

CIVIC ACTOR STUDIO AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PILOT 2021

A collaboration between



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Office of Civic
Engagement



The Civic Actor Studio at the University of Chicago is a civic leadership retreat designed to help strengthen the performative aspect of civic leaders and accelerate civic trust through Classic Theater.

CIVIC ACTORS



NICOLE BOND is a Lead Museum Educator and Teaching Artist at the Smart Museum of Art. She joined the staff in 2017 by invitation, as an Illinois Humanities Odyssey Project Alumnus. Her love of the visual, performing, and literary arts powers her earliest memories. It has informed most of her previous work trajectory, from working actor, to freelance

makeup artist on an NBC Emmy Award winning daytime television show, and it is why she enjoys being part of the Smart Museum and Court Theatre community, where she also works part-time as an Assistant Manager in the Box Office. Nicole is also a former editor and contributing writer for the South Side Weekly.



ERMA BREANN (they/them/theirs) is a gender creative non-binary activist, facilitator, and community organizer serving as the Program Director at Affinity Community Services. Their work at Affinity is focused on advocating for the liberation of Black LGBTQ+ communities and creating healing community spaces for Black queer women and all people who have lived

experience of misogyny.



MICHELLE CHARLES is an IT professional with 20+ years in the healthcare industry. She has a love of learning and a passion for applying organizational and analytical skills to non-profit organizations serving youth. Roles have included community liaison Urban Initiatives, Girl Scout troop leader for 10+ years, and board memberships for several schools and churches.

She is currently a parent board member on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team at Jones College Prep High School. Michelle has a BS in Marketing and a BS in Communications from St. Louis University and a Master in Communication Studies from Northwestern University.



BENNIE CURRIE, owner of MBC Financial Strategies, specializes in tax-advantaged solutions for small businesses, professionals and families. Bennie is a former journalist, PR professional, corporate/mayoral speech writer, and public radio essayist. Bennie is a soccer fanatic and especially loves running, reading, and giving back. He is a Hyde Park Chamber of

Commerce/Hyde Park Neighborhood Club board member. In 2019, he launched CollaBOoration, a neighborhood block activation strategy aimed at keeping the peace on Halloween night while building community.



ENNERESSA "REESIE" DAVIS is the CEO and founder of Praize Productions, Inc., an arts-based, not-for-profit organization on the South Side of Chicago. She is an award-winning choreographer whose work has been highlighted on Windy City LIVE, Heart & Soul, and WGN's Around Town. She was the keynote speaker for Loyola University of Chicago's Black Lives Matter

Conference and was recognized by the Young Women's Professional League as one of their "40 Under 40."



CHRISTOPHER GOINS is a former founding high school principal and now serves as the Chief Equity Officer at Thrive Chicago and the Impact Leader for My Brothers Keeper Chicago (MBK), in partnership with the Obama Foundation. Through MBK, Chris is leading a cross-sector Chicago call to action focused on building a safe and supportive community for boys and young

men of color where they feel valued and have clear pathways to opportunity. As a result, MBK is launching a holistic pipeline for high school male students to attend college and major in education as an effort to increase the representation of men of color as educators.



WILL GRANDBERRY, a graduate of Howard University, has a charismatic approach to ministry that pierces the heart and mind of all generations. Pastor Will's God given purpose of serving the needs of all people is fully demonstrated in his role as Senior Director of Outreach and Community Development for New Life Covenant Southeast and the Chance Center Inc.

under the leadership of Pastor John F. Hannah.



SHARON GRANT is the Executive Director of the Community Programs Accelerator at the University of Chicago. Retired from three decades of service in corporate, she provides nonprofit capacity building services to South Side nonprofit organizations. A veteran of the airline industry, Sharon previously served at United Airlines as the Vice-President and Chief

Community Engagement Officer, Vice-President of the Customer Contact Centers, and in various roles in Accounting and Finance.



MASHAUNE HARDY is the Assistant Director of Community Arts Partnership and Strategy at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts and the Business Manager of Ayodele Drum and Dance. She has performed with Seneke West African Percussion Ensemble, Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago, and Ayodele Drum and Dance. Mashaune also produces concerts, conferences,

and performances, and has developed social media strategies for artists and arts organizations including the Jazz Institute of Chicago. Mashaune has led technology projects as a Senior Systems Analyst at Gold Eagle Co, HP, and EDS.



KEVIN IEGA JEFF is a renowned choreographer, accomplished dancer, award winning director, respected and devoted dance educator, and an innovative executive leader. Jeff was honored as one of The Juilliard School's 100 Outstanding Alumni during its centennial celebration. After co-founding and serving as Artistic Director of Deeply Rooted Dance Theater

for 24 years, Iega has transitioned into the role of Creative Director and continues serving as Executive Director. Iega is focusing on growing Deeply Rooted Productions/Dance Theater into an institution with the development of the South Side Center for Black Dance and Creative Communities, a new home for Deeply Rooted and partner organizations on Chicago's South Side.



MAIRA KHWAJA is an educator and multimedia producer. She is director of public strategy at the Invisible Institute, a journalism production organization based in Woodlawn. Her work is centered on the Youth / Police Project, which primarily builds conversations with young people (ages 16-22) on the South Side about their everyday encounters with policing.



ROB MCKAY is co-owner and curator at Connect Gallery located in Hyde Park, Chicago, providing a social space and gallery for both well-established and burgeoning artists. He is Director of Productions for The Silver Room Sound System Block Party is the founder of THEARE Group, an organization where artists and entrepreneurial-minded individuals share ideas

and resources. Rob has led many successful community projects and believes Art changes the world. He aims to increase collaboration between community members, agencies, and stakeholders to express and solve issues using creativity as the catalyst for social innovation.



PRINCESS MHOON is an award-winning director, choreographer, producer, educator, and scholar recognized in 2015 by HUFFINGTON POST as one of 26 Female Choreographers You Should Know. She is the Founder & CEO of the Princess Mhoon Dance Institute in Washington, DC and the Strategic Program Manager for the Chicago Black Dance

Legacy Project at the Logan Center for the Arts.



MIKE NOURSE (he/him) is a practicing artist, educator, and programs professional and is currently the Director of Education for Hyde Park Art Center. Mike's work involves partnerships with South Side schools, onsite community-supported programs for youth and adults, self-directed teen programs, and professional pathways for working artists. Separate from his work at the Art Center,

Nourse is also the Executive Director of Chicago Art Department, a civically-minded residency program and learning lab he founded in 2003, driven to support artists who question the city we live in.



MARS DELAVONTA' SILVER, born and based on the South side of Chicago, IL, is a designer and programmer that works on the intersection of design, wellness and community. Silver's mission is to build alongside neighbors that reshapes and reimagines an equitable community for all.



GREGORY SMITH is the Director of Partnerships at Hyde Park Art Center working with Chicago Public Schools to provide art programs to elementary schools primarily on the South Side of Chicago. He also works with community-based organizations in creating partnerships with Hyde Park Art Center. Gregory worked with Chicago Public Schools and with the City of Chicago in

different capacities: International Program Coordinator with the Mayor's Office of International Relations, Manager of Special Projects with Chicago Sister Cities Program, and Manager of Youth Education Programs with Gallery 37 (Department of Cultural Affairs).



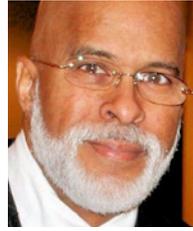
SUSAN TRICE was born and raised in Chicago, IL. After a 30-plus year career in accounting, Susan is currently dedicated to work as Finance Director at Deeply Rooted Dance Theater since 2016. Susan is a proud and devoted Mother, Grandmother, Daughter, Sister, Aunt, and Friend; a passionate Quilter, Dancer, Swimmer and Naprapath. Susan has also actively held numerous

volunteer leadership positions in community-based groups/associations/organizations. She loves to travel, cook, collect art; and is also a lover of music, Africa and new experiences.



CREDELL "CRE" WALLS is currently Program Coordinator for the Forest Preserve of Cook County. He has worked with the Jane Goodall Institute and the Garfield Park Conservatory managing various youth programs. He has delivered professional and personal development training workshops to more than 3,000 youth nationally. He has studied

Improvisational comedy at Chicago's Second City and has performed with his sketch comedy group Soul Fools and Minority Rules in different festivals and venues in Chicago. He is a proud graduate of the 2019 Latino Policy forum, Multicultural Leadership Academy which promotes black and brown relationship building. He has a BA from DePaul University in Nonprofit Management and an MA in Biology from Miami University.



CHARLES WALTON is the Executive Director of 100 Black Men of Chicago. He is Chicago born and Chicago bred, Southside taught, and Southside fed! With a global career, I've been blessed. But it's my Southside roots, I claim as best!

CIVIC FACILITATORS



DANIEL O. ASH is associate vice president of community impact at The Chicago Community Trust. Ash previously served as the Trust's chief marketing officer from 2013 to 2019. Prior to joining the Trust, Ash spent 10 years as vice president at Chicago Public Media, production home of WBEZ/91.5FM (Chicago's primary NPR station), This American Life, Sound Opinions, Wait

Wait...Don't Tell Me and Vocolo.org.



DOMINIQUE ATWOOD is a graduate of Howard University where she co-founded the first Contemporary Dance Company on campus, I.AM.WE. In 2016 she participated as one of the region's leading dance leaders by former First Lady Michelle Obama during her Celebration of Black Women in Dance. She is currently the Development Director at Deeply Rooted Dance

Theater and on faculty at Ballet Chicago. Dominique serves as Board Chair of Young Ladies Aspiring Greatness (YLAG), a mentoring program missioned to create leaders through community service.



GABRIELLE RANDLE-BENT is a scholar, director, and dramaturg who is passionate about social justice, storytelling, and the power of performance to change the world. She has a dual BA degree in Drama and Sociology from Stanford University and an MA degree in Performance as Public Practice at The University of Texas at Austin. She has directed, devised,

dramaturged, and produced professionally across the United States in Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Austin, and New York City (off-Broadway) and internationally on three continents. She is one of the founders of the Civic Actor Studio at the University of Chicago.



PASTOR VICTORIA CAROL BRADY is an Arts/Community Activist, Playwright, Singer, Artistic Director, and Humanitarian. She is the Founder/Pastor of Restoring Hope Ministries International. She is also the President/CEO of Annie B. Jones Community Services, Inc (ABJ), an institute of high-end arts and culture that was founded as a

Child Welfare Agency by her mother, Dr. Vivian R. Jones. Under Pastor Victoria's leadership, ABJ has transformed into a unique center for cross-generational Arts-Entrepreneurialism, Culture, Peace-Building, Activism, and Community Empowerment.



SAMANTHA (SAM) BROWN

(Co-Community Alchemist) joined Deeply Rooted Dance Theater in September 2018 as the Dance Education Manager. She is also the South Side Dance Center Project Manager and Executive Assistant. Beyond Deeply Rooted, Sam is the Administrative Director for AileyCamp Chicago and has worked on the production/local talent curation

staff at Hyde Park's the Promontory. A proud alumni of Oberlin College and Oberlin's LaunchU Entrepreneurship Intensive, Sam is incredibly excited to be expanding upon that foundation in her work as a space cultivator on the South Side.



HARRY L. DAVIS studies leadership, strategy, creativity and innovation. He joined the faculty of the Booth School of Business in 1963, and has introduced many innovative executive education programs in the United States and abroad. He earned a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1959 and an MBA in marketing in 1960 from Dartmouth College. He earned a master's degree

in sociology in 1969 and a PhD in marketing in 1970 from Northwestern University. He is one of the founders of the Civic Actor Studio at the University of Chicago.



JOANIE FRIEDMAN (Community Alchemist) is the Executive Director of Civic Leadership in the Office of Civic Engagement at the University of Chicago. She is responsible for advancing the knowledge, teaching, and practice of civic leadership locally, nationally, and globally to increase civic trust and strengthen cities.

Working across the University, she raises the visibility of programs and partnerships that strengthen the civic sector via civic leadership. She is the instigator and community alchemist of the Civic Actor Studio at the University of Chicago.



CHARLIE NEWELL has been Artistic Director at Court Theatre since 1994, where he has directed over 50 productions. He is one of the founders of the Civic Actor Studio at the University of Chicago.



NICOLE CLARKE-SPRINGER,

Artistic Director of Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, began formal training under the guidance of Claudette Soltis (Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and Joliet Ballet Society) and the Indianapolis Ballet Theatre under Dace Diodonis. She received her B.S. in arts administration-dance from Butler University in Indianapolis. She teaches and

choreographs throughout the country and has been on faculty as an adjunct professor at Chicago State University and Western Kentucky University and is currently on staff at Northwestern University.



WENDY WALKER WILLIAMS

is the Executive Director of Community Partnerships with the University of Chicago Office of Civic Engagement. Wendy works to ensure community stakeholders are informed and engaged in UChicago's efforts to provide social and economic opportunities in neighboring South Side communities. Working closely with community

leaders and elected officials, Wendy helps create and advance community engagement strategies that build and sustain strong partnerships and connect community stakeholders across the South Side to the University.