

# SUMMIT

APRIL 22, 2023

HOST: SICILY S. JOHNSON

## Good Morning Sis!

10:30-11:30 am  
Second Floor

### Registration

11:30 am  
Room: Beverly Snow

**Remarks:** Janique Edwards, Nina Oduro, Maame Boakye  
**Opening Address:** Carla Hall  
**Wellness Exercise:** Carmen D. Harris

## Breakout Sessions (12:00 – 1:00pm)

**Uber Eats Advisors  
Lab Sessions**  
Room: Barnett-  
Aden A

***Group advising sessions with food & hospitality expert.  
By appointment only.***

**Advisor:** Désirée Younger

**Sip on This: Making  
Moves in Wine and  
Spirits Industry**  
Room: Salon A

Black women are making strides in the male-dominated wine and spirits industry and these women are at the forefront. This panel will explore the diverse contributions of Black women in the field as well as the opportunities and challenges they face. They will delve into Black women's impact on the industry through advocacy, creativity and innovation along with what is needed for long-term change.

**Moderator:** Julia Coney  
**Panelists:** Nadine Brown, Chasity Cooper, LP O'Brien

**Who's on the Farm?  
| Sponsored by  
Niman Ranch**  
Room:  
Barnett-Aden B

A sustainable food system requires equity from farm to table. This panel of leading farmers, chefs, and activists explores Black women's contribution in food production and distribution. They will discuss the current state of Black women's representation in agriculture, the opportunities and challenges they face, and what is needed to accelerate equity and support for Black women and other underrepresented groups in agriculture

**Moderator:** Dawn Padmore  
**Panelists:** Adrian Lipscomb, Tope Fajingbesi, Gail Taylor

### **All About the Brand**

Room: Crystal B

What does it take to build a food-focused personal or business brand? Let these women tell you! They've built brands that reach thousands of people through food. They will explore strategies and best practices for building a strong brand that resonates with consumers, navigating brand partnerships, and the challenges and opportunities associated with building a brand in a competitive industry and ever-evolving digital landscape as Black women.

**Moderator: Jamila Robinson**

**Panelists: Auzerais Bellamy, Alex Hill, Angel Gregorio**

### **Lunch + Unconference (1:00 – 2:30pm)**

1:00 pm

Lunch

1:40 pm

Unconference: Peer-driven discussion and collaboration

### **Breakout Sessions (2:40 – 3:40pm)**

#### **Uber Eats Advisors Lab Sessions**

Room: Barnett-  
Aden A

***Group advising sessions with food & hospitality expert.  
By appointment only.***

**Advisor: Lesley Riley**

#### **Securing the Bag**

Room: Crystal B

It takes money to build and sustain a successful food venture, but how do you secure the necessary funds? This panel features women with experience raising, funding, or providing access to capital. They will discuss different funding options, the opportunities and challenges associated with obtaining financing, preparation needed to access capital, and navigating investments as Black women.

**Moderator: Brianne Garrett**

**Panelists: Marie Clark, Rachel Wilson, Riana Lynn, Ehime Eigbe**

#### **Black Women Fighting for Food Freedom for All | Sponsored by WANDA: Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture**

Room: Barnett-  
Aden B

From Harriet Tubman to Vertamae Smart Grosvenor, Black women have been instrumental in building and leading social movements to advance our local communities. The late Ella Baker said: "We who believe in freedom cannot rest." Through the power of food, this dynamic panel of Black women who are food freedom fighters on the frontline of food justice and equity will share their strategies from farm to health that shift the narrative, center Black food culture, and co-create generational health through food policy and building local food economies and democracy.

**Moderator: Debra Freeman**

**Panelists: Mary Blackford, Tiffany FitzGerald, Tambra Raye Stevenson**



### **Match Made in Heaven?**

Room: Salon B

As the saying goes, "if you want to go far, go together." But how far can you go with a partner? This panel explores partnerships in food-focused ventures. Panelists will explore the different types of partnerships and collaborations that Black women food business owners have made and the opportunities and challenges in partnership relationships. They will discuss identifying and selecting the right partners, negotiating and structuring partnerships, and managing partnerships for long-term success.

**Moderator: Courtnee Futch**

**Panelists: Tonya Thomas, Janique Edwards, Andra Johnson**

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### **I Gotta Put Me First: Wellness in the Food and Beverage Industry**

Room: Salon A

What does it mean to be well - mentally and physically - while building a food-focused career? This panel explores the pursuit of wellness for Black women who are building diverse careers in the food and beverage industry. They will discuss factors that impact wellbeing and the effects of race and gender on cultivating wellness as individuals and within institutions. They will unpack strategies that enable physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

**Moderator: Colleen Vincent**

**Panelists: Elle Simone Scott, Carmen D. Harris, Yoli Ouyi**

### **Break**

3:45pm

Catch your breath sis.

### **Fireside Chat (4:00 - 5:00pm)**

4:00pm

Room: Beverly Snow

**Fawn Weaver in conversation with Aba Kwawu**

### **Closing**

5:00pm

Room: Beverly Snow

**Closing Remarks: Nina Oduro and Maame Boakye**  
**Wellness Exercise: Carmen D. Harris**

### **Reception**

5:30pm

Room: Salon A & B

**Networking & Sponsored Giveaways**

# SPEAKERS



## **Auzerai Bellamy, Blondery**

The synthesis of passion and experience has fueled what Auzerai believes is her magnum opus: Blondery, a seasonal collection of handmade blondies launched in November 2016. While Auzerai has held titles at some of the finest kitchens around the globe— including Sous Chef at Bouchon Bakery – the most fulfilling has been that of Founder and CEO of Blondery.

Blondery is a one-of-a-kind, virtual bakery that presents limited-release, seasonal blondie collections throughout the year to our nearly 10K (and counting) waitlist members. Blondery has been featured on CBS mornings and in publications such as the New York Times, Cosmopolitan, and Eater. Blondery has been trusted to deliver exceptional product quality by brands like Netflix, Spotify, and Viacom.



## **Mary Blackford, Market Seven**

Mary Blackford is the Founder of Market 7, a Black-owned food hall that features Black-owned food and lifestyle businesses for the purpose of alleviating food and retail deserts in Washington, DC. Mary graduated from Babson College with a BS in Business Management. As a student she also taught entrepreneurship courses to high school students in Ghana and South Africa. She began her career in the socially responsible finance industry as an Analyst. In 2013, Mary became one of the founding chapter leaders of the DC Chapter of Women Investing for a Sustainable Economy (WISE), a women-led professional group committed to providing resources to women working within the impact investing industry. In the summer of 2017 she launched her most recent venture Market 7. Market 7 has worked with 60 Black-owned businesses in the DC area to create alternative community pop-up markets that include fresh food, lifestyle products, and home essentials in Ward 7 (DC). Market 7 is currently building a new 7,000 sq ft food hall slated to open in 2023. Market 7 has been highlighted by the DC Mayor Muriel Browser, Forbes, The Washington Post, The White House, CNBC, Black Enterprise, The Washingtonian, Essence Magazine, NBC, FOX, and WUSA. In 2019, Mary created a partnership with Whole Foods Market (Mid-Atlantic) to bring more Black-owned brands to their stores. Mary has also developed training partnerships with Google and the Greater Washington Urban League to provide entrepreneurial training in underserved communities in 2020–2021.





# SPEAKERS



## **Maame Boakye, Dine Diaspora & Black Women in Food**

Maame Boakye is President and Co-founder of Dine Diaspora, which produces the Black Women in Food initiative. She oversees business strategy and talent partnerships; helping brands shape initiatives that amplify diverse voices and advance equity and inclusion across the food system. Maame has over 12 years of experience specializing in the strategy development and management of initiatives that connect industry leaders and organizations to their key audiences, drive brand awareness, and deliver value through mutually beneficial partnerships. She has worked to advance policy and diverse initiatives supporting women, climate action and entrepreneurship across North America, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East for globally renowned international institutions and brands. Maame received a Master's degree in Development Studies from the University of London, SOAS, and a BA in International Relations and English from the College of William and Mary.



## **Nadine Brown, At Your Service Hospitality & Wine Consulting**

Nadine is a member of the DC Chapter of Les Dames de Escoffier and Regarding Her organization. She is a wine judge and writer. In 2021 Nadine founded At Your Service Consulting, where she offers a range of services from building wine programs to paid partnership campaigns for top brands. "Re-imagining" wine a series of dinners and events that are held in collaboration with regional chef's to highlight the diversity of wine pairings possibilities.



## **Marie Clark, New Voices Foundation**

Marie Clark is a seasoned communications and program development professional with nearly 25 years of experience providing program design and strategic communications services to businesses, nonprofits, and foundations, including designing and managing a multi-year national nonprofit capacity-building project in the Caribbean. For the last decade, her work has primarily focused on helping businesses develop and implement communications strategies to grow vibrant online communities that engage customers and other key audiences. Today, Marie leads the strategy, partnerships, and communications at New Voices Foundation, which offers more than 25,000 women of color entrepreneurs (including leading food & beverage startups) access to non-dilutive capital, leadership development, skill-building, and networking opportunities via entrepreneurial summits, accelerators & bootcamps, pitch competitions, mentoring, and coaching.



# SPEAKERS



## **Julia Coney, Wine Consultant for American Airlines**

Julia Coney is a Washington, D.C. and Houston, Texas-based wine writer, wine educator, speaker, and consultant. Julia is the Wine Consultant for American Airlines, Wine Enthusiast's 2020 Social Visionary Award Winner for her work in writing and speaking on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the wine industry and Wine Industry Network has named her one of Wine's Most Inspiring People for 2022. Julia is the Founder of Black Wine Professionals, a resource for wine industry employers and gatekeepers, professionals, and the food and beverage community. Their goal is to lift up the multifaceted Black professionals in the world of wine.

Julia is the Wine Columnist for Sweet July Magazine. Her work has been featured in The New York Times, VinePair, Wine Enthusiast, Thrillist, The Tasting Panel, Plate Magazine, Forbes.com, WineEnthusiast.com, The Washington Post, Seven Fifty Daily, Wine Searcher, the Financial Times, JancisRobinson.com, Glamour, Essence, and numerous print and digital publications.



## **Chasity Cooper, Cheers to That**

Chasity Cooper is a Chicago-based award winning writer, entrepreneur, and wine culture expert. She has articles published in outlets such as Wine Enthusiast, Vinepair, Food & Wine Magazine, Chicago Tribune, and Imbibe Magazine, and has also executed several creative partnerships with notable wine and spirit brands. Ultimately, her goal is to make wine and spirits more relatable through storytelling, and design spaces for people to enjoy wine and cultivate community.



## **Janique Edwards, Eat Okra**

As COO / Co-Founder of EatOkra, Janique focuses on sourcing and managing business data to attract more users, while developing the company's brand identity and mission. The company now includes a team of eight; She oversees the daily operations of the company while also focusing on developing company culture, defining the overall mission and values, revising brand identity, managing team morale, framing business goals, and building strong industry relationships. Janique is a graduate of Herbert H. Lehman College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

# SPEAKERS



## **Ehime Eigbe, Sweetkiwi**

Ehime is the Founder of Sweetkiwi, an awarding winning, woman & minority owned better for you CPG food brand which is whipping up the frozen dessert category and reinvigorating the space through uniqueness, nutrition, functionality and taste! A Uterine Fibroid diagnosis led her to a greater understanding of the power of food. She changed her eating habits and delved into learning more about different ingredients that supports our bodies development. Sweetkiwi was born from this labor of love. She has led the Sweetkiwi as it launched the 'Whipped Greek Yogurt' she formulated in her kitchen onto the shelves at grocery stores. It can be found in Whole Foods Market, Walmart, Kroger, with products in just under 2000 stores. She builds on her experience growing Sweetkiwi from an idea to West's Africa's biggest frozen yogurt brand. Ehime is a McKinsey Black Executive Leader, a Visa grant recipient, a Sara Blakely X Spanx Grant Recipient, Acumen 2021 West African Fellow, the winner of the Black Girls Venture DC pitch competition and winner of the California Milk Dairy innovation competition partnering with milk producers on two continents.



## **Tope Fajingbesi, Dodo Farms**

Tope Fajingbesi is the Chief Financial Officer of Ashoka. She is a committed social impact entrepreneur and a published author. Tope is the founder and president of The She-EO – a global platform for women of African descent to have important conversations that matter. In addition to being the founder and coordinating trustee of United for Kids Foundation, Tope created and hosted the Impact Africa radio show, which inspired Africans and Africans in the diaspora to participate consciously and actively in African development from 2013 to 2015. Tope frequently speaks to global audiences with a mission to inspire. She delivered a powerful address at Hillary Clinton's final presidential campaign rally in Michigan in November 2016, the keynote speech at Grand Rapids City High School's commencement ceremony in June 2017, and one of the two keynote speeches at the Future Harvest Conference in 2021.

Tope is married to Niyi Balogun, who she co-owns Dodo Farms, a Certified Naturally Grown produce farm in Montgomery County (Maryland) with.





# SPEAKERS



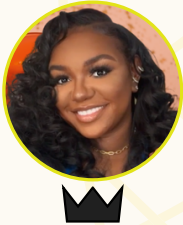
## **Debra Freeman, Food Writer and Podcaster**

Debra Freeman has written for national outlets such as Eater, Conde Nast Traveler, Plate Magazine, Food 52, Epicurious, Garden and Gun, Pit Magazine, Gravy, and Gastro Obscura. Her written work often intertwines her own personal food history while showing readers the cultural memory connections that are intrinsic to the African-American experience. Freeman is also the host of Setting the Table, the critically acclaimed podcast about African-American foodways on Whetstone Radio Collective that was recently named by Apple Podcasts as one of the "Shows We Loved in 2022."



## **Tiffany FitzGerald, DC Greens**

Tiffany FitzGerald joined DC Greens after serving as an organizational development consultant specializing in creating leaderful, thriving cultures that embrace complexity and our full humanity. Born in Washington, D.C. and raised in neighboring Prince George's County, Maryland, Tiffany spent her formative years watching the city transform. She returned at the first opportunity, after graduating from the College of William & Mary with a BA in English.



## **Courtnee Futch, EatOkra**

Courtnee Futch is a chef, mixologist, cookbook author, storyteller, and Director of Brand & Partnerships at EatOkra, the largest US directory of Black-owned restaurants. Courtnee started her career in food as the founder of a bakery at 17. Her passion for food enterprises led to her earning a Masters in Entrepreneurship from Syracuse University. With sights set on a future in savory dining, Courtnee started The Spread Catering Co in 2018 while working as a marketing manager for companies like HelloFresh and Blue Apron. In her 2020 debut cookbook Early Enough, Courtnee shares 89 recipes for decadent brunch dishes and their perfect cocktail pairings. Now, as a content creator and producer, her work is a blend of her passions: creating content that empowers, entertains and educates on the joy of Black food.



## **Brianne Garrett, Sweet July**

Brianne Garrett is a journalist and editor focused on food, lifestyle and entrepreneurship in addition to amplifying Black and Brown voices. She is currently managing editor for Ayesha Curry's Sweet July brand. Prior to joining Sweet July, she was a reporter at Forbes and the editorial lead for Forbes' For(bes) The Culture community, where she led content and programming aimed at creating equitable pathways for creatives of color. At the heart of Brianne's work are stories for the soul.

# SPEAKERS



## **Angel Gregorio, The Spice Suite & Black and Forth**

Angel is a mommy, home cook, activist and educator with a knack for blurring the line between food and fashion. In 2015, she walked by a vacant store front with no plan or desire to be a small business owner and decided on the spot to turn it into a spice shop. That spice shop has become a dream incubator and haven. Her love for fashionable flavors and natural talent in the kitchen landed her a spot in the Top 40 of MasterChef's Season 8. Since then, Angel has regularly made appearances in local news and print media.

Angel brings gourmet, exotic and tantalizing spices, infused oils and other culinary delights to customers in a hip, quaint and comfortable, atmosphere. The aesthetics and energy at The SpiceSuite mirror Angel's home— welcoming, engaging and fun!



## **Carla Hall, Author and TV Personality**

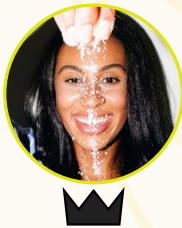
Carla Hall first won over audiences when she competed on Bravo's "Top Chef" and "Top Chef: All Stars" and shared her philosophy to always cook with love. She believes food connects us all, and she strives to communicate this through her work, her cooking, and in her daily interactions with others. Carla spent 7 years co-hosting ABC's Emmy award winning, popular lifestyle series "The Chew", and is currently featured on the Food Network in shows such as "Thanksgiving, Holiday and Halloween Baking Championships" (judge), and "Worst Cooks in America". Her latest cookbook, Carla Hall's Soul Food: Everyday and Celebration, was published in 2018, landing on annual "Best Cookbook" lists across the country and receiving an NAACP Image Awards nomination. Hall published her debut picture book, Carla and the Christmas Cornbread, in November 2021, with Denene Millner Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. Illustrated by Cherise Harris, Carla and the Christmas Cornbread is a heartwarming tale loosely based on Hall's childhood growing up in Nashville, TN, that celebrates family traditions, old and new, and also includes a child-friendly Christmas cornbread recipe perfect for the holidays. She is active in many charitable endeavors and focuses her board member-level participation in organizations where she can make an impact advocating for children such as with 4H, Pajama Program, GenYouth, and Helen Keller International. In addition, Carla volunteers time to promote other non profit organizations such as: The James Beard Foundation, FEED America, Jacques Pepin Foundation, The Smithsonian Institutes and their membership of museums, and many others.

# SPEAKERS



## **Carmen D. Harris, Two Inches Beyond Black**

Carmen D. Harris is a public health consultant and somatic spiritual coach. She is the co creator of Imagine Me Free and Two Inches Beyond Black, a practice playground and sacred sanctuary for Black Imagination. Known for her ability to inspire others to lead the lives they desire, Carmen coaches and creates space for Black dreamers and entrepreneurs to imagine new possibilities in themselves and their businesses through practices of rest and centering one's own body wisdom. Her rest practices, training in body wisdom, and self-regulation of the nervous system continues under the mentorship of Dr. Crystal Jones. She has completed training in somatics with The Embodiment Institute and will complete her mind-body coaching certificate from The Embody Lab in August 2023. Carmen also holds a B.S. in mathematics from Spelman College where she currently serves on the board of trustees and Masters of Public Health from University of South Carolina. Carmen is the former managing partner and co-founder of Magnus on Water, a cocktail bar and restaurant just outside of Portland, Maine. The restaurant opened just 8 weeks before the pandemic in January 2020. The restaurant survived the pandemic and winter white storms in Maine; Carmen, however, did not. Her last weekend in Maine was Juneteenth 2021. Her biggest desire is for Black people to lead free and healthy lives.



## **Alex Hill, Just Add Hot Sauce**

Alex Hill is a Washington, D.C. born now Los Angeles based, self-taught cook with a passion for making food that's filled with flavor, functional and affordable. Her affinity for cooking developed at an early age watching her mother, Evelyn, create mouthwatering dishes for their family combining both her Puerto Rican and African-American heritages. In 2017, she created Just Add Hot Sauce as an outlet to show an expression of love to the people you care about the most ... through their stomachs. From dinner parties and blogging recipes to teaching cooking classes and trying new techniques, cooking is what brings her joy.



## **Andra Johnson, Serenata and DMV Black Restaurant Week**

Andra is currently a Managing Partner and the Beverage Director of Serenata/Zumo inside La Cosecha latin Market where she renews her commitment to providing exemplary service and thoughtful cocktails each day. She is also a Co-Founder of DMV Black Restaurant Week and heads up a cocktail pop up initiative called 'Back to Black' that strives to raise funds to donate to overlooked and underfunded charities and organizations in the DC area. In 2022, Andra was named Imbibe 75 "People to Watch".





# SPEAKERS



## **Sicily S. Johnson Chef, Restaurateur, Culinary Instructor, & Business Coach**

Chef Sicily Sierra is a chef, restaurateur, culinary instructor/teacher, and serial entrepreneur. When Sicily Sierra says serial entrepreneur she means it, she began her first career (acting) at the age of 7. She became known for her successful roles as Chantel in "How Stella Got Her Groove Back", "Young Aisha " on the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, and on the primetime family comedy, "One On One" as Spirit. But for Sicily, the Hollywood afterparties and award shows were less about networking and more about watching chefs prepare food for party-goers. "I would just wish I could cook for those people," she remembers. "I have always been fascinated by how food and people intersect. And, how meals turn into a tradition." So, this Le Cordon Bleu grad set out to make her own traditions while honoring the 7 generations of traditions that raised her. She has intentionally built her culinary brand, opening restaurants in California and New York. And, opening a CPG company in a pandemic while centering her blackness, femininity, motherhood, and queerness in the work that she does. Now, Chef is tapping into her passion for equipping the Homecook with everything they need to thrive in the Kitchen as a Resident Creator with Pinterest and her subscription-based cooking school, The Sandwich Ministry.



## **Aba Kwawu, President , TAA PR**

Aba Kwawu is the founder and president of TAA PR, a results-oriented public relations, marketing, and special events agency dedicated to the fashion, design, entertainment, hospitality, and luxury lifestyle sectors. Kwawu earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh and her master's degree from the University of the Arts London College of Fashion. She founded her agency in 2002 while teaching at HowardUniversity.

Today, TAA PR continues to advise and serve brands seeking expertise in media relations, event production, experiential marketing, and social media. The agency's regional, national, and international clients span various industries and have included Cirque du Soleil, Ladurée, Chanel, Gucci, chefs Wolfgang Puck and Gordon Ramsey, Daniel Boulud, Shake Shack, hospitality for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Tysons Galleria, CityCenterDC, the Smithsonian Institution, and more. In addition, Kwawu has chaired high-profile events (including the first annual Smithsonian Hirshhorn Ball and the 26th Annual Knock Out Abuse Gala, spoken at international conferences, and provided commentary for outlets from Women's Wear Daily (WWD) to The Washington Post. When not glammed up for work, she can be found globetrotting with her husband and their two children.



# SPEAKERS



## **Adrian Lipscombe, 40 Acres Project**

Adrian Lipscombe is a native Texan, Adrian began her career in city planning after graduating from the University of Texas at San Antonio with a Masters in Architecture, working with the municipal government in Austin and subsequently, San Antonio, on community impact project planning. She is an advocate for all farmers and ranchers to provide opportunity for local connections with chefs. Adrian is also a advisory board member of the Foodways Texas and Austin Travis County Food Policy Board.

In 2016, Adrian moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin and opened Uptowne Café, creating a safe haven and gathering place for the Northside community while exploring the synergy behind her Southern upbringing, Midwest ingredients and African American culinary history.



## **Riana Lynn, Journey Foods**

Riana Lynn is a neo-scientist, creative entrepreneur, and technologist that is focused on bringing better data to the world's biggest food and supply chain problems. She leads fast-growing software startup Journey Foods. The company is backed by top VCs in North America, Europe, and Asia. Riana has served as a top consultant and VC to fortune 500 food and CPG companies. She's currently an angel investor, creative director, and former Google Entrepreneur in Residence. Riana has been featured in Forbes, MIT 35 under 35, and serves as World Economic Forum Tech Pioneer.

Riana is an Austin-based entrepreneur that enjoys growing fruit trees, writing film scripts, and exploring culinary and architectural heritage sites around the world.



## **LP O'Brien, Winner of Drink Masters, LP Drinks Co.**

LP is a highly decorated and award-winning mixologist. Her dedication to education, innovation, and cultural integration through cocktail creations motivated her to establish LP Drinks. LP's notable achievements include being one of the owners of Siponey Spritz Co.™, which is the first B Corp certified spirits-based canned cocktail company. Additionally, her expertise in the beverage industry was recently recognized on Netflix's new television series, Drink Masters, where she emerged as the winner.

# SPEAKERS



## **Nina Oduro, Dine Diaspora & Black Women in Food**

Nina Oduro is CEO and Co-founder of Dine Diaspora and Co-founder of Black Women in Food. Her mission is to create a more equitable food system through initiatives that center the African diaspora. Nina leverages her experience in diversity, equity and inclusion; leadership development; network building; and community development; to connect people and brands through food. Nina has over 13 years of experience supporting research, learning, and innovation initiatives for non-profits, businesses, and governments including Microsoft, International Organization of Migration, and the US Embassy-Ghana. She was featured as a 2020 Changemaker in the DC food system by Washington City Paper and a 30 under 30 honoree by Future of Ghana. Nina received a Master's in African-American studies from Columbia University, a Bachelors in political and social thought from the University of Virginia, and holds a certificate in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University.



## **Yoli Ouyi, Food + Wellness Equity Collective**

A passionate entrepreneur and visionary, Yoli's current ventures are co-founder of the Food + Wellness Equity Collective and producer of In Color Network Podcasts. The Food + Wellness Equity Collective, which launched July 2020 with 20 founded members and now has over 300 members, is diverse group of content creators and entrepreneurs committed to being change agents for equity, diversity and anti-racism in the food and wellness industry. In Color Network is a multi-platform content production agency that seeks to promote wellness in underrepresented communities. Podcasts include "Wellness in Color", "Sustainability in Color", and "CPG in color" with additional shows debuting in Fall 2023



## **Dawn Padmore, James Beard Foundation**

Dawn Padmore serves as the Vice President of Awards at the James Beard Foundation, where she works closely with volunteer committees, staff, and the Board of Trustees to shape the future of the James Beard Awards. Since 2021, she has led the Foundation's Awards mission to recognize exceptional talent and achievement in the culinary arts, hospitality, media, and broader food system, as well as a demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity, community, sustainability, and a culture where all can thrive. She oversees a team that worked to relaunch the 2022 James Beard Media Awards, Leadership Awards and Restaurant & Chef Awards – the first since groundbreaking changes were made to policies and procedures under her leadership. She has been lauded for helping to drive systemic change in the food and beverage industry.





# SPEAKERS



## **Lesley Riley, Mama's Biscuits**

Lesley Riley is the Founder and CEO of Mama's Biscuits, the nation's first gourmet biscuit company. Mama's Biscuits is the first minority-owned consumer packaged goods biscuit brand to partner with major retailers like Walmart, Publix, Trader Joes and Wegmans. Her passion does not stop at biscuits. She is laser focused on her mission to serve the community, and is the driving force behind the "Feeding Faith" initiative, where her business donates hundreds of biscuits to organizations in need every month.



## **Jamila Robinson, Philadelphia Inquirer**

Jamila Robinson is the food editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer where she leads a team of reporters and directs its multiplatform food content franchise. Previously, Jamila was an editorial director for Atlantic Media where she led content strategy projects for media companies. As a senior content strategist for the USA TODAY NETWORK, she managed editorial strategy for special projects including USA TODAY's Wine and Food Experience. Jamila was also a senior editor for features at The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, where she led its features and entertainment team. Jamila is the chair of the James Beard Foundation Journalism Committee, which organizes the highest honors in food media. She also serves as the coach and mentor for the JBF fellowship program. Jamila is an idea person, an avid traveler, and in her free time, coaches figure skating. Her love language is pie.



## **Tamba Stevenson, WANDA: Women Advancing Nutrition Dietetics and Agriculture**

Tamba serves as the first-ever regional representative to North America for the African Nutrition Society to advance African nutrition in the diaspora. As a 2014 National Geographic Traveler of the Year, she has traveled across Africa learning about her African food roots as medicine, starting with her Fulani roots in northern Nigeria. She is a Director of the Les Dames d'Escoffier Washington, D.C. regional chapter.

# SPEAKERS



## **Elle Simone Scott, SheChef Inc.**

Food-styling guru Elle Simone Scott is a trailblazer who manages to make food both stunning and approachable. She shapes the visual aesthetic for the Cook's Country brand and her work appears across ATK media platforms. Elle is an on-screen test cook for America's Test Kitchen, and is the star of a new show currently in production - Entertaining with Elle showcases her skills as a cook, a teacher, and a stylist and will premiere in 2023. Elle provided food styling and expert advice for *Boards, Stylish Spreads for Casual Gatherings*, a best-selling, highly regarded cookbook released in April 2022. In addition to her role as an executive editor at America's Test Kitchen, Elle also uses her platform and her organization SheChef to advocate, mentor, and inspire other women of color in the food space.



## **Gail Taylor, Three Part Harmony Farm**

Gail Taylor (she/ her) owns and operates Three Part Harmony Farm which produces vegetables, herbs and flowers for a 100-member CSA as well as wholesale customers in the Washington, DC metro area. Since 2012, she has collaborated with other farmers, primarily other Black farmers, to support one another economically, physically, mentally and spiritually. These informal networks of Black farmers in the DMV are critical to the survival of each individual farm. Before devoting her life to farming, Gail worked as a grassroots activist and organizer with a focus on anti-militarization in Latin America. With this background, she launched a citywide policy campaign called "I Want DC to Grow" that resulted in the 2014 passage of a farm bill in DC, opening the door for more urban farms to be established. Gail is a member of the Black Dirt Farm Collective which cultivates Afroecology as a pedagogical methodology to activate Black agrarian communities' personal, cultural, and technical capacities to be used as transformative organizing tools.



# SPEAKERS



## **Tonya Thomas, H3irloom Food Group**

Chef Tonya Thomas is a chef and entrepreneur from Baltimore, MD who has always had a passion for when food, family, and community meets culture and tradition. Tonya has been in the industry for over 25 years, and alongside her husband, Chef David Thomas, operated a catering company and opened several restaurants, including the nationally recognized, award-winning Herb & Soul Gastro Café and Ida B's Table. In 2020, Tonya and David stepped away from their restaurant to establish H3irloom Food Group with long-time friends Floyd and Linda Taliaferro. Today, the 100% Black-owned company's portfolio includes ticketed dinner experiences, catering, pop-ups, sustainable farming initiatives, and the award-winning H3 product line, all working together to uplift the Black food narrative and provide a deeply personal approach to the Black food experience that's rooted in history and culture.



## **Colleen Vincent, James Beard Foundation**

Colleen Vincent is a champion for diverse leadership in the hospitality industry. She is also the cofounder of Black Food Folks an influential fellowship of Black excellence in food and drink and executive producer of Black Desserts. She has been featured at Essence Fest and on "Oprah Daily". She has appeared on numerous podcasts and publications and has curated and consulted a wide variety of roundtables and workshops. She has been named a Trailblazer by on Dine Diaspora's 31 Black Women in Food list, a Person to Watch by Imbibe Magazine, received a Hue Society Women in Wine nod and a 2021 Gumbo Jubilee Award recognizing her work highlighting food ways of the Diaspora. In 2022, she was awarded a "Women's History Maker" by the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce.





# SPEAKERS



## **Fawn Weaver, Grant Sidney Inc. and Uncle Nearest Inc.**

Fawn Weaver has been a serial entrepreneur for more than 25 years. As the CEO and founder of Grant Sidney, Inc., a privately held investment company, Weaver has often been active in her investments, serving in leadership capacities behind the scenes. Weaver is a popular TED speaker,, as well as a *USA Today* and *New York Times* bestselling author who has appeared on 100s of popular newspapers, radio, morning and television talk shows across the US, including FOX Business, the *TODAY Show*, *The New York Times*, *CBS This Morning*, *Good Morning America*, *CNBC*, *Fast Company*, *Washington Post*, and *Oprah Magazine*. She is a regular contributor to *Inc. Magazine* and has been interviewed by top shows in Canada, United Kingdom, South Africa, Italy, Belgium, Australia, Ireland, Australia, Poland, Spain and New Zealand on topics ranging from accelerating growth in business without losing your soul to creating a happy balance between work and family.

Weaver is the first Black American woman to build a \$1B+ company from the ground up (founded, majority-owned and led), who is not a celebrity. She serves as the CEO of Uncle Nearest, Inc., a company she founded in 2016, which sits under the Grant Sidney umbrella. Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey is the fastest-growing American whiskey brand in U.S. history, the bestselling African American founded spirit brand of all time and was the most award-winning American whiskey (including bourbon) of 2019, 2020, 2021 and has now extended that winning streak to include 2022. The super-premium brand has earned more than 600 awards, including more than 400 Gold medals or higher, "World's Best" by *Whisky Magazine* two years in a row, as well as the industry coveted "Double Gold" by San Francisco World Spirits Competition and *Wine Enthusiast's* "Spirit Brand of the Year."



## **Rachel Wilson, Collab Capital**

She has a B.A. in Economics & Business from Agnes Scott College and M.S. in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She is also on the board of Black Women in Venture Capital (BWVC), a nonprofit dedicated to supporting careers across the spectrum of venture capital and capital access networks for Black women and a 2023 NAIC Women in Alternatives Fellow.



# SPEAKERS



## **Désirée Younge, Oatly Inc.**

Désirée Younge has over 20 years of experiences as a cross-sector senior executive in philanthropy, for-profit and nonprofit sectors. Désirée's professional experience encompasses entrepreneurship and leadership development, poverty alleviation and economic development, practiced through venture philanthropy and impact investing business models.

Désirée has served in senior positions at Amazon's Last Mile Team (USA), Tory Burch Foundation (USA), The Tony Elumelu Foundation (Africa), Robin Hood Foundation (USA), and Synergos Institute (Global). Désirée recently joined Oatly's Future Lab, as the Deputy Executive Director. Her focus is to launch pioneering projects that will define what a radically better future could be for Oatly, a agric-fueled company. One of her new ventures is a nonprofit – E2 Entrepreneurs Inc., which supports women-led social enterprises primarily in West Africa, with coaching, mentoring, access to local capital and a global network of experts and investors.



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