaver is a Services Specialist at the Clearwater Council of Governments (COG), a dedicated disability advocate, and the host of the Powerfully Disabled podcast, where she uplifts disabled voices through storytelling, leadership, and lived experience.

A graduate of Ohio University, Kelsi earned her degree in social work and has built her career at the intersection of policy, service, and advocacy. During her senior year of college, she participated in WrightChoice Mentoring, where she was matched with a mentor who supported and encouraged her to use her voice and step confidently into advocacy—an experience that helped shape her leadership journey.

Kelsi is a former board member of Disability Rights Ohio and currently serves on the Governor's Council for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, continuing to champion equity, access, and inclusion for people with disabilities across the state.

Kelsi resides in Toledo, Ohio, and cherishes her partner, Nathan Turner.



## About WrightChoice Mentoring

WrightChoice Mentoring is a Columbus-based nonprofit organization operating at the intersection of mentoring, career exposure, and workforce readiness. With more than 20 years of youth development experience, WrightChoice equips high school, college students and early career professionals with the confidence, connections, and real-world experiences needed to thrive in today's economy.

After a strategic pause from 2016–2019, the organization re-engaged students virtually during the pandemic and returned to full-scale programming in 2024 with renewed focus and expanded partnerships.

Through signature initiatives such as the LYNKX, MentorMatch, Pre-Professional Law Program (PPLP), ACCESS+, and Bio+Neuro Futures, WrightChoice connects students to employers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders who open doors and expand access to opportunity. Programs are strengthened through wraparound supports like YourMoneyMentor and YourWellbeingMentor, ensuring students develop financial capability, professional presence, and personal resilience alongside career readiness.

WrightChoice is committed to building a mentoring-driven ecosystem that strengthens social capital, fuels economic mobility, and transforms potential into purpose.

### LYNKX

LYNKX prepares high school seniors and first-generation college students for a confident transition into higher education. Through mentoring and summer readiness workshops, students build the skills, mindset, and support network necessary to persist, perform, and thrive during their first year and beyond.

### MentorMatch

MentorMatch connects students with dedicated professionals aligned with their career interests, goals, and lived experiences. Through intentional matching, structured touchpoints, and guided conversations, students gain exposure, accountability, and encouragement. The program strengthens social capital, expands professional networks, and fosters meaningful relationships that inspire confidence and long-term growth.

### Pre-Professional Law Program (PPLP) Summer 2026 10th Cohort

The Pre-Professional Law Program (PPLP) is an immersive rotational experience introducing undergraduate students to diverse legal pathways. Participants engage with judges, solo practitioners, corporate counsel, and nonprofit attorneys while building skills in writing, advocacy, and professional presence. The program culminates with a moot court experience and sustained mentoring relationships.

### ACCESS+

(Beechcroft High School Partnership) funded by the Columbus Foundation ACCESS+ is a six-week self-awareness and career readiness program delivered in partnership with Beechcroft High School. Students explore strengths, workplace expectations, communication skills, and career pathways while connecting to mentors. ACCESS+ intentionally engages students with disabilities or unique learning needs

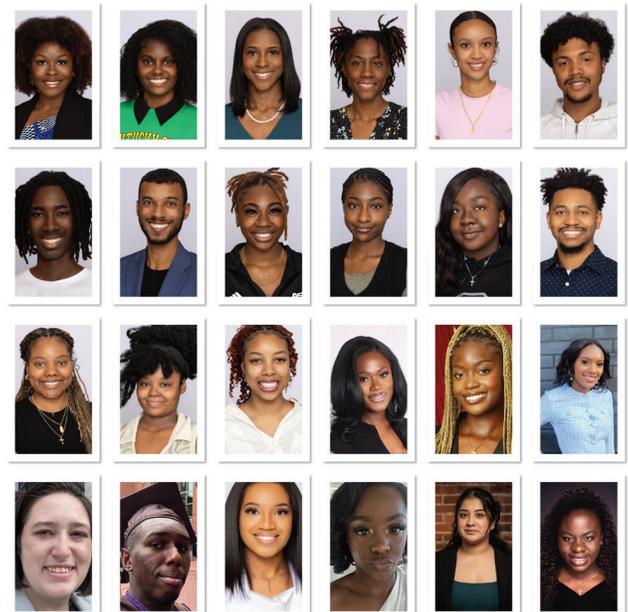
### Bio+Neuro Futures – supported by The Women's Fund

Bio+Neuro Futures exposes students to emerging careers in biotechnology, neuroscience, and applied life sciences. Through lab visits, industry site rotations, and mentorship from scientists and innovators, students explore pathways that bridge research and real-world application. The initiative builds technical confidence, career clarity, and access to highgrowth industries.

[WrightChoiceMentoring.com](https://WrightChoiceMentoring.com)

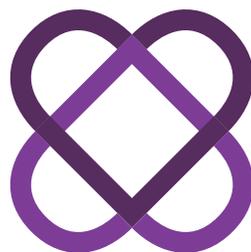
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## 2025 Mentees



## 2026 Mentors





## Sylvia A. Garrett & Associates Agency, LLC

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Sylvia A. Garrett  
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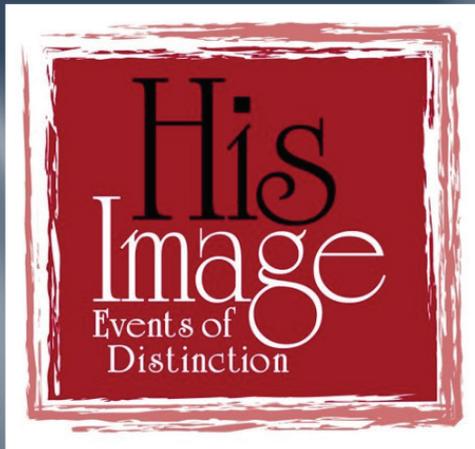
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*"A Jazzy Experience"*

Featuring Rhoda G.



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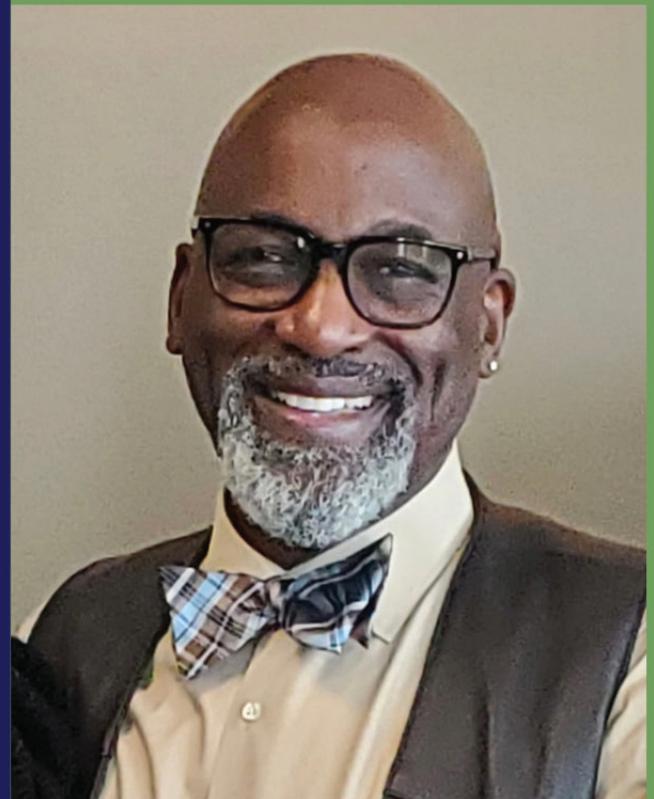
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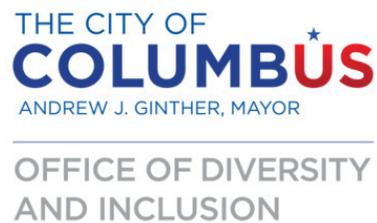
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F O W L E R

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Dr. Laura Espy-Bell

Ervan Rogers and Dana Raymond

Forrest Street Consulting

Jackie Kemp, The Eden Work Force Center

Jameel Turner

James Prysock

Jen and Jason Koma

Judge James E. Green (retired)

Lead the Way

Natasha and Scott Davis

Scott Markham and the Central Ohio Belonging Consortium

Theresa Adeliyi and Davia Stevenson

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