



News & Views

Six Black, female fundraising and philanthropy professionals you should know

March 14, 2022

by Aisha Murphy

It's Women's History Month, a time when we celebrate the pivotal role women have played in shaping history. But this year, Women's History Month hits a little differently amid the backdrop of a global pandemic, wealth inequality and alleged racial reckoning.

And as calls for book bans across the nation grow more strident, one group of women has, and continues to be, particularly vulnerable to being erased from historical narratives. That group is Black women.





Kia's words: "I'm seeking justice for Black and Brown communities who bear the brunt of every structural inequity imaginable. I'm proud to marshal resources to improve outcomes in under-resourced communities. It's my pleasure and my passion to know I'm making a difference."

Black women have historically been at the helm of social justice movements, vociferously pushing for equity and social change. In celebration of Women's History Month, we're honoring those unsung Black women, past and present, who've devoted their lives to effecting systems of change. Today, we're shining a light on Black women changing lives, communities and narratives for people of color.

Here's a look at six Black, female nonprofit fundraisers and philanthropy professionals you should know.

Kia Croom

Kia Croom is a 20-year nonprofit fundraising and philanthropy professional. She's raised nearly \$400 million for nonprofits across the nation, in a variety of cause areas including: STEM, Advocacy, youth development, workforce development and health and human services. She specializes in building multi-million dollar, high-impact strategic partnerships that yield impactful social returns.

In 2021, Kia founded the [Black Fundraisers' Podcast](#) to amplify the voices and lived experiences of Black nonprofit and philanthropy professionals across the globe.

Kia is a proud social entrepreneur and director of corporate relations at the Children's Defense Fund.

Kia's inspiration in her own words:

"I'm seeking justice for Black and Brown communities who bear the brunt of every structural inequity imaginable. I'm proud to marshal resources to improve outcomes in under-resourced communities. It's my pleasure and my passion to know I'm making

a difference.” To learn more about Kia Croom visit www.kiacroom.com. Connect with Kia via LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kiacroom/>.

Birgit Smith Burton

Birgit Smith Burton is a respected leader in the fundraising profession who has raised more than \$500 million during her 33-year career. She worked as the executive director of foundation relations at the Georgia Institute of Technology (GA Tech), where she led her team in raising \$309 million toward the Institute’s most recent successful \$1.8 billion capital campaign. In November 2021, she retired from GA Tech to lead the African American Development Officers (AADO) Network, an organization she founded in 1998 to provide professional development, education, employment support, mentorship and networking opportunities for Black fundraisers.



"I'm involved not just because I'm passionate about helping people who are the working poor; I'm also involved because of what I can contribute through my knowledge of the fundraising profession," says Birgit Burton.

Birgit serves on the global board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and recently was voted as the Chair-Elect for 2021. She has the distinction of being the first Black woman in AFP’s 60-year history to serve in this role.

Birgit’s inspiration in her own words:

“I’m involved not just because I’m passionate about helping people who are the working poor; I’m also involved because of what I can contribute through my knowledge of the fundraising profession.”

To learn more about Birgit Burton and AADO, visit www.aadonetwork.com. [Connect with Birgit via LinkedIn here.](#)

Dianna Campbell

Dianna Campbell has over 25 years of experience in nonprofit fundraising, marketing and business development. She specializes in nurturing profitable relationships with the nation’s largest Fortune 100 corporations, foundations, cause partnerships and high net worth individuals, and has raised over \$130 million over the course of her career. In addition, she’s managed teams that have secured close to \$500 million for programs benefiting people, systems and the environment.





Dianna Campbell's mantra? "To whom much is given, much is required." I'm blessed with a lot of skill sets that can move the dial on the things I care most about."

Most recently, she served as the Vice President and Chief Development Officer at the National Council of Aging before launching her own boutique consultancy firm, DiCam Strategic Solutions, where she works with clients on partnership development and consulting, regarding fund development and philanthropy strategies.

Dianna's inspiration in her own words:

"I live by the mantra, 'to whom much is given, much is required.' I'm blessed with a lot of skill sets that can move the dial on the things I care most about: under-served people, systems and our environment. Raising money through securing strategic partnerships that impact millions of lives is my purpose."

To learn more about Dianna Campbell visit www.dicamsolutions.com. [Connect with her via LinkedIn](#).

Yolanda F. Johnson

Yolanda F. Johnson is the Founder and President of YFJ Consulting, LLC. She's both a philanthropy and fundraising expert, successfully having led fundraising operations for a wide range of nonprofit organizations. Her fundraising expertise includes securing foundation, corporate and government funding, and cultivating a diverse major gifts portfolio.





"Seeing inequity impact women and people of color in our society, and most certainly how that translated to fundraising and philanthropy, led me to champion Black women and women of color," states Yolanda Johnson.

In addition to leading YFJ Consulting, LLC, Yolanda is the Founder of Women of Color in Fundraising and Philanthropy® (WOC), as well as the founder of Allies in Action Membership Network, in addition to serving as the President of Women In Development, NY (WID).

Yolanda's inspiration in her own words:

"Fundraisers and philanthropists illuminate the path to the good work needed in the world today. This field of 'good work' has been important to me since I first entered the profession. Seeing inequity impact women and people of color in our society, and most certainly how that translated to fundraising and philanthropy, led me to champion Black women and women of color."

To learn more about Yolanda F. Johnson and Women of Color in Fundraising and Philanthropy (WOC) visit www.woc-fp.com. [Connect with Yolanda via LinkedIn](#).

Crystal Rucker

Crystal Rucker began her career over 20 years ago at a Virginia-based investment banking firm. She wanted to find a way to align those client relationships with opportunities to make a broader social impact within her community. Her experiences inspired her to initiate and manage youth programs and develop innovative partnerships with individuals, businesses, nonprofits and corporations that have led to over \$40 million in financial investments in the District of Columbia, her hometown.



Why does Crystal Rucker fundraise? "To provide vital programs and resources to ensure children enjoy equitable access to high quality education, healthcare, food and all of the things they need and deserve."

Crystal is incredibly passionate about nonprofit fundraising and philanthropy. She is a proud board member at Access Youth Inc., a philanthropist and longtime volunteer at the Homeless Children’s Playtime project. She currently works as the Director of Individual Giving and Special Events at the Children’s Defense Fund.

Crystal’s inspiration in her own words:

“My family sacrificed so much to ensure I had access to a quality of life that would help me succeed. I acknowledge that not every child has caring adults to guide their development, so I fundraise to provide vital programs and resources to ensure children enjoy equitable access to high quality education, healthcare, food and all of the things they need and deserve.”

[Learn more about Crystal Rucker here.](#)

Christal M. Cherry





"Fundraising is my ministry. It presents opportunities for me to pour into God's Kingdom to fulfill my purpose and make a difference through philanthropy, by asking those who have the resources to use them to benefit humanity," says Christal Cherry.

Christal M. Cherry is a nationally recognized nonprofit executive and professionally trained fundraiser. With over 20 years in the nonprofit sector, she has supported higher education institutions, human services organizations and faith based missions. Her career portfolio, as a full time professional and consultant, includes American University, the United Negro College Fund, Spelman College, Nicholas House, the Interdenominational Theological Center, Florida A&M University, Action Ministries and the Georgia Center for Nonprofits.

Christal is the founder and president of The Board Pro, a consultancy that coaches, guides, trains and transforms their leaders to optimize their boards.

She recently published her first children's book entitled "Mac and Cheez Being Different is Okay," which introduces children to the concepts of inclusion, tolerance and acceptance.

Christal is also the founder of Fabulous Female Fundraisers (F3), a member-based community that supports, enriches and professionally develops female fundraisers of color.

Christal's inspiration in her own words

"Fundraising is my ministry. It presents opportunities for me to pour into God's Kingdom to fulfill my purpose and make a difference through philanthropy, by asking those who have the resources to use them to benefit humanity."

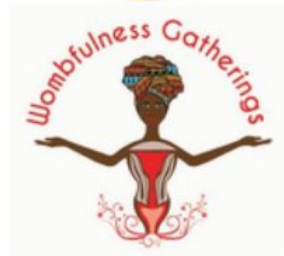
To learn more about Christal visit www.theboardpro.com. [Connect with Christal Cherry via LinkedIn.](#)

Aisha Murphy is an experienced communications professional, journalist and podcaster with a Master's Degree in Public Relations. [Connect with Aisha on LinkedIn.](#)

The San Francisco Public Library's African American Center in partnership with Maafa, SF Bay Area presents...

Dialogue: Wombfulness Gathering

Creating Safety for Wombs to Speak



The Black Wom(b)an has been carrying, bearing and birthing community without opportunity to restore, refresh and replenish herself. The Wombfulness Movement is a reclamation of this powerful space. Join Opal Palmer Adisa, Arisika Razak, Maï Lingani, & Marjé in dialogue with Wanda Sabir, at this one year anniversary and celebration of wombfulness gatherings, a project of Maafa SF Bay Area.

Saturday, March 19, 10 a.m.

Virtual Library



Scan the QR Code to register at:

<https://on.sfpl.org/Wombfulness>

More information at:

<https://on.sfpl.org/03-19-2022>



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