



CELEBRATING 45 YEARS!
**YMCA Black Achievers
Awards Celebration**

February 17, 2024

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers

**Adult Achiever of the Year
Distinguished Achiever of the Year
Legacy Award Recipient
YMCA Adult Achievers (by company)**

2024 YMCA Black Achievers

**Youth Achiever of the Year
Youth Achiever of the Year Finalists
YMCA Black Achievers**

SUCCESS IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!



Kevin Bruce Sr.
President & CEO
Bruce Insurance Group

Kevin Bruce Sr. is a distinguished professional from Louisville, Kentucky. He graduated from Seneca High School and later earned his degree from the University of Louisville. Kevin commenced his career with a dedicated three-year stint as a social worker, contributing his expertise in the public and private sectors. Following this, he served for three years as a home school coordinator for the Jefferson County Public School system.

In 1998, Kevin embarked on a transformative journey with American General Financial Group, marking the initiation of his enduring commitment to the insurance and financial services industry. Today, he is the President of the Bruce Insurance Group, a thriving venture that he co-owns with his wife, Tonya. Holding all four insurance licenses and Series 6 and 63 certifications in financial services, Kevin has positioned the Bruce Insurance Group as a trusted representative of nine top-rated companies. The agency boasts a substantial client base, with annual premiums exceeding \$1,000,000.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Kevin is deeply engaged in community service, reflecting his dedication to making a positive impact. He actively participates in organizations such as YMCA Black Achievers, where he serves on the Steering Committee, acts as the Senior Cluster Leader, and coordinates the National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Spring Break Tour. Additionally, he contributes to Bearing Oil Ministries Fellowship International as a Board Member and holds the position of Vice Chair on the Board of Directors for Park Duvalle Community Health Centers.

Kevin's leadership extends to his role as the Past President of the Louisville Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (LAIFA). He is also a respected Past Master of Mt. Moriah Lodge #1 F&AM PHA and contributes to the community as a high school referee with the Kentucky Football Officials Association. An Associate Pastor at House of Faith Christian Church, Kevin's commitment to service has been recognized through his inclusion in Who's Who in Black Louisville.

Kevin is a husband and partner to his wife Tonya, and he is a proud father of three adult children: Shelton, Kevin Jr., and Demetria. The Bruce family is further enriched by the presence of a beloved granddaughter, Sheriah. Kevin Bruce Sr. exemplifies a profound sense of pride in giving back to the community through his multifaceted public service endeavors.



Volunteer College Tour Coordinator, Kevin Bruce Sr., and Black Achievers seeing historic sites during the Virginia College tour at the U.S. Capitol.



R. Stephen Tarver
YMCA of Greater Louisville
Retired President and CEO

Steve Tarver served the YMCA of Greater Louisville as President and CEO for more than 23 years prior to his retirement. Steve has been involved in the YMCA since he was a six-year-old growing up in Jacksonville, Florida. Involved in the Teen Leaders Club Program, his first job was as a lifeguard, swimming and gymnastics instructor. His first full-time position was as the Physical Director of the Tallahassee YMCA while attending Florida State University. He worked in program positions in Kentucky and Tennessee, and served as a YMCA Branch Executive in Nashville. Prior to Louisville, he served as the CEO of the YMCA of the Suncoast (Clearwater, Florida). Steve served as the Director of YMCA Blue Ridge Leaders' School (2007–2016) involving over 700 teens from YMCAs across the southern states. He has worked on health and wellness at the regional and national level. Steve carried the Olympic Torch prior to the 1996 Games, and has received several awards and certifications in the field of health and wellness.

In all, Steve dedicated 51 years working for the YMCA. He has been a passionate and tireless supporter around the concept of health equity and social determinants during his tenure, working with countless civic leaders, leading health initiatives, supporting community organizations, and advising wellness advocates and others to improve communities such as Louisville and to benefit the lives of their residents. He has devoted much of his time to teaching children about the importance of health and wellbeing, and value-based decisions.

Under his visionary leadership, the YMCA has experienced significant growth, expanded its outreach efforts, and made a profound impact on countless lives in our community. From health initiatives dreamed up with members like the Total Movement with Parkinson's program to a community integrated health facility that houses the Republic Bank Foundation YMCA, Tarver's impact and legacy will continue to resonate across the entire community for generations.



Steve "Y-MAN" Tarver greeting children in the community.



Congratulations to 2024 Legacy Award Recipient Elmer Lucille Allen

**Brown-Forman Chemist, Retired
Ceramic and Fiber Artist**

Elmer Lucille Allen, a ceramic artist and chemist, was born at a time when Louisville was still a segregated city. She graduated from Central High School in 1949, when African American women had very few opportunities available to them. She attended Louisville Municipal College, a co-ed, all Black school from 1949 to 1951, then went to Nazareth College (now Spalding University) where she was one of only a few Black students, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1953.

Allen began working as a chemist at the Brown-Forman distillery in 1966 after years of working in labs, hospitals, and then doing medical and dental research at the University of Louisville.

Allen was recognized for her contributions to the field on September 1, 2023, by the Black Bourbon Society. The organization awarded her with the Bourbon Pioneer Award and a Distinguished Citizen Proclamation, among others.

She worked at Brown-Forman for 31 years before retiring in 1997, rising from junior to senior chemist along the way. And before she retired, she had already started on another path that would bring her accolades and success as well as healing and enjoyment—that of an artist. Elmer Lucille Allen became involved in the Louisville arts scene in the 1980s. She helped form the Kentucky Coalition of African American Arts and was a founding member of the Arts Council of Louisville.

Starting in 1981 she began to study art at the University of Louisville, receiving her master's degree in Creative Arts with a focus in ceramics and fiber in 2002. Allen's textile work incorporates shibori dyeing techniques.

In 2004, she became the first recipient of the Kentucky Arts Council Governor's Award in the Arts for Community Arts.

Throughout her career, Elmer Lucille Allen was featured in several exhibits including one in 2023 at the age of 92, and has won numerous awards for her art and her community service.

In an article by American Whiskey, Allen was asked to consider the importance of art. She said, "It's maybe some things that you make, it not only helps you to heal, but it might heal somebody else." On why she creates and the impact she hopes it has on others, Allen remarks, ". . . I want people to view my art and to get something, take something away from that, that I've made. You know . . . that's really my goal. And when you sit down and think about art, art is really a continuation of my chemistry work."



**Chemist, Elmer Lucille Allen,
in her early days at Brown-Forman**

THANK YOU, ELMER LUCILLE ALLEN AND BROWN-FORMAN, FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR YMCA BLACK ACHIEVERS HISTORY.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Baptist Health

Kermory Malone

Financial Operations Analyst II

Kermory Malone's journey with Baptist Health began within the Floyd hospital system, where he embarked on a path of excellence that now extends to the Louisville market hospital.

Throughout his tenure, Kermory has been instrumental in advancing the financial performance of each hospital, leveraging his expertise to enhance the analytical capabilities of staff members.

Collaborating closely with clinical leaders, Kermory provides invaluable insights into financial metrics and operational challenges, working tirelessly to streamline processes and drive efficiency. His proficiency in business intelligence report writing proved invaluable during the implementation of a new IT system, showcasing his adaptability and technical prowess.

Beyond his technical expertise, Kermory is known for his collaborative spirit and unwavering support for his peers. He extends a helping hand to new staff members, aiding in their onboarding process and offering guidance for success in their roles. Kermory's personable nature fosters strong relationships with colleagues, both past and present.

Prior to joining Baptist Health, Kermory pursued academic excellence, earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Kentucky in Economics and Finance, respectively. Committed to making a difference beyond the workplace, he dedicates his time to community service, volunteering with organizations such as Third Step, E7 Kids Cafe, and Believing in Forever, Inc. Kermory's multifaceted contributions exemplify his dedication to both professional advancement and community betterment.



Baptist Health

Terence "Terry" Henderson

Nursing Support Tech (CICU)

Terry Henderson's journey from housekeeping to Nursing Assistant in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) is a testament to his relentless dedication and unwavering spirit.

With a heart full of compassion and a willingness to lend a hand to anyone in need, Terry has become an indispensable pillar of support within the critical care areas.

His infectious positivity and boundless energy bring light to even the darkest of times, uplifting the spirits of patients, families, and colleagues alike. Terry's commitment to excellence knows no bounds; he seamlessly fills gaps wherever necessary and readily assists others at a moment's notice.

Outside of his professional duties, Terry extends his impact by mentoring and coaching youth football and basketball leagues, instilling valuable lessons of teamwork and perseverance in the next generation.

Throughout his tenure, Terry's warm presence and ever-positive attitude have earned him the admiration and respect of all who cross his path. His exemplary work ethic has been recognized through numerous unit-based and hospital awards, underscoring his profound influence on the work environment at BHL.

A devoted family man and active member of his church community, Terry's generosity and kindness extend far beyond the walls of the hospital. As a beacon of compassion and excellence, Terry Henderson is not only deserving of recognition for this award but also serves as an exemplary representative of the values upheld at BHL.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Booz Allen Hamilton

Brent Little

Associate Project Manager

Hailing from Louisville, KY, Brent journeyed from Bryan Station High School in Lexington, KY to the University of Louisville, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communications. Fueled by a passion for Human Resources (HR) and strategic planning, Brent furthered his studies with a Master's Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Walden University.

Early exposure to entrepreneurship and technology through the YMCA Black Achievers program shaped Brent's love for business and people, as well as his commitment to community and mentorship. As the founder of Sage Solutions, a consulting business, Brent specializes in organizational change, transformation, leadership coaching, and human resources. Brent's professional mission is to assist individuals and businesses in actualizing their dreams and goals. Eagerly embracing the future, Brent navigates the dynamic business landscape with enthusiasm, driven by a deep-seated desire to make a positive impact. Away from the office, Brent enjoys experiencing the arts, new cultures, and new places.

Brent would like to share his heartfelt gratitude with his family, friends, coworkers, mentors, and the Black Achievers community who have played a pivotal role in molding him into the person and leader that he is today.



Booz Allen Hamilton

Latesha Rutledge

Security Project Manager United States European Command

Latesha Rutledge's journey with the Black Achievers program dates back more than 20 years, when she entered the program as a Youth Achiever. During her senior year of high school, Latesha was awarded the Black Achievers Full-Tuition Scholarship to Kentucky State University. She received her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Kentucky State University in 2008 and has since earned several certifications: Department of Defense Certified Counter Insider Threat Fundamentals, Certified Counter Insider Threat Analyst, Carnegie Mellon—Counter Insider Threat Program Evaluator, and Global Counter Insider Threat Professional Certification.

Professionally, Latesha is an Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton, a management consulting firm. Throughout her 14-year tenure, she has served in several capacities, including Physical Security, Security Project Manager, and currently as a Counter Insider Threat Analyst.

In addition to her professional career, Latesha has volunteered and assisted Booz Allen's Race and Social Equity Grant Partnership with the Black Achievers program. The Booz Allen Partnership Team worked closely with the Black Achievers program to provide financial literacy resources for the program's youth and families. The partnership was a resounding success and offered three financial literacy offerings for the Black Achievers program. Additionally, the grant funds covered program expenses for 50 students and sponsored seven college visits for the Black Achievers program.

Service and community are the cornerstones of Latesha's life. She has been a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. for 19 years and currently serves as the Z-Hope (Zeta's Helping Other People Excel) coordinator for the Germany Chapter, Mu Theta Zeta. Latesha recently chaired a Christmas Toy Drive where the chapter collected more than 75 toys, clothes, shoes, and books. In partnership with Helfende Hande (Helping Hands), the donations were distributed to refugees, the poor, disadvantaged, and Poland & Ukraine refugees residing in Stuttgart, Germany. Latesha is a life member of the KSUNAA (Kentucky State University National Alumni Association).

Latesha currently lives and works in Stuttgart, Germany, and in her free time, she enjoys traveling and exploring new countries.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Booz Allen Hamilton

Marshawn Williams
Engineer Lead

Marshawn is a Black Achievers alum, having attended during his time at Suda E. Butler High School. He spent nine years in the United States Navy as an IT professional. While on active duty, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Adult Education from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. After joining the private sector, he obtained an MBA from the University of California, San Diego while serving as both the Student Body President and as a Cohort Representative to the Rady Business School at large. Marshawn has worked as a federal contractor for nine years, with clients ranging from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). He currently works for Booz Allen Hamilton as a Technical PM and Engineer, supporting one of the largest public sector cybersecurity contracts in U.S. history. Marshawn is a former volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters and a former Board Member of the Women's Museum of California.



GE Appliances & Haier

Marsha White
Inside Sales Manager

Marsha White is an Area Sales Manager as well as an Inside Sales Manager for GE Appliances & Haier. She has been a valuable member of the company for 33 years to date. Marsha is also active in her community. On the job, Marsha specializes in sales management and property management with customers. She also serves in a leadership position for Black Excellence for the company employee resource groups dedicated to empowering the black employees through advocacy, allyship, leadership, and growth.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



GE Appliances & Haier

Robert Sellers Jr.

Electrical Engineer, Advanced Systems

Robert Sellers is an electrical engineer for GE Appliances & Haier. He has been an asset during his 3 years at the company. His job involves researching new technologies for the next generation of electronics in refrigeration products. He also provides support for various projects and works closely with engineers, manufacturing, and commercial teams to understand consumer needs and develop innovative products. Aside from Robert's many leadership tasks in his main role, he also serves in a leadership capacity for the company ERG groups that provide empowerment through its advocacy for diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Humana

Alford L. Beck Jr.

Enterprise Transformation Lead

Alford L. Beck, Jr. is an Enterprise Transformation Lead for Humana Inc. In this role, Alford uses his project management expertise to lead large engagements that require expert process and strategy consultation for the Insurance Consulting Services Team (ICS).

Alford, who is a Class of 2005 Black Achiever himself, began his career as a Humana Infusion Program summer intern in 2007 and 2008 while attending Western Kentucky University. Since transitioning to a full-time associate in 2009, Alford has led a variety of projects, including standing up an offshore call center, managing provider strategy regarding Stars, maintaining a portfolio regarding specialty benefits, and engaging with clients for optimal procurement solutions. Alford is especially proud of the work he has done over the last three years with the IMPACT NRG, helping to start "My Brother's Keeper," which focuses on the importance of community and building a safe space for African American men within the company.

When not at work, Alford enjoys spending time with his wife Jessica and their daughter Malia, volunteering in his community through church, and serving as the present Board Chair of a local non-profit, St. George's Scholar Institute.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Humana

Marchel Williams

Culture and Engagement Lead

Marcel Williams plays a key role in shaping the culture at Humana, helping associates find joy and fulfillment in their work. As a true well-being and engagement advocate, his

efforts in bringing the highly acclaimed Interrupting Bias Series to Humana have earned over 100,000 views and 11,000 hours of educational watch time, underlining his dedication to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. His expertise in digital design shines through as he crafts logos, marketing materials, and builds SharePoint sites widely used across the enterprise. As the visionary and co-designer of Go/Maximize, Marcel has seen his work not only achieve impressive viewership but also gain adoption across the entire company. In 2021, he spearheaded mentoring initiatives that led to him being honored with Humana's prestigious Summit Award, which formally recognizes associates who consistently go above and beyond in creating the "Humana Perfect Experience."

His role as the host for Bruce Broussard's All Leader Town Halls in both Q1 of 2022 and Q3 of 2023 has solidified his position as a trusted voice within the organization. As the co-host of Humana Radio's, The Jo and Marcel Show, he champions authenticity and enjoyment at work. His close collaboration with senior leaders in various organizations led to measurable improvements in employee belonging and well-being. Before joining Humana, Marcel managed physician offices, proving his versatile leadership abilities.

A dedicated husband to Anne and father of four, in his downtime, he enjoys traveling, reading self-improvement books, celebrating his eldest son's military career, listening to his daughter's original music, cheering on his youngest sons' sports teams, and unwinding with science fiction and fantasy films. Marcel's professional endeavors and personal passions reflect a commitment to creating a fulfilling and impactful life for himself, his family, and his colleagues at Humana.



Humana

Danny Wooten, MBA

**Associate Director, Market Consultation/
Partnership, Strategy and Business
Support (SBS)**

**Healthcare Quality Reporting &
Improvement (HQRI)**

Danny has over 25 years of experience in internal and external auditing, process improvement, and consultation across the healthcare and banking industries. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of Kentucky and an MBA from Northern Kentucky University. During his tenure at Humana, Danny has cultivated numerous diverse working relationships across the company. He leverages these relationships to encourage collaboration and synergies in pursuit of company objectives, while also sharing best practices across the organization. Currently serving as an Associate Director, Market Consultation/Partnership Lead on the HQRI SBS Provider Support team, Danny manages a team of four associates supporting regional Risk Adjustment and Provider Engagement teams in executing Humana's risk adjustment provider education and engagement strategy.

Danny's Humana journey began in the Internal Audit Consulting Group (IACG), where he predominantly consulted within Provider Contracting, Provider Network Operations, and Claims lines of businesses. His guidance helped business leaders improve processes while addressing strategic, operational, compliance, and financial risks to Humana. In subsequent roles, including Audit Manager in the Claims and Provider segment, Danny managed risk management and annual controls oversight, ensuring alignment with business processes.

Before joining Humana in 2004, Danny worked in the banking industry for five years in Operations Risk Management and Internal Audit departments. His responsibilities included assessing operational risks, evaluating controls, and ensuring compliance with corporate policies. Danny also brings Big 4 Accounting experience to his role.

Active in various professional organizations, Danny co-facilitates Humana's Healthcare 101 and Business Connection programs. He is also involved in the Louisville Chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), where he previously served as President for five years. Danny is a graduate of the Disney Perfect Service Experience (PSX) program and completed Humana's Development Acceleration Program (DAP) in Fall 2008.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Kroger

Byram Muteshi **Store Manager**

Byram Muteshi is the Store Leader for Kroger on West Broadway, where he is dedicated to delivering a Full, Fresh, and Friendly experience to Every Customer, Every Time.

Originally from Africa, Byram was born and raised in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, where he grew up in a family of seven, including his parents, three brothers, and one sister.

Byram holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Lindsey Wilson College and a Master's Degree in Business Administration and Management from Campbellsville University.

His journey with Kroger began in 2022 when he joined the Store Leadership Development Program. After completing the program, he served as an Assistant Store Manager in three different locations: Grantline Road in New Albany, Indiana, Brownsboro Road in Louisville, Kentucky, and the Highlands in Louisville, Kentucky. In these roles, Byram demonstrated his commitment to the company by volunteering for various leadership positions, including Valentine's Day Champion, Fresh Start Champion, and Store Safety Champion for the district.

In his current role as Store Leader, Byram is excited about the opportunities for growth and development within Kroger. Outside of work, he enjoys running, spending time with his significant other and their two-year-old son, and watching sports.



Kroger Company

Sarah Barnes **Customer Experience** **Field Specialist**

Mary began her journey with Kroger in 2007 in Louisville, Kentucky, starting her career as a part-time Cashier. She then transitioned through various roles, serving as an Assistant Front-End Leader before being promoted to Front-End Leader. In this capacity, Mary managed a team of seventy associates, providing coaching, training, and development focused on delivering Fast, Friendly, and Efficient service.

Later, Mary seized an opportunity to work at the Louisville Division Office in the Louisville Training Center, where she played a pivotal role in training and developing newly hired associates for their roles in stores across the Louisville Metro area, positively impacting several thousand associates.

Having mastered the skills of training and development, Mary shifted her career path towards talent recruitment in the hiring process. This led to her promotion to Associate Resource Manager. In her current position, Mary excels at attracting, connecting, and retaining great associates while embodying Kroger's Purpose and Promise.

Outside of work, Mary is actively involved in Kroger's community, serving as a proud member of the Pride Committee, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Hourly Associate Influencer, and a member of the African American Associate Resource Group (AAARG).

In her spare time, Mary enjoys traveling and cherishing moments with her 11-month-old daughter, Olivia.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Kroger

Mary Brown

Associate Resource Manager

Sarah began her Kroger career in 2002 as a bagger at the Richmond Road store in Lexington, Kentucky. After a few months, she transitioned to the Floral department, where she spent several years while attending high school and college.

In 2011, Sarah entered the Management Development 1 Training Program. She subsequently served as an Assistant Store Manager in several stores in the Lexington area. Sarah also held the role of E-Commerce Manager in Richmond, Kentucky, and contributed to the Division Customer 1st Promise Team, aiding in the rollout of High Performing Teams to enhance store operations. Prior to becoming the Store Manager at store 371 and 768 in Lexington, she served as the District 4 (Lexington) Front-End Coordinator. Currently, Sarah serves as the District 4 Customer Experience Field Specialist.

Sarah graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Health Science. Additionally, she completed Kroger's Emerging Leaders program through Bellarmine University in 2022.

In her spare time, Sarah enjoys attending church, traveling, decorating, and cherishing moments with friends and family, including her husband Thomas of more than 13 years and their three children: Olivia (16), Marley (11), and Miles (6).



MSD

Lamont Hawkins

Electrical Maintenance Supervisor

Lamont is an Electrical Maintenance Supervisor and has been employed at MSD for more than 18 years. In his role, he supervises industrial maintenance electricians in the installation, repair, calibration, and preventative maintenance of process control, electrical, and mechanical systems. Additionally, he oversees industrial mechanics and wastewater treatment plant operators as needed.

Lamont was a member of the University of Louisville/MSD Cornerstone Wet Weather Design Project, which is part of the Speed School of Engineering curriculum.

Outside of work, Lamont is married to Tara Hawkins, and they have one daughter, Sophie. He is an active member of Burnett Avenue Baptist Church and the owner of Grace Travel.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Norton Healthcare

Cara Bland

**Director of the Institute
for Health Equity**

Cara Bland, Director of the Institute for Health Equity, a part of Norton Healthcare, is a native of Louisville and has been with Norton Healthcare for 26 years. During her tenure, she has worked in various departments, including Environmental Services, Norton Neuroscience Institute, Human Resources, and Norton Women's Care, where she served as the former Director of Provider Operations.

As the director of the Institute for Health Equity, Cara's purpose is to ensure that the organization provides quality healthcare to all it serves, responding to the needs of communities by addressing disparities that impact health outcomes.

Cara earned a Bachelor's of Science in Workforce Leadership & Development from the University of Louisville in 2011 and will be pursuing her Master's degree in the spring. She is passionate about community service, health equity, physical health, and nutrition. Her recent work includes creating the first outpatient, hospital-based doula program in the state of Kentucky.

Outside of the office, Cara enjoys traveling, exercising, and spending quality time with her family and friends. She has been married to her husband, Stephen, for 26 years, and they have two daughters, Steshel (30) and Stevelyn (23).

Cara's mission is to continue her work addressing health disparities and inequities throughout the community and organization.



Norton Healthcare

Deonte Malone

Director of Provider Operations

Deonte Malone is the Director of Provider Operations for the Norton Children Medical Group. Prior to joining Norton Healthcare, Deonte worked at the University of Louisville Hospital for 8 years in various leadership roles, including Director of Patient Access for Frazier Rehab, Clinical Operations Manager for U of L Physicians (Family Medicine), Practice Manager for U of L Physicians, and Revenue Cycle Manager for the Jewish downtown campus.

In his role as the Director of Provider Operations, Deonte's purpose is to ensure that day-to-day operations run smoothly while assisting the clinical team in meeting all quality metrics. Additionally, he fosters an environment where leaders can learn, grow, become independent leaders, and advance in their careers.

Deonte earned a Bachelor's of Science in Healthcare Administration in Emergency Management from the University of Columbia Southern in 2022 and is currently pursuing his master's degree in Business & Healthcare Management. He is deeply passionate about leadership development and seizes every opportunity to teach others, living by the motto: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Outside of the office, Deonte enjoys traveling, fishing, basketball, supporting the Michigan State Spartans, and spending time with his family. He is a single father of four kids: James (18), Damareon (12), Isaiah (12), and Taylor (10).

Deonte's mission is to help those he encounters in any capacity become a better version of themselves.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



PNC Bank

Derrick Littlejohn

**Commercial Banking
Market Leader**

As PNC Bank's Commercial Banking market leader for Louisville, Derrick Littlejohn, a 20-year banking veteran, leads a team of talented relationship managers. Their focus is on delivering PNC's full suite of lending solutions, cash management services, risk management strategies, and innovative ideas to companies in Greater Louisville, southern Indiana, and western Kentucky. Dedicated to assisting local companies in achieving growth and success, Derrick and his team collaborate with internal partners to provide clients access to PNC's specialized services and solutions for Treasury Management, Equipment Finance, Capital Markets, and Healthcare.

Derrick joined PNC in 2018 and assumed his current role in 2023. From 2021 to 2023, he spearheaded the buildout of the Commercial Banking business for PNC's newly established Greater Los Angeles market. Additionally, apart from serving as the Commercial Banking market leader, he is a member of PNC's Louisville distribution working group, which annually deploys approximately \$2 million in grant funding to local organizations.

A native of Louisville, Derrick earned his Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing from the University of Kentucky and his Master of Business Administration from the University of Kentucky's Gatton College of Business. He serves on the board of the Muhammad Ali Center. Derrick's family includes his wife Marsha and daughters Aubree and Ava.



PNC Bank

Jerry Macon Jr. **Branch Banker, Senior**

As the senior branch banker for PNC Bank's Watterson City branch, Jerry Macon Jr. leverages his extensive banking knowledge and passion for assisting people to provide banking solutions and financial education to PNC customers. Before his appointment at Watterson City in 2023, Jerry spent four years excelling in various banking roles at PNC's Shawnee West Broadway branch. As a PNC Certified Minority Business Advocate, Jerry consistently demonstrates his dedication to offering enhanced support for minority business decision-makers.

Originally from Detroit, Jerry has called Louisville home since 2015, following his graduation from Ohio Valley University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and was a member of the men's basketball team. Before attending Ohio Valley University on a full scholarship, Jerry obtained his associate degree in communication and played on the men's basketball team at Lipscomb University.

Known for his generosity with both his time and talent, Jerry mentors first-generation UofL students through the University of Louisville's READY Mentoring Program. Additionally, he serves as a coach for the YMCA of Greater Louisville's youth basketball league for children ages 3-4, which includes his son, Jaxon, on its roster.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



Republic Airways

Peggy B. Riley Flight Attendant

Peggy, a flight attendant for Republic Airways, has been based in Louisville for five years. Prior to this career, Peggy retired from the Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau (now Louisville

Tourism) after serving for 23 years as Director of Multicultural Affairs and Director of Southeast Sales. During her tenure in tourism, she assisted in soliciting conventions and meetings in the Southeast and minority markets.

After retirement, Peggy decided to pursue her dream of becoming a flight attendant and applied to work for Republic Airways, a Regional Company contracted to fly the Embraer 170 and 175 Jets for Delta, American, and United Airlines. In addition to her flight attendant duties, Peggy serves as the Chairperson for the Uniform Committee of the Teamsters Local 135, Airline Division, and is a member of Republic Airways' Uniform Compliance Team and BAAR Committee.

Peggy has two daughters, Tiffany Riley and Shavone Drake, as well as three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



Republic Bank

Ashley N. Duncan, CDP Vice President Inclusion and Diversity

Ashley N. Duncan is a native of Louisville, KY, who embarked on her career journey at the Transit Authority of River City (TARC), where she spent nearly 20 years, beginning as an intern. She pursued her education at Western Kentucky University and Spalding University, earning her Master of Science in Business Communication.

Ashley's career has been marked by numerous achievements, including being the first Director of Diversity and Inclusion for TARC. She then transitioned to Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), where she served as the inaugural Diversity Hiring Specialist. Currently, she holds the position of Vice President of Inclusion and Diversity at Republic Bank. Ashley has received accolades such as Business First Forty Under 40 Honoree, NFocus Magazine New Face of Philanthropy, and MASS Transit Forty Under 40 Honoree.

She is a founding member of the Western Kentucky University Alumni Association Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council and currently serves as the Board Chair for Metro United Way. Ashley also serves on the boards of Canopy, Parks Alliance, and the University of Louisville Chief Diversity Officer Advisory Board.

Married to Desmond Duncan, Ashley is the mother of three children. Interestingly, she comes from a family with five sets of twins. Active in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Ashley has also authored a children's book titled "The Princess of Ice Cream".



UAW

William Sheckles, III **UAW Representative**

William Sheckles, III is a proud graduate of Fairdale High School's class of 2012. William is a fourth-generation employee, and has been an integral part of Ford Motor Company for nearly nine years.

Since joining the UAW, William has been actively involved in his local union, holding positions as District Committee Person and Constitution Convention Delegate. He takes great pride in his role, advocating tirelessly to protect the rights of all UAW members within his Local Union on a daily basis.

William is a devoted husband and father to three wonderful children.



UAW

Matthew White **UAW Utility**

Matthew White, a native of Jeffersonville, Indiana, is deeply committed to his role as a team leader at Ford Motor Company. This position allows him to actively engage in day-to-day operations, where he can make a meaningful impact.

With twenty-four years of service, Matthew is a generational employee, following in his father's footsteps as a proud member of the UAW.

In his leadership role within the chassis department, Matthew finds fulfillment in working alongside his colleagues and enjoys the camaraderie that comes with it. Utilizing his strong interpersonal skills, he excels in building relationships and collaborating with coworkers to ensure the production of high-quality vehicles.

Beyond his professional endeavors, Matthew finds joy in his family life. He has been happily married to his wife Amy for nineteen years and takes immense pride in being a father to their 16-year-old daughter, Mya.

2024 YMCA Adult Achievers



WLKY

Tabitha Awoniyi
Associate Producer

Tabitha Awoniyi joined WLKY as an Associate Producer in 2022 and immediately immersed herself in learning the responsibilities of daily news production. Tabitha attended the Hearst Producer Academy in March of 2023. She has raised her skill level to solo, producing multiple newscasts at WLKY. Tabitha is an excellent co-worker, contributor, and collaborator. In addition to her duties at WLKY, Tabitha is a Staff Sergeant the U.S. Air Force Reserves. Since joining WLKY, she has served our country on two overseas missions and reports monthly for training. Her dedication and positive attitude are a model for all.



Zeon Chemicals

Andre Mayo
HR Generalist

Andre works closely with his team to lead Human Resources practices and objectives aimed at fostering an employee-oriented, high-performance culture. This culture prioritizes empowerment, quality, productivity, goal attainment, and the recruitment and ongoing development of a superior workforce. Andre holds a vital role within ZCLP and has made significant contributions to the Human Resources group, contributing to a positive employee culture.

Currently enrolled at UofL, Andre is actively pursuing his master's degree in human resource organizational development. In addition to his academic pursuits and professional responsibilities, Andre actively engages in community service. He volunteers at his church, participates in mentoring programs, and contributes to the ZCLP Helping Hands Committee.

In his personal life, Andre cherishes spending time with his wife and three daughters, ages five, ten, and thirteen. They are the focus of his free time, and he enjoys creating lasting memories with his family.

2024 Youth Achiever of the Year



Janae Allen
Ballard High School

Janae Allen is a senior at Ballard High School with college credits from the University of Louisville, Jefferson County Technical College, and Morehead State University. She lives with her parents, Orlando and Tomisha Allen, along with her two older brothers JoVahn and Josiah Allen. She has been a member of YMCA Black Achievers for three years.

Janae plans to major in Secondary Social Studies Education after graduating from high school. Her ultimate goal is to be Secretary of Education for the United States of America. As she works toward this goal she plans to gain experience in each level of education. While in high school Janae was involved in a number of clubs and extracurricular activities. She is president of Kentucky Educators Rising, vice president of her senior class, secretary of Ballard's Black Student Union, and a leader of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She participated in the National Honors Society, Principal Advisory Committee, varsity track and field, and is a Ballard student ambassador.

In addition to education, Janae is passionate about American Sign Language (ASL). While in college she will learn ASL and use that knowledge to increase the availability of ASL classes for middle and high school students. Additionally, Janae plans to study political science to broaden her understanding of government and to ensure her education reform goals are logistically possible. Janae credits her dedication to education to all of her teachers, past and present, who poured into her and went out of their way ensuring she was well-prepared for every developmental stage.

In her free time, Janae enjoys reading, working out, and spending time with friends. She is passionate about her relationship with Christ and is thankful for all he has done for her and taught her. She appreciates the support and encouragement of her family who motivated her to succeed in many facets of her life.



Great Day Live host, Elle Bottom, with Youth Achiever of the Year, Janae Allen and her parents Tomisha and Orlando Allen during a YMCA Black Achievers interview at Ballard High School.

2024 Youth Achiever of the Year Finalists



Jada Brasher

Louisville Male High School

Fun Facts:

Jada plans to attend Howard University to major in Political Science.

This Governor's Scholar alumnae will graduate as her class valedictorian and will have 5 years of perfect attendance. She is passionate about adjusting wealth inequality in the U.S and about the environment.



Alyssa Hughes

Louisville Male High School

Fun Facts:

Plans to attend University of Cincinnati or Spelman College to major in Business and Finance.

This Governor's Scholar alumnae is a state track champion, will graduate as her class valedictorian, and will have 13 years of perfect attendance.



Asia M Leach

DuPont Manual High School

Fun Facts:

Asia plans to attend the University of Miami or Middle Tennessee State University.

She is visually creative and enjoys cooking, fashion, and making art. She will serve as her school's Performance Director for Black History month.



Nadia Sougoufara

Eastern High School

Fun Facts:

Nadia plans to attend Spelman University or University of Kentucky to major in International Business.

Nadia is a prolific performing artist. She plays seven different instruments and has been dancing since she was 13 years old.

2024 Youth Achiever of the Year Nominees

Janae Allen

Ballard High School

Jada Brasher

Louisville Male High School

Asia M Leach

DuPont Manual High School

Nadia Sougoufara

Eastern High School

Alyssa Hughes

Louisville Male High School

Kane Watson

Louisville Male High School

Peyton Jones

Brown School

Christopher Thompson

Ballard High School

Nia Giselle Farris

Eastern High School

Anniah Johnson

Atherton High School

Lauren Sidney Duck

Louisville Male High School

Cameron Morris

Butler High School

Youth Achiever of the Year committee members

Angela Davis Clark
Pashens Fitzpatrick

Howard Holloman Jr.
Marietta Thompson

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CLASS OF 2024 NOMINEES



The YMCA of Greater Louisville wishes to honor
all of our 2024 graduating
YMCA Black Achievers
and congratulate our
YMCA Black Achiever of the Year
Janae Allen

YMCA Black Achievers Class of 2024

What YMCA Black Achievers Means to Me



Alaja Allen



Lauren Bethel

Serving in numerous organizations helps me build leadership, organizational and fundraising skills as well as allowing me to volunteer and get civically involved in my community. Being a YMCA Black Achiever gives me a sense of pride for my race, ethnicity, and community. The program

provides guidance, knowledge, and support for career development.



Janae Allen

Living and existing in a world not designed for me is utterly exhausting. I have goals and plans, but am often discouraged by the lack of representation, systematic racism, and racial bias in settings of influence. YMCA Black Achievers has provided a sanctuary where I can rest and be filled. It has encouraged me to get

my education and use it to help educate others. I know that I need to speak for myself and my community to achieve my goals. Complacency and silence are not an option in the race to reform education.



Jada Brasher

Being a YMCA Black Achiever puts two powerful things together: being Black and being an achiever, creating a bright human who lifts multicultural communities to kindness and hard work. To me, being a Black Achiever isn't wasting Saturday mornings at the YMCA; it's bettering myself

with the help of adults who truly care for my future and every other Black Achiever's future. A YMCA Black Achiever won't settle for the bare minimum because we understand that we have to raise the bar in order to secure our future.

Kenaija Banks

YMCA Black Achievers has taught me how to handle the responsibilities that have been set in place. As I enter college, I will use my program experiences and previous life experiences to push myself forward.

What YMCA Black Achievers Means to Me



Kennedy Bridges-Smith

To be a Black Achiever means you're not just achieving for yourself, you are uplifting your family and making your community a better place to live, work, and play. You are achieving for those individuals in our past who were wronged by injustice and oppression and whose dreams were wrapped in chains.

You strive to achieve because you understand that time and effort are your greatest investments, knowing that in the end, the rewards are worth every sacrifice.



Franklin Brown

Without YMCA Black Achievers, I would not be where I am, or on the path I am on. YMCA Black Achievers is empowering. It provides equity. It helps youth recognize their potential and gives them the push needed to step out with confidence. It provides career exploration, networking opportunities, community engagement, leadership development, and academic support. I am so passionate about what the program has done for me, I will stay involved well past my college years. What does YMCA Black Achievers mean to me? It means EVERYTHING!



Amari Brookins

YMCA Black Achievers means support, excellence, experience, contribution, community, culture, and more. Having the support of the cluster leaders and the Black Achievers team has provided me with my journey to my future.



Emory Brookins

In the YMCA Black Achievers program, I was exposed to multiple art mediums which helped me discover who I am as an artist and an individual. I was provided with tools to expand my creative journey. I can picture my future self, growing and flourishing at a college that would allow me to create films for people

from diverse backgrounds and with people who challenge and support me as an artist. As a young and gifted individual, I feel encouraged to share and display my art with the world.



Brooke Claycomb

YMCA Black Achievers means many things to me, the first is hope to the possibility of attending college with a scholarship. Black Achievers means opportunity. Seeing successful people that look like us provides the opportunity to see that we can succeed too. Black Achievers provides information about our history not taught in schools, or taught with missing pieces, and allows us to express our culture unapologetically so Black Achievers means home. Black Achievers means acceptance. Black Achievers means success.



Rakim Clark



Aleeyah Brown

I strive to be a Black Achiever and exude excellence not only because I want to make my family and loved ones proud, but I'm doing this for me! YMCA Black Achievers isn't just a scholarship program, there is so much more offered when we show up to 9th and Chestnut. The staff care about our well-being,

who we are as people, and who we want to be. They want to see us achieve EXCELLENCE!



Aerial Click

Being a YMCA Black Youth Achiever means embodying the values of excellence, leadership, community, and resilience. It signifies a commitment to personal and collective growth, and it empowers young Black and brown individuals to make a lasting and positive impact in their communities and the world.

What YMCA Black Achievers Means to Me



Kensley Davis

The YMCA Black Achievers program has truly helped mold me to be who I am today—a leader who is a role model for my community. At church, I lead and serve in the house of the Lord. I am a mentor for middle schoolers where they see the person that I have become and want the same thing for themselves. I am a role model for other black teenagers like me. I have the inspiration and motivation to go out and pursue my goals and dreams.



Chase Farrar

Through the YMCA Black Achievers program, I have learned the importance of completing assignments on time, how to be a better speaker when presenting to a room full of people, and how to prepare for job interviews. I have created friendships with like-minded people in our clusters. The cluster meetings have been filled with helpful real-life information. I now know that possibilities are endless when you study hard and believe in yourself.

Julian Dawson

I am the only Black person in most of my classes, but the YMCA Black Achievers program offered me the opportunity to be in a setting made up of individuals who look like me and who share my interests and my concerns. I have made friends, who like myself, are excited and working toward our goals. In a time where everyone talks about changing the world, I have been privileged to witness firsthand how it's truly achieved.



Nia Farris

YMCA Black Achievers, to me, represents the triumph over historical adversity and systemic obstacles. It embodies the spirit of those who have defied social constraints and excelled in their chosen fields. YMCA Black Achievers serves as a powerful reminder that success is possible despite the challenges that have historically plagued the black community. It showcases individuals who have shattered barriers and serves as a source of motivation for me to push beyond any limitations and strive for excellence in my own endeavors.



Lauren Duck

YMCA Black Achievers are surrounded by role models who look like us, who demonstrate Black excellence, and show us that it is possible to be successful and achieve whatever we set our minds to. The YMCA Black Achievers program has provided many resources to help me understand, direct, and prepare for my future. By participating in the health and medical cluster, I was exposed to numerous experiences to help jumpstart my career in nursing. The YMCA Black Achievers program is a bridge to help African American youth reach their dreams and goals.



Jame' Glenn

YMCA Black Achievers is breaking stereotypes and defying the odds of what we can do as Black and brown people. The program builds us up and pushes us to the best of our ability. It is a huge stepping stone to creating successful and meaningful careers, and has shaped me, not just for my career, but for my life. I will use the information I've learned in this program for years and years to come. I will never forget that we are achievers, and we achieve excellence.



David Durham Jr.



Journee Harbin

What YMCA Black Achievers Means to Me



Alyssa Hughes

YMCA Black Achievers, to me, is bringing our people together to advance from the hardships we faced in the past. I can come to class where everyone is unapologetically Black, unapologetically loud, and unapologetically themselves and feel safe. Being surrounded by like-minded people who looked like me in

a positive environment helped me view myself more positively. I know that in the future, girls like me, can learn to love themselves, despite how others perceive them.



Peyton Jones

YMCA Black Achievers has provided me with opportunities to explore my professional goals and to work toward making them happen through collaboration and connection. Having programs like the YMCA Black Achievers, can help close the achievement and opportunity gaps. It combats racial bias by having students

defying the odds and accomplishing goals that are seen as unattainable by society. The most important thing I learned is the importance of building a community and no matter where I go, I am going to make sure to build a community that I can always rely on.



Anniah Johnson

The YMCA Black Achievers program represents a source of inspiration and empowerment to those in the Black community. This program is not just an educational initiative, but it is a program that transforms the lives of Black students and provides a source of hope and opportunity for their future. Black Achievers

has shown me and other Black students, that I can be anything I want to be and that I am indeed not defined by the color of my skin.



Tyonne King

As a YMCA Black Achiever, I become a force to be reckoned with, shattering the glass ceiling, and making my mark in the world. It's about defying expectations, embracing my roots, and showing the world what I'm made of. Being a Black Achiever means being a trailblazer, breaking stereotypes, and making

a positive impact. It's about embracing my heritage, celebrating diversity, and showing the world what I am capable of. I will continue to strive for greatness and will inspire others along the way!

Alexandria Jones

YMCA Black Achievers means working with leaders who want to help me become a leader.



Amya Jones

The YMCA Black Achievers program is nothing less than an incredible organization with endless opportunity and connections. It serves to proactively rectify historic and systemic disadvantages faced by minority communities in accessing higher education. By specifically targeting scholarships for under-represented

groups, it helps to bridge the gap created by economic and social inequalities, providing a much-needed opportunity for those of us who may otherwise struggle to afford a college education.



Asia Leach

Being a YMCA Black Achiever has helped me recognize the value of being authentic to who I am, and it has empowered me to cultivate my unique voice and confidence, and to use it to inspire others. Throughout this program, I've been able to find myself, I've built connections, grown in confidence, and

gathered information that will continue to be impactful throughout my life. Being a Black Achiever is a distinction I proudly embrace every day. I stand tall, radiating excellence and wearing the armor of a proud Black Achiever for all to see.



Kenzleigh LeFlore

YMCA Black Achievers Class of 2024

What YMCA Black Achievers Means to Me



Jasmin Logan

YMCA Black Achievers taught me that even when you are different you can accomplish anything you put your mind to. The YMCA Black Achievers program has shown me that no matter my struggle, I have someone there to support me and show me the way to accomplish my goals if I take the initiative.

YMCA Black Achievers has empowered me to push past my limitations and realize that I too can pursue my dream even if my journey looks different.



Destiny Morris

A YMCA Black Achiever is a symbol of resilience, determination, and the profound impact that one can make on their community and society as a whole. It is a testament to the recognition of their excellence and unwavering ability to overcome obstacles to achieve their goals. To be a Black Achiever means embracing my blackness across multiple dimensions of life, including learning, spirituality, and the professional world. In a world where diversity is celebrated but not always fully understood, the path to self-discovery becomes a vital component of personal growth.



Kiya McClellon

The YMCA Black Achievers program gave me confidence within myself to be able to take steps that the people in my life didn't or couldn't. This experience opened my eyes and mind to another side of what achievement looks like. I was empowered to answer to a calling of wanting more in life outside of what my adolescence brought upon me and society's configuration.

I want to do better and be better.



Riniah Mowman

The YMCA Black Achievers program is not just a program, it is hope, a source of empowerment, a community of support peers, and encouragement for change. It means that my dreams, aspirations, and potential are not limited by my demographic background but they can be encouraged and celebrated. YMCA

Black Achievers represents the spirit of persistence and progress that has defined the African American/Black experience, and it represents a path toward a brighter, better, and more inclusive future for everyone.



Cameron Morris

When thinking about the YMCA Black Achievers program, I see a beautiful image of a greenhouse. I was a part of the engineering cluster that took a trip to the Botanical Gardens, and around me I saw beautiful and unique species of flowers and plants in a place that was formerly a landfill—a place where

previously people would drive past with disgust on their face—it is now a beacon of beauty where plants thrive. The YMCA Black Achievers program is like that for me. Like a greenhouse, it has been a place that has dedicated itself to the proper growth of its participants, creating a path to success for anyone who wants to take part.



LaJuan Odom

YMCA Black Achievers provided me a platform to find my voice and use it to fuel my passion for the arts. Now I want to use my own platform as a production director to inspire others.



Christopher Morris

YMCA Black Achievers to me is an introduction to a successful future. As Black Achievers, we get to identify what career paths we may want to embark upon.



Quincey Otieno

YMCA Black Achievers Class of 2024
What YMCA Black Achievers Means to Me



Kennedy Patillo

I joined YMCA Black Achievers my junior year of high school when my mom, who was in the program when she was my age, signed me up. The program provided me with a visual representation of what my future should look like and the knowledge that I needed to use the resources that were given to me.

They inspire me and the future generation to pursue their careers. They are setting me up for success.



Kennedy Payton

Being a YMCA Black Achiever means using our voices and platforms to advocate for social justice and equality. It means being unapologetic about who we are and using our talents to uplift and empower others. It means being a role model and mentor for the next generation, showing them

that they too can achieve greatness. Together, as Black Achievers, we can continue to make a positive impact and create a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



Angelo Persley

The YMCA Black Achievers program challenges societal stereotypes and breaks down racial barriers. By showcasing successful Black individuals in various fields such as arts, sciences, business, and politics, it serves as a powerful reminder that talent and potential know no racial boundaries. It empowers

individuals by encouraging them to defy societal expectations and pursue their passions without limitations. This program serves as a platform to highlight the achievements of Black Achievers and inspire future generations to strive for excellence, Black excellence.



Talia Rawlins

Through YMCA Black Achievers, I have not only been able to find the best career for me, but I was able to get assistance in making my first steps toward pursuing this career. I found a college with the major I wanted and found well-paying jobs inside of this career.

I also got to meet people with the same career interests as me. This whole program was very inclusive and supportive and I never felt overwhelmed, lost, or alone. This program has helped me, my community, and my family.



Trinit Robinson



Donovan Roland

The YMCA Black Achievers program serves as a springboard for dreams and aspirations. To me, it means the difference between merely dreaming and taking tangible steps towards my goals. The program empowers me, a young Black individual, to believe in the possibility of a brighter future and provides the tools

and guidance needed to turn those dreams into reality. The program has instilled in me the belief that everyone has the potential to be a leader, a change-maker, and an advocate for their community.



Anishiah Russell



Shabelle Sanders

I am blessed and eternally grateful for the amount of assistance and motivation that YMCA Black Achievers has given me. I have family members and friends that are alumni who encourage me. Without YMCA Black Achievers, I would have missed out on absolute life-changing experience. I was exposed to

concepts that are motivational and truly inspiring and they have shaped my potential career and future. Having accessibility to an environment filled with representation and a place that caters to the education and experience of those that look like me is truly euphoric.

YMCA Black Achievers Class of 2024

What YMCA Black Achievers Means to Me



Rae'Ven Slaughter

YMCA Black Achievers has been my village since I was in elementary school. Getting up every Saturday morning has been worth it knowing I have options for my future.



Kane Watson

YMCA Black Achievers has been a guiding light, a source of inspiration, and a platform for personal growth. Because of the lessons I have learned in the program, I'm confident in saying that once shy and quiet teenager wouldn't have come nearly this far. I am what I am today because of YMCA Black Achievers, and am beyond grateful for it.

Kennedy Smith

To me, being a YMCA Black Achiever means working hard and persevering. We work hard and achieve every day, to bring a brighter future for ourselves, our families, and our communities.



Nadia Sougoufara

YMCA Black Achievers doesn't just have one meaning to me among others, it means self-discovery, opportunity, and building a successful future. From networking and building connections, to following a path to self-discovery and opportunity, the organization pushes you to be better, to not sell yourself short, and to not settle for what you think is the only thing obtainable. YMCA Black Achievers symbolizes opportunity and building a future.



Cionna Wilson

Being a YMCA Black Achiever for the past four years has helped shape the young lady I am becoming. It has been so inspirational to have been surrounded by many Black bosses and successful Black people. Witnessing so many individuals with different backgrounds and upbringings has let me know that I too, can be like them one day and, I aspire to do just that. In addition, I will be able to come back and speak to future YMCA Black Achievers about my successes.



Christopher Thompson

The YMCA Black Achiever Program is the highlight of my weekend and so much more. I truly feel that I can be myself, surrounded by others who understand the experience of being a young Black teen. I have had incredible mentors who have guided me, helped me set ambitious goals, and showed me that my dreams are achievable. I am reminded that, as a young Black person, my potential is boundless, my future is bright, and my impact on the world can be truly transformative.



Zion Wise

Being in YMCA Black Achievers, I learned that no matter how much I succeed, none of it is possible without the support of a strong community. Service to my community is not just something nice to do, but it is an obligation and an opportunity to pour back into the community that has poured into me. YMCA Black Achievers has allowed me to grow personally, build meaningful relationships, connect with professionals, give back to the community, and explore scholarship opportunities. It has empowered me to never let go of my dreams, work hard, and to strive for excellence.



Brooklynn Walker

What YMCA Black Achievers means to me, is a community where I can be myself and be surrounded by my peers and successful adults who look just like me. This community wants to see me grow and succeed in life.

Not Pictured

Araya Allen

Emmanuel Harbin

Jersei Brooks

Sakarra Jackson

Jayla Clark

Malaya Menezes

Larry Cunningham

Mikayla Noriega

Tiffany Davis

Laila Patterson

Samayah Foster

JaVon Stoudemire

Braxton Frazier

Brooke Sturgeon

YMCA Black Achievers Culture

Negro National Anthem

Lift every voice and sing
'til earth and heaven ring.
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past
has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present
has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.
Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod.
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died.
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears
has been watered.
We have come, treading our path
through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light.
Keep us forever in the path we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God,
where we met Thee,
Lest our heart, drunk with the wine of the world,
we forget Thee,
Shadowed beneath thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God
True to our native land.

Achievers' Pledge

I make a vow to achieve.
And in myself, I will believe.
All my dreams, I will pursue.
And give my best, in all I do.
Everyday I will believe,
That I am destined to achieve.

Achievers' Creed

Cluster: Who are we?

Leader/All: We are Achievers!

Cluster: What do we do?

Leader/All: We achieve excellence!

Cluster: When do we achieve excellence?

Leader/All: Every minute of every day!

Cluster: Why do we pursue excellence?

Leader/All: Because we won't settle for less!

Cluster: Will we stop before we get there?

Leader/All: No!

Cluster: Who are we?

Leader/All: We are Achievers!

Cluster: What do we do?

Leader/All: We achieve excellence!

Seven Principals

UMOJOA (Unity) To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

KUJICHAGULIA (Self-determination) To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.

UJIMA (Collective Work & Responsibility) To build and maintain our community together and make our sister's and brother's problem our problems and to solve them together.

UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics) To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.

NIA (Purpose) To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

NGUZO SABA/Seven Principles Presentations KUUMBA

(Creativity) To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

IMANI (Faith) To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.



**YMCA OF GREATER LOUISVILLE
Chestnut Street Family YMCA**

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