

THE STATE OF THE
Black Worker in America



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

*Kalmanovitz Initiative
for Labor and the Working Poor*

October 10 & 11, 2013

**Georgetown
University**

THE STATE OF THE Black Worker in America

Georgetown University, 37th and O Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20057

Oct 10, 2013 | 7:00 - 9:00 PM Oct 11, 2013 | 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor

Georgetown University's Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor develops creative strategies and innovative public policy to improve workers' lives in a changing economy. The Initiative draws on Georgetown's distinctive identity – its commitment to intellectual excellence, grounding in the Catholic and Jesuit traditions, history of inter-religious cooperation, global reach, and prominence as an arena of policy debate in the nation's capital – to advance prosperity, broadly-shared economic justice, and respect for the dignity of labor.

Black Labor Scholars Network

The Black Labor Scholars Network seeks to initiate a new conversation about the place of black workers in the current economic downturn and the role they might play in its resolution. The BLSN is inspired by the legacy of black labor leader A. Philip Randolph, who insisted that ending racial discrimination was an essential component to the broader struggle for economic justice. The BLSN is a nationwide network of scholars who are prepared to study, speak and write about, and propose solutions to the problems facing black workers.

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Conference Agenda

October 10, 2013

Gaston Hall, Georgetown University

7:00 pm **Welcome and Introduction**

Joseph A. McCartin, Director, Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor
Marc Bayard, Black Labor Scholars Network

Keynote Panel

Eugene Robinson, Washington Post Columnist and MSNBC Contributor
William "Bill" Lucy, President Emeritus, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Nikki Lewis, Executive Director, DC Jobs with Justice
Eric Arnesen, Professor of History, George Washington University

October 11, 2013

Fisher Colloquium, Rafik B. Hariri Building, Georgetown University

8:30 am **Breakfast**

9:00 am **Welcome/Opening Statements**

Joseph A. McCartin, Director, Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor
Marc Bayard, Black Labor Scholars Network
Dania Rajendra, Associate Director, Neighborhood Funders Group

9:30 am **How did we get Here? A Historical and Economic View of the State of the Black Economy and the Need to Organize Black Workers**

Moderated by Professor Maurice Jackson, Georgetown University

Professor Steven Pitts, Labor Policy Specialist, UC Berkeley Labor Center
Professor William Jones, Professor of History, University of Wisconsin

10:30 am **Panel: Voices of Black Leaders on the State of the Movement**

Moderated by Marc Bayard, Black Labor Scholars Network

Fred Redmond, International Vice President, United Steelworkers
Gerry Hudson, Executive Vice President, Service Employees International Union
Marietta English, Vice President, American Federation of Teachers
Kenneth E. Rigmaiden, General President, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades

12:00 pm **Lunch Speaker**

Michael Eric Dyson, Professor of Sociology, Georgetown University

After lunch, we will move to Lohrfink Auditorium, located on the second floor of the Rafik B. Hariri building.

1:15 pm

Panel: Meeting the Moment: Exciting Innovations in Black Worker Organizing

Moderated by Professor Dorian Warren, Columbia University

Lola Smallwood Cuevas, Executive Director, LA Black Worker Center
Derrick Johnson, President, Mississippi NAACP
Denise Perry, Project Director, Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity
Pierrette Talley, Secretary-Treasurer of the Ohio AFL-CIO and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists member

3:00 pm

Panel: Ain't I a Worker?: A Critical Look at Black Women, Organizing and Economic Justice

Moderated by Patricia Jerido, Program Officer, Special Initiatives and Partnerships, Open Society Foundations

Fatima Goss Graves, Vice President for Education and Employment, National Women's Law Center
Linda Burnham, National Research Coordinator, National Domestic Workers Alliance
Sukari Pinnock, former Organizing Director, American Federation of Government Employees

4:30 pm

Closing Remarks



KALMANOVITZ INITIATIVE
for Labor and the Working Poor

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Join the conversation online at

#blackworkers

Welcome

Joseph A. McCartin

Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor

Joseph A. McCartin is a historian of the U.S. labor movement and 20th century U.S. social and political history. He is a Professor of History at Georgetown University, where he has taught since 1999. His research focuses on the intersection of labor organization, politics, and public policy. His first book, *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations*, won the 1999 Philip Taft Labor History Book Award. His new book, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike that Changed America*, examines the origins and implications of the 1981 PATCO strike of air traffic controllers. It won the Richard A. Lester Award for the Outstanding Book on Industrial Relations and Labor Economics published in 2011. He is a member of the steering committee of Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice, the editorial committee of *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, and he serves on the board of Interfaith Worker Justice.

Marc Bayard

Black Labor Scholars Network

Marc Bayard is the founder of the Black Labor Scholars Network. He is also the former Executive Director of the Worker Institute at Cornell University, based in the Industrial Labor Relations School, which advances worker rights and collective representation. He has worked nationally and internationally in the labor movement for more than 15 years, as a Regional Program Director for Africa with the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center and corporate affairs department researcher for the AFL-CIO. Marc has taught cultural studies and political economic courses, and holds Master's Degrees from Cornell University and Georgetown University.

Dania Rajendra

Neighborhood Funders Group

Dania Rajendra is Associate Director and directs the NFG Working Group on Labor and Community Partnerships. A writer, social justice strategist and journalist, Dania began her work with NFG in August 2010. Previously, she directed the communications at the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, an AFT local of 22,000 faculty and professional staff at the City University of New York; her reporting there won the top prize in labor journalism in 2008. In addition to her work in the labor movements on the East Coast and in Minnesota, she has worked for immigrant's rights, in the arts, and on the 2004 election cycle. She serves on the board of Political Research Associates. Dania holds an MFA in creative nonfiction and is at work on a certificate in culinary arts and, after stints in Baltimore, MD and Jackson, MS is now home again in Brooklyn, NY.

How did we get here?

A Historical and Economic View of the State of the Black Economy and the Need to Organize Black Workers

Maurice Jackson

Georgetown University

Maurice Jackson teaches Atlantic, African American, Urban and Jazz history at Georgetown University. Before that he worked as a community and human rights organizer, house painter, longshoreman and rigger. His *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism* was published in 2009 (University of Pennsylvania). He is the co-editor of *African-Americans and the Haitian Revolution* (Routledge, 2010). He has recently lectured in France, Turkey, Italy, Puerto Rico and Qatar. He has held fellowships at the Kluge Center (Library of Congress) the Smithsonian Institution, and the Woodrow Wilson Center for International for Scholars. His “Washington, D.C.: From the Founding of a Slaveholding Capital to a Center of Abolitionism” appears in the May 2013 issue of the *Journal of African Diaspora Archeology and Heritage*. A 2009 inductee into the Washington, D.C. Hall of Fame, Jackson has just been named, by the Mayor of Washington, DC, the Chair of the newly established District of Columbia’s Commission on African American Affairs.

William Jones

University of Wisconsin

William P. Jones is Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin Madison, and an expert in the history of civil rights and labor. He is author of the award-winning book, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (University of Illinois Press) and he has written for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Nation* and other venues. His most recent book is *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (W.W. Norton & Co.).

Steven Pitts

UC Berkeley

Steven Pitts came to the Labor Center in August of 2001 from Houston, Texas. He received his Ph.D. in economics with an emphasis on urban economics from the University of Houston in 1994. His M.A. is also from the University of Houston and he holds an A.B. from Harvard University. At the Labor Center, Steven focuses on issues of job quality and Black workers. In this arena, he has published reports on employment issues in the Black community, initiated a Black union leadership school, and shaped projects designed to build solidarity between Black and Latino immigrant workers. Currently, a major area work involves providing technical assistance to support existing Black worker centers and incubate new Black Worker Centers around the country via the National Black Worker Center Project.

Voices of Black Leaders on the State of the Movement

Marietta English

American Federation of Teachers

Ms. English has been president of the Baltimore Teachers Union for nine years and was re-elected as president in May 2013. She has made it her goal to achieve even more success in Baltimore City Public Schools. In addition, Ms. English was elected as an American Federation of Teachers Vice-President in July 2010. She has fought for fair wages and improved

working conditions for City School teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel (PSRPs). A member of several civic, social, and cultural organizations, Ms. English serves as the President of AFT/Maryland and a Vice President for AFT National. She has served as President of the Metro-Baltimore Alliance of Black School Educators (MBABSE). She currently serves as the President-Elect of the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE). Ms. English is also a life member of the NAACP. As well as a lifetime member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., where she has served on several committees. She is a graduate of Western High School, Morgan State University and the University of Maryland, College Park.

Fred Redmond

United Steelworkers

Fred Redmond has been the USW International Vice President (Human Affairs) since 2006. Mr. Redmond joined the Steelworkers union when he went to work at Reynolds Metals Co. in McCook, IL in 1973 and worked his way up through the ranks from shop steward, grievance committee member and chairman and vice-president. He served three terms as president of the USW Local 3911. Before his 2005 election to his current position, Mr. Redmond represented USW members in Illinois and Indiana as a staff person and then as an Assistant District Director. He is Chairman of the USW Container Industry Conference and coordinates bargaining for the USW Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals and Public Employee sectors. Mr. Redmond also serves as Chairman of USW's Civil and Human Rights Department and is joint chairman of USW's Next Generation Program. In 2007, he was elected to the board of directors for Working America, he serves as regional representative for the mid-west region of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionist (CBTU), he was appointed to the AFLCIO Executive Council in 2008. Fred is a board member of the National Labor College and the National Endowment for Democracy. And, finally, he serves as the chairman of the board of directors of the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI).

Gerry Hudson

Service Employees International Union

Gerry Hudson has served as Executive Vice President of SEIU since June 2004. He leads the union's political program, ensuring that SEIU members and all workers have a strong voice to hold politicians accountable and elect candidates at all levels who stand with working families. His commitment to labor and social and economic justice spans decades. He came to SEIU in 1978 from the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale, N.Y., where he was a member of SEIU Local 144. His dedication to addressing urban sprawl and the disproportionate impacts of environmental degradation on low-income and minority communities informed his participation in the first-ever U.S. labor delegation to the United Nations' climate change meeting in Bali in 2007. Recently honored by Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations for his extraordinary leadership, Hudson continues to have wide-ranging impact on the fight to improve the lives of working families and their communities.

Kenneth Rigmaiden

International Union of Painters and Allied Trades

Mr. Rigmaiden began his career with the IUPAT in 1977 after receiving his Bachelor of Science Degree from San Jose State. He rose through the ranks to be elected Local Union 1288's business representative in 1986 and business manager for Local Union 12 in 1993. In 1996, he was selected to serve as a general representative. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from the National Labor College in 1998. He was elevated to the position of Executive General Vice President of the IUPAT in 2002 and in March 2013, was unanimously elected to the office of General President by the IUPAT General Executive Board. He serves as Co-Chairman of the Finishing Trades Institute, the Labor Management Cooperation Initiative and the IUPAT Industry Pension Fund. He is a member of the AFL-CIO's Executive Council, a trustee of the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust and a member of the Board of Directors of several AFL-CIO constituency and allied groups.

Lunch Speaker

Michael Eric Dyson

Georgetown University

Michael Eric Dyson, named by Ebony as one of the hundred most influential black Americans, is the author of sixteen books, including *Holler if You Hear Me, Is Bill Cosby Right?* and *I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King Jr.* He is currently University Professor of Sociology at Georgetown University. He lives in Washington, D.C.

Meeting the Moment

Exciting Innovations in Black Worker Organizing

Dorian Warren

Columbia University

Dorian T. Warren specializes in the study of inequality and American politics. He teaches and conducts research on labor organizing and politics, race and ethnic politics, urban politics and policy, American political development, community organizing and social movements, and social science methodology. Prior to coming to Columbia, Professor Warren spent two years as a visiting scholar at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago and spent 2008-2009 as a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation.

Derrick Johnson

Mississippi NAACP

Derrick Johnson currently serves as State President for the Mississippi State Conference NAACP, and Executive Director of One Voice, Inc. He recently served as a Mel King Community Fellow with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He holds a Juris Doctorate from South Texas College of Law in Houston, TX and a Bachelor of Arts from Tougaloo College in Jackson, MS. Mr. Johnson serves on the NAACP National Board of Directors, the boards of the Mississippi ACLU and the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and on the Advisory Council of the Mississippi Economic Policy Center. Additionally, Mr. Johnson was appointed by the Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court as a Commissioner to the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission. Mr. Johnson also served as a Fellow with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation working in the office of Congressman Bennie G. Thompson as well as a Fellow with The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management Minority Fellowship Program.

Denise Perry

Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity

In 29 years of labor and community organizing, Denise Perry has been dedicated to developing strong grassroots leaders, through organizing and training. She organized with labor for more than 10 years. She has been on the creator team of many efforts over the years such as Organizing Institute, Women's Global Equity Project with International Labor affiliates in Africa and the Caribbean to train and work with women activists and helping the development of the Right to the City Alliance. In 1999, Denise co-founded Power U Center for Social Change, rooted in Miami's historically Black community of Overtown. Power U has challenged the displacement of low-income families by gentrification. She serves on the board of Power U and the Louis E. Burnham Award Program, and she received the Bannerman Fellowship. Today she is leading

the Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity (BOLD) project providing leadership training for Black Organizers and Directors nationally.

Lola Smallwood Cuevas *LA Black Worker Center*

Lola Smallwood Cuevas is a project director at the UCLA Labor Center, a center dedicated to research, education, and public service as it relates to employment and the status of working people in Los Angeles. Her work at the Labor Center has focused on exploring the role of unions, empowering African American workers in Los Angeles, and strengthening the position of the Black working class. She currently directs the Los Angeles Black Worker Center (BWC), the first worker center in California focused on solving the Black job crisis. The BWC aims to build power among Black workers to create greater access to quality jobs, address employment discrimination, and transform industries that employ black workers. Before joining the UCLA Labor Center, Smallwood-Cuevas worked as political and community coordinator for the SEIU Local 1877 Security Organizing Campaign. She has a background in journalism, working as a daily beat writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, *Long Beach Press Telegram*, and the *Oakland Tribune*, where she was introduced to organizing as a member of the East Bay Newspaper Guild. She is co-editor of the UCLA Labor Center publication *Women's Work: Los Angeles Homecare Workers Revitalize the Labor Movement* (2009) and co-author of "Common Cause," a chapter on LA's Black community and labor in the newly released UCLA Bunche Center publication *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities* (NY University Press).

Pierette Talley *Ohio AFL-CIO*

Pierette "Petee" Talley is Secretary-Treasurer of the Ohio AFL-CIO and the first woman to hold one of the top two offices in the history of the Ohio AFL-CIO being elected in 2002 and reelected in 2006, and 2010 the current term. Her career in the labor movement began with AFSCME in Ohio and she has held several positions with AFSCME including the International union's political and legislative director in Michigan, before her appointment to the national AFL-CIO in Ohio in 1999. She serves on several boards including Ohio Employee Ownership Center, Universal Health Care Action Network, Progress Ohio, the National APRI Board, CBTU National Executive Council, and the National Board of the Alliance for Retired Americans. She continues her work at the grassroots, organizing union and community non-partisan voter mobilization efforts across Ohio. And she volunteers in the capacity of Convener of the Ohio Unity Coalition, a coalition of several labor, faith, civil and human rights organizations with a focus on civil engagement in African-American communities across the state.

Ain't I a Worker?

A Critical Look at Black Women, Organizing and Economic Justice

Patricia Jerido *Open Society Foundations*

Patricia Jerido is a program officer with the Special Special Initiatives and Partnerships Unit of U.S. Programs. Her prior experience includes eight years as a social worker and community organizer on human rights issues in the Manhattan Borough President's Office, and as co-director for Client Services at the Minority Taskforce on AIDS, where she worked with women incarcerated at Rikers Island. Since 1999, Jerido has worked as a program officer and consultant to foundations and nonprofits working on economic, health, and leadership development issues. As a program officer for health and

safety at the Ms. Foundation for Women, she managed three funds covering reproductive rights, women and AIDS, and sexuality education. Since 2003, Jerido has worked as an independent consultant, assisting nonprofit organizations in fundraising, communications, board and program development, evaluation, executive coaching, and organizing. Jerido has also explored the intersections between popular culture and progressive politics through GoLeft.org, a web-based nonprofit that she founded. Jerido is a graduate of Rutgers University and Hunter College Graduate School of Social Work.

Fatima Goss Graves

National Women's Law Center

Fatima Goss Graves is Vice President for Education and Employment at the National Women's Law Center, where she works to promote the rights of women and girls at school and in the workplace. Ms. Goss Graves works to advance equal pay for equal work, expand opportunities for women in nontraditional fields, and ensure the development of fundamental legal principles of equal opportunity. She uses a number of advocacy strategies in her work on these issues ranging from public education and legislative advocacy to litigation, including briefs in the Supreme Court and federal courts of appeals. Prior to joining the Center, she worked as an appellate and trial litigator at Mayer Brown LLP. She began her career as a law clerk for the Honorable Diane P. Wood of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Ms. Goss Graves is a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles and Yale Law School.

Linda Burnham

National Domestic Workers Alliance

Linda Burnham is the Research Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance, an organization that advocates for the rights and dignity of nannies, housecleaners and elder caregivers. She is the co-author of *Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work*. Burnham was a leader in the Third World Women's Alliance, a national organization that was an early advocate for the rights of women of color. In 1990 she co-founded Women of Color Resource Center, and was its Executive Director for 18 years. Burnham has published numerous articles on African-American women, African-American politics, and feminist theory in a wide range of periodicals and anthologies.

Sukari Pinnock

Georgetown University

Sukari Pinnock is an Organization Development practitioner, specializing in Team Building, Leadership Development, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice Work, and Leadership Coaching. She is an Adjunct Professor with Georgetown University, teaching a Theories course in Diversity and Inclusion in the HR Masters Program, School of Continuing Studies. Prior to launching herself as an independent consultant, Pinnock served for over 21 years as the Director of Membership and Organization for the American Federation of Government Employees, AFGE. During no time in her tenure in this position did the AFL-CIO ever have either two women Organizing Directors or African American Organizing Directors on its Organizing Directors Committee *at the same time*. She is the architect and chief strategist of the union's groundbreaking TSA Organizing Campaign, which brought some 44,000 workers into the house of labor. She considers herself to be a Labor Futurist.