Women's History Month Special Edition — Founded in 1975, BDPA™ Nears its Golden Anniversary

# bdpatoday®

MARCH 2024

**JROTC ADVANCES CYBER, MATH, AND STEM SKILLS**

Cyber Programs prepare veterans and students for careers in cybersecurity.

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Annual Women's History Month showcase of tech leaders and innovators.

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## *WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH*

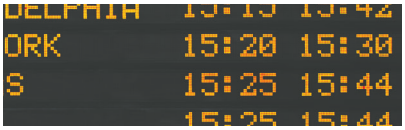
INSIDE: BDPA pays tribute to trailblazers in Aerospace, BioTech, Computer Science, Data Science, Defense, Engineering, Entertainment, FinTech, HealthTech, Intelligence, Space Exploration, Telecommunications, and all things STEM.

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# 50th ANNUAL CONVENTION

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF BLACK ENGINEERS



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#NSBE50



— BDPA photo

## BDPA Launches 46th Annual Tech Conference in 2024 as BDPACON Returns to Atlanta

**ATLANTA** — BDPA looks forward to welcoming you and your organization to Atlanta, GA for its 46th Annual BDPA Technology Conference and Career Expo. These conferences are open to both students and professionals in STEM and all digital technology fields. The Association also invites those in emerging professions and industries that increasingly rely on data technology to enhance their work to join the annual convening, which is highly immersive and transformative

If you are a BDPA Member, contact the association at **helpdesk@bdpa.org** to receive special discount code(s) for BDPA Members.

To participate, speakers, presenters, panelists, BDPA Members, Student Members, and exhibitors visit: **conference.bdpa.org** to pre-register.

**BDPACON24** will be held July 31st – August 3rd, 2024 at the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta, GA. Register today. Join BDPA this year during the 45th Annual BDPA Technology National Conference. **bt**

*View related articles at → **bdpatoday.com***

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Largo, Maryland
March 1, 2024

# Women's History Month: *The BDPA Legacy* ™

Dear Members, Associates, and Partners:



**Vivian C. Wilson**
Past National President, BDPA

As BDPA advances toward its 50-year milestone and Golden Anniversary next year, we cordially invite you to take this opportunity to continue reflecting upon our great legacy. Embracing *Women's History Month* is our ongoing reminder of the challenges and successes recognized while honoring HERstory—her story as a leader, an entrepreneur, a scientist, an inventor, or a distinguished member of BDPA.

During this reflective period, one cannot help to rediscover that our strength lies in our combined capabilities to continue developing and nurturing tomorrow's talent for our industry and community. It is our fundamental belief that a highly skilled workforce is required not only for large and women-owned small business (WoSB) partners but also for schools and governments developing our communities.

Let *Women's History Month* ignite deeper conversations, spark new collaborations, and inspire more breakthroughs. The very essence of progress is our continued immersion in the narratives of those who continue to pave the way. Every chapter in your new book, "*The BDPA Story*", weaves a unique fabric of passages across our deeply rich heritage bridging close to five generations of leadership, entrepreneurship, and talent within our tech industry. The courage to deploy better solutions faster than ever before, to challenge algorithmic biases, and to amplify more voices from digitally divided communities, continues to fuel our innovative ambitions from our classrooms directly into your new boardrooms.

To our executives, mentors, and trailblazers, the Post-Quantum Era awaits your brilliance. Be the catalysts for change. Diversity of thought matters. Unique perspectives matter. Role models matter. Influence matters. Be not afraid to possess all of these attributes with force multipliers for digital transformations—but use them wisely throughout our new world order and beyond. Continue to hold your torches very high just as the late Vivian Wilson, the late Diane Davis, the late Margaret "Midge" Jennings, the late Valorie Hartridge, Annette Yates, Betty Hutchins, Beverly Moore, Danna Sturdivant, Dr. Denise Holland, Gina Billings, Glenda Chappell, Janice Lee, Jeanette Wiggins, Judaea "Judy" Lane, Dr. LaVerne Council, Loraine Stewart-David, Mildred Allen, Monique Berry, Pamela Mathews, Paulette Johnson-Davis, Renee McClure, Renetta English, Roxanne Burrus, Traci Wade, Yvette Graham, and countless others did for BDPA and new BDPA Members while illuminating exciting career paths forward.

With our appreciation and admiration,

President, BDPA

# #TheBDPAStory

A new business-technology paradigm shift was underway, shaking up the work place and forever changing how corporations large and small would operate. Corporate computer usage skyrocketed, demand for computer programmers, analysts, operators, and managers also skyrocketed. Inspired by these emerging societal opportunities in the mid 1970's, Earl A. Pace, Jr. and David Wimberly launched BDPA — Black Data Processing Associates — expanding new opportunities for African Americans to upskill far beyond data-entry positions. And this journey begins.










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For 40 years, BDPA has enabled the upward mobility of African Americans and other minorities in the Information Technology (IT) and STEM fields. Through its 40+ local community chapters in major cities across the United States, BDPA has been at the forefront of promoting the minority agenda within the IT profession since 1975. BDPA has been a leader and pioneer in technology and STEM training for IT professionals and High School students since 1986.

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- Obtain exposure to technical and professional topics through program meetings, seminars and workshops
- Participate in certification support groups
- Discounts on IT certifications and training courses

bdpatoday PTTV

# National High School Computer, Coding, and Cyber Competitions

Est. 1975



BDPA photo by Charlie Perkins

National BDPA's **High School Computer Competition** (HSCC) hit 2001, the first century of our 3rd millennium, with reckless abandon. Over 25 teams from participating BDPA Chapter cities fielded teams for annual national scholarship rounds.

Powered by **IBM**, **Mayo Clinic**, and **Rochester Public Schools**, National BDPA's ***Southern Minnesota HSCC Team*** (above) became the most diverse set of "top coders" and #JrDevs in the nation amassing more world HSCC Championships than all other BDPA Chapters combined. They closed out 2K's first decade with four consecutive HSCC Championships by 2010 and one more in 2011 — five championships in a row.

The bar is raised each year for every HSCC team heading to #BDPACON, National BDPA's annual technology conference.

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# CONGRESS LEADS EFFORT TO ESTABLISH THE U.S. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SAFETY INSTITUTE (USAISI)




**WASHINGTON**—U.S. Senators Todd Young (R-Ind.), Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), and Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) praised the inclusion of $10 million in initial funding in the Fiscal Year 2024 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations bill to establish the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) U.S. Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute (USAISI).

Earlier this year, a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee was sent in support of initial funding for the USAISI.

"We are pleased that initial funding for the USAISI is included in this appropriations package. The rapid advancement of AI innovation has brought forth immense possibilities and opportunities. With these advancements comes potential challenges and risks that must be addressed in a safe manner. The USAISI will provide a dedicated platform for research, collaboration, and implementation of safety measures in AI development. USAISI's work will be critical to ensuring AI technologies are developed in a manner that reflects our shared democratic values and supports American industry," the senators said.

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced the creation of USAISI in November 2023 as part of ongoing efforts to ensure our nation's global leadership in setting standards for AI innovation and use. NIST will use the funding to enhance the USAISI team with experts in red teaming and capability evaluation, support the formation of a Joint Research Center for advancing AI system evaluation techniques and safety research, and support the USAISI Consortium that will play a crucial role in integrating these advancements into industry and society. **bt**

—Source: *U.S. Senate*

# JROTC Advances Cyber, Math, and STEM Skills

**WASHINGTON**—The final FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) contained a provision critical to expanding STEM education across America. Based on the Providing Resources and Organization to Maximize Opportunities for Training and Education in STEM (the PROMOTES Act), NDAA language supports the establishment of grant programs to increase the training and education of Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). These fields include, but are not limited to, computer science; computational thinking; artificial intelligence (Ai); machine learning (ML); data science; cybersecurity; robotics; health sciences; and other subjects determined by the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) related to STEM. BDPA's SITES programs may include software engineering, privacy, algorithmic transparency, and operational security (OPSEC) for participating high schools and BDPA Student Members. **bt**

— *Sources:* ***Congressional Reseach Service***



*(L-R) Perry Carter, National President, BDPA (bdpa.org) with Brigadier General Omar Randall, USMC; Deputy Commander Marine Forces Reserve; NJROTC Cadet Commander; and Commander Robert Clements, USN (Retired), Senior Naval Science Instructor at Suitland High School. .* — photo ©2024 ***bdpatoday®***

*View related success stories at* **bdpatoday.com**.

# Unsung Heroines • HIDDEN FIGURE$

## Commemorating Women's History Month




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# In Memoriam

National BDPA Presidents

## Vivian C. Wilson

**May 25, 1943 - October 19, 2020**



***Vivian C. Wilson*** retired as a Data Center Manager from Ameritech after 33 years of service. Twenty of those years were in Computer Operations, Security, and Data Systems for Northeast Ohio. Ms. Wilson served as the Vice President of National BDPA's third U.S. chartered chapter, **BDPA Cleveland**. Ms. Wilson became the first **National BDPA President** elected to office without serving as a Chapter President and the first woman chief executive of NBDPA. Ms. Wilson served as NBDPA's President from 1989 to 1992 and selected in 1990 as Cleveland's ***Professional Woman of the Year***.

# In Memoriam



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# Midge

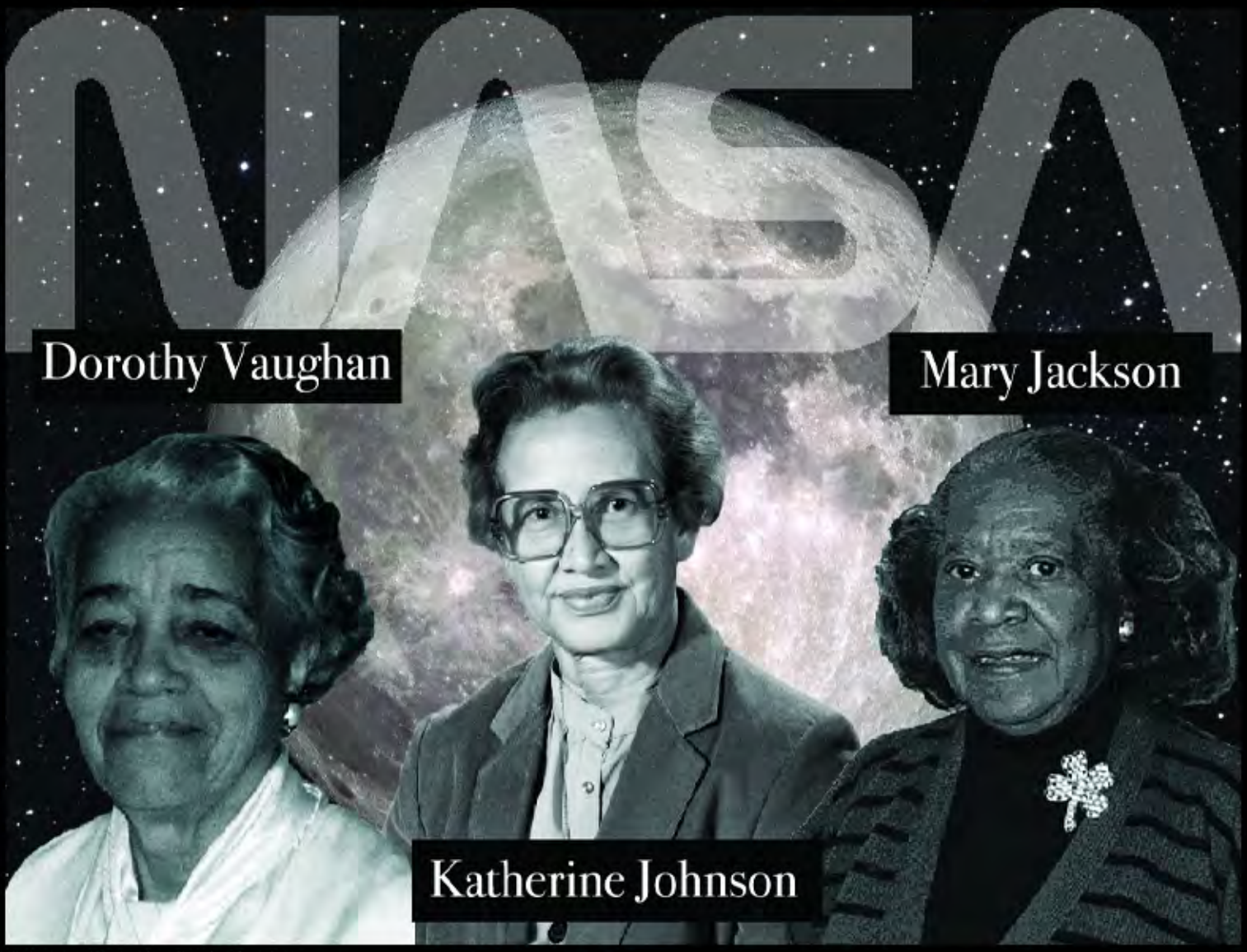
## Margaret Johnson

May 22, 1943 to December 24 2022

**Margaret *"Midge"* Johnson** was an experienced Information Technology professional with over 50 years of professional experience in the information technology industry, 42 years of which were specialized. She was Founder and current President of a volunteer based charitable NPO, Rainbow Production Ministries, that has been in existence since 2000. Ms. Johnson was the *first* **Executive Director for National BDPA**. She also was the Washington, D.C. BDPA Chapter President for approximately 3 years where she secured the IRS 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit status for the local chapter. She secured financial support for the first Washington, D.C **High School Computer Competition** (HSCC) team in 1986. In 2013, Ms. Johnson retired from GEICO as a Senior Systems Analyst and Lead for IBU Claims Release Management and received her Lifetime Membership during BDPA-DC's 35th Anniversary.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month




Photographs: NASA and *Smithsonian Magazine*




**Hidden Human Computers**

Often overlooked in histories of technology, and even in histories of human computing, the women of **NASA** nevertheless played a vital role in research at NASA Langley, back when our nation's "computers" wore skirts. Lest we forget, America's mathematically talented women, who helped power NASA and 20th century computing technologies.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month



NASA photographs



***Valerie Thomas*** is an African-American scientist and inventor. In 1997, Valerie Thomas began research on how light and concave mirrors could be used.

It was this research which led to her invention of the illusion transmitter which made it possible to project 3-D images onto television screens. Ms. Thomas was also heavily involved in the **Landsat Project** which were the first satellites to send images back to earth from space.

Dr. Thomas received numerous awards, including the **Goddard Space Flight Center Award of Merit** and BDPA-DC's 2019 **Lifetime Achievement Award**.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month



NASA photographs



***Dr. Mae Jemison*** is an American physician and first Black woman in space. Dr. Jemison was a keynote speaker during event opening and Industry welcome ceremonies at the 2004 National BDPA Technology Conference hosted by BDPA's Dallas, Texas Chapter.

As an engineer, physician, and astronaut, Dr. Jemison was assigned to the **STS-47** space mission in 1992.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month



Photo courtesy ***Inclusive Innovation Incubator*** (In3)

*NASA OPSPARC Finalists from* ***Benjamin Banneker Academic High School*** *with Microsoft's CEO* **Satya Nadella** *in Redmond, WA. DC Finalists invited to attend Hack-a-thon at Microsoft's headquarters after* **Earth Day Tech Summit** *events.*




Photo courtesy *Microsoft*

**NASA OPSPARC** finalists were awarded ***Amazon Fire HD 10 tablets*** and ***Best Buy gift cards*** from their host **BDPA** Chapter's ***Tablets For Teens*** program during ***CYBEREarth18***, BDPA's annual Earth Day Tech Summit. Aaron Saunders, CEO of **In3DC**, In3's Community Manager, Marissa Jennings founder of **Socialgrlz'** Teen Mobile App, and Travis Bolden of **Hales Government Solutions**, provided facilities and equipment with materials and weekly coaching to assist these NASA innovators. Students (above) are **India Skinner**, **Bria Snell**, and **Mikayla Sharrieff**.

# Commemorating Women's History Month






photo credits: ITSMF, NSBE, and Per Scholas

During ITSMF's first symposium of 2022 (S1-22), ***Viola Thompson*** had the distinguished honor to be awarded the designation of an **Information Technology Senior Management Forum** (ITSMF) Fellow. In celebration of her career achievements, board appointments, and community impacts across our technology industries, Ms. Thompson was recognized with this prestigious designation.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month



Dr. Kyla McMullen with National BDPA President Monique Berry
Photograph ©2013 BDPA by Charlie Perkins




Credits: BETF + Clemson University

**Dr. Kyla McMullen** is an Assistant Professor and Director of the University of Florida's ***SoundPad Lab*** in the University's Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) Department.

In 2013, Dr. McMullen (above) with NBDPA received **National BDPA's Epsilon Award** for ***Professional Achievement***. In 2012, she became the *first* African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering from the University of Michigan.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month



Photo credits: Dr. Cathy Hughes, Urban One, and Howard University

> ***"My first goal in buying this radio station, was not to make money. My goal was for it to make the Washington community a better informed and enlightened Black Community."***
>
> *— Cathy Hughes*

Had it not been for the support of the Howard University School of Communications in her earlier professional years, ***Dr. Cathy Hughes*** said she wouldn't be where she is today.

Dr. Hughes is founder and chairperson of Urban One, the largest Black-owned American media company with holdings in radio, cable, TV, and digital media. Founded as Radio One, the company went public in 1999, making her the first African-American woman to head a U.S. publicly traded corporation. Her multi-billion dollar company owns and operates 56 radio stations in 16 U.S. markets.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



Photographs: Library of Congress



***Carla Hayden*** was sworn in as the 14th Librarian of Congress on September 14, 2016. Hayden, the first woman and the first African American to lead the national library, was nominated to the position by President Barack Obama on February 24, 2016, and her nomination was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on July 13.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month



Photo credits: ODNI

The **Central Intelligence Agency** (CIA) names ***La'Naia J. Jones***, a veteran cybersecurity leader in the U.S.spy community to be its new chief information officer (CIO). She recently served as the **National Security Agency's** (NSA) deputy CIO — where she oversaw I.T. investments and acquisition efforts — and as NSA's Information Sharing and Safeguarding Executive. Prior to the NSA, Jones served as acting CIO for the U.S. clandestine community within the **Office of the Director of National Intelligence** (ODNI) working with CIOs and other senior leaders across the Intelligence Community's (IC) 18 agencies.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month




Navy photo and BDPA-DC Post Card



**Barbara Hoffman** joined Samsung in January of 2018 as Vice President for Global Strategic Operations Government Vertical furthering the company's role in Business to Government (B2G) IT and Mobile Communications. Appointed the Department of Defense Chief Information Officer (DOD CIO), Principal Deputy for the Information Enterprise in September 2016, she led the delivery of the first ever Software as a Service (SaaS) for Enterprise Collaboration and Productivity Services (ECAPS) across the entire DOD. Ms. Hoffman has been a staunch supporter of BDPA, STEM, and tech community engagements. She was a Fireside Chat panelists with tech CIOs during BDPACON12 in Chicago and served as the sponsoring keynote during BDPA-DC's Annual Awards Gala in 2019.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



*bdpatoday* photo by Roy Lewis



Photo: Assured Information Security, Inc. (AIS)

***Ms. Marjorie Forbes*** has over 40 years of experience working in leadership and operations roles, 32 years with the National Security Agency (NSA). Mission assignments included SIGINT and Information Assurance. Ms. Forbes is a BDPA of Greater Washington, D.C. 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

As Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for AIS, Ms. Forbes identifies new opportunities for continued corporate growth in research and development (R&D), deployment, and sustainment. In 2019, AIS was a corporate sponsor of BDPA's Greater Washington, D.C. national **High School Computer Competition** (HSCC) coding championship team (above).

# Commemorating Women's History Month



*bdpatoday* photo by Pamila Gilliam



ODNI photo

***Ms. Cynthia Miller*** (above center) served as a panelist addressing cybersecurity careers and workforce challenges with Admiral Cecil Haney, U.S.Navy (left) and Dr. Caesar Jackson, National Science Foundation (NSF) during the 2010 BDPA **Advance Program Brieifng to Industry** for Interns (APBi). A retired U.S. Navy Captain, Ms. Miller also served as the Chief of Human Resources Group for the **National Security Agency** (NSA) responsible for the management, implementation, and administration of Agency plans, policies, services and programs associated with the entire NSA workforce.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



*bdpatoday* photo by Paige Travis



DOD photo

***Ms. Essye B. Miller***, Principal Deputy CIO, Department of Defense (SES Retired) was presented a **2020 Lifetime Achievement Award** from National BDPA's Greater Washington, D.C. Chapter.

Ms. Miller served as Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer for DOD (DoD CIO) as the primary advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Information Management, Information Technology, and Information Assurance.

Above, Ms. Miller, served as keynote presenter during NNOA's Quantico Chapter Annual Ladies' Luncheon.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



Rear Admiral Annie Andrews, Rear Admiral Lillian Fishburne, and Admiral Michelle Howard [Navy photo]



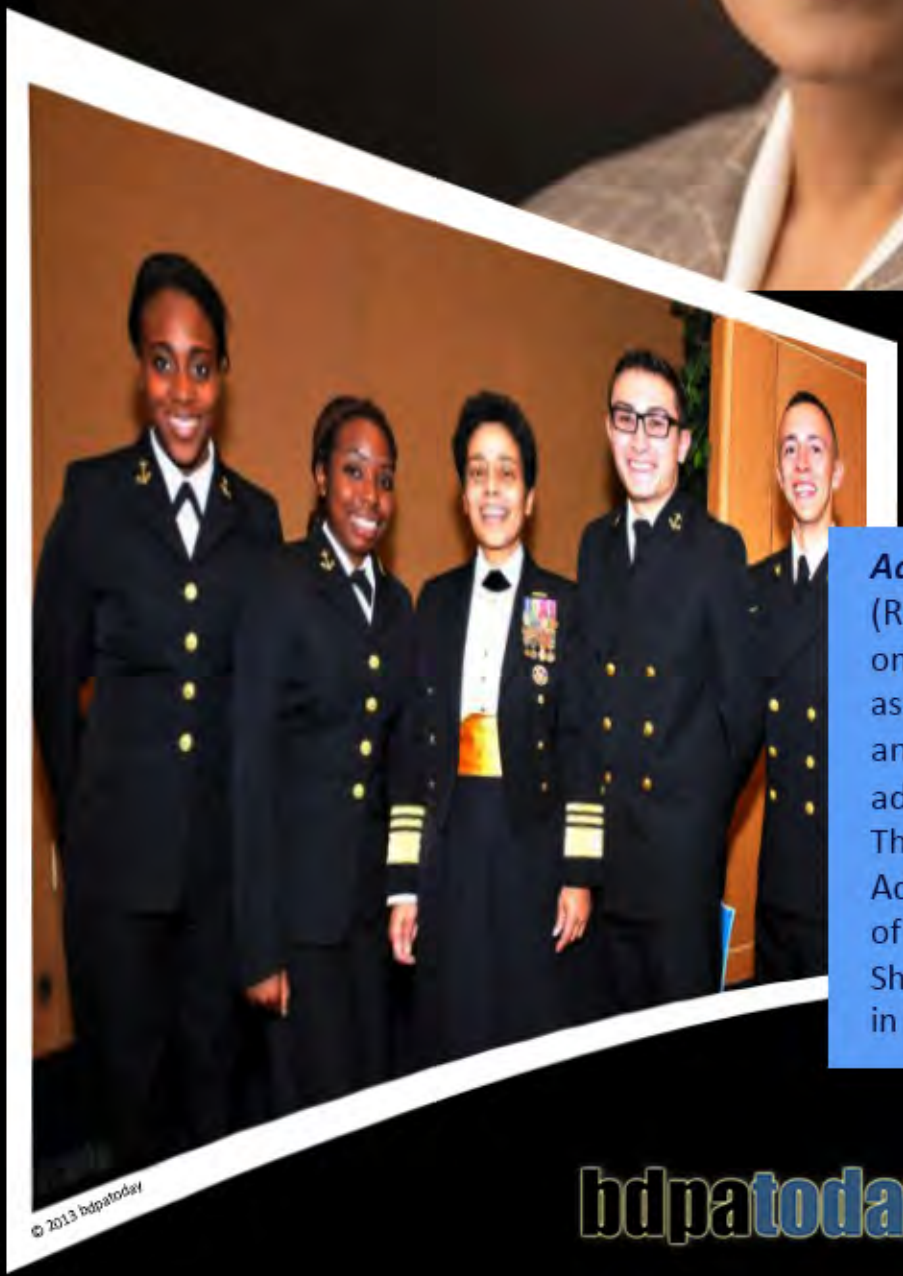
**Rear Admiral Lillian E. Fishburne** is the first African American female to hold the rank of Rear Admiral in the United States Navy. Admiral Fishburne is a Member of the National Naval Officers Association and a very strong proponent of **STEM** education and programs. Admiral Fishburne is a Lincoln University alumna and received her Master of Science degree in ***Telecommunications Systems Management*** from the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. Her final active assignment was Director, Information Transfer Division for what we know today as **SPAWAR**.

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IBM photo



© 2013 bdpatoday

***Admiral Michelle J. Howard***, U.S. Navy (Retired) joined IBM's Board of Directors on March 1, 2019. Admiral Howard served as the 38th Vice Chief of Naval Operations and is our nation's first female four-star admiral to command operational forces. Throughout her distinguished naval career, Admiral Howard was a staunch proponent of **STEM** and **Cyber** programs for our youth. She attended BDPA's 35th Anniversary event in Washington with Midshipmen and students.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month






U.S. Navy photos

**Janice C. Haith** is a senior cybersecurity technology executive, strategist, and board member with three decades of collaborative leadership in public service. Following her retirement from the Federal Government, she worked as a Strategic Industry Executive at Oracle, a role in which she continues to push for modernization in the IT and cybersecurity space.

Ms. Haith moved into the upper echelons of civilian service within the military where she served as the first African American Chief Information Officer (DoN CIO), to the Deputy Chief of the Naval Operations for Information Warfare.

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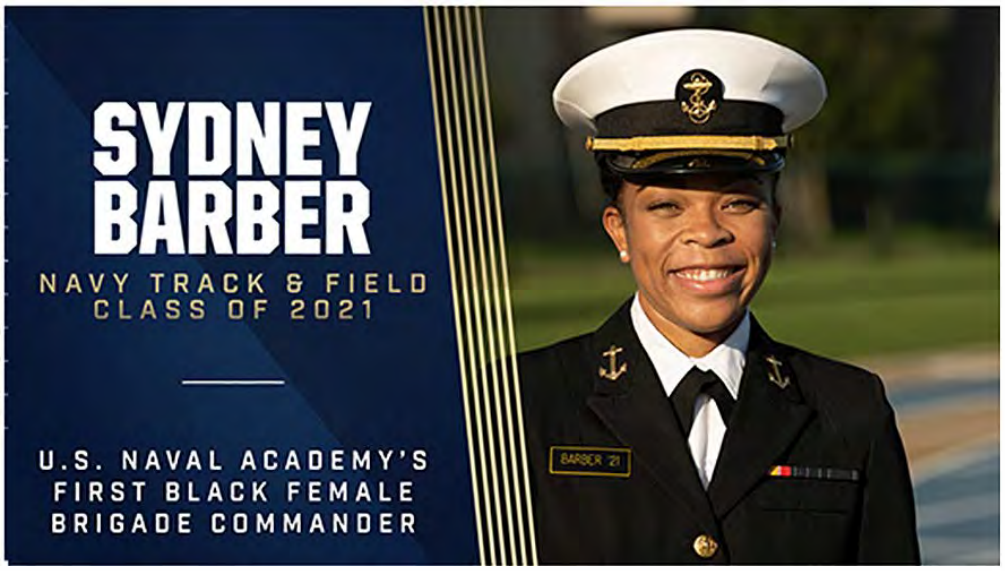
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# Sydney Barber Becomes First African American Woman to Lead Brigade of Midshipmen at U.S. Naval Academy




**Sydney Barber is a mechanical engineering major aspiring to commission as a U.S. Marine Corps ground officer. A walk-on sprinter and hurdler of the Navy Women's Varsity Track and Field team, she lettered all three years of competing and is a USNA record holder for the outdoor 4x400m relay. She is the co-president of the Navy Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club, secretary for the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), and a member of the USNA Gospel Choir and Midshipman Black Studies Club.**

See full and related stories at bdpatoday.com.

*U.S. Naval Academy photo*

**ANNAPOLIS, Md. --** The Commandant of Midshipmen announced the spring semester midshipman leadership positions which includes the selection of the Naval Academy's first African American female brigade commander, Midshipman 1st Class Sydney Barber, of Lake Forest, Illinois. Barber, a graduate of Lake Forest High School, is a mechanical engineering major and aspires to commission as a U.S. Marine Corps ground officer upon graduation in May 2021.

The brigade commander is the highest leadership position within the brigade, and is the only "six striper"-- a reference to the collar insignia worn on the midshipman uniform, the rank of midshipman captain. The semester-long position is currently held by Midshipman 1st Class Ryan Chapman and is selected through an application and interview process by senior leadership from the Commandant's staff.

Midshipman Barber initiated a STEM outreach program that leverages mentoring, literature, and service lessons to serve middle school-aged girls of color, and led a team to organize the inaugural USNA Black Female Network Breakfast to bridge the generational gap between current black midshipmen and alumni. She most recently mobilized a team of more than 180 midshipmen, faculty, and alumni to develop the Midshipman Diversity Team to promote greater diversity, inclusivity, and equity within the Brigade.

She was recently invited to speak at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Visitors, the academy's congressional oversight committee. Barber discussed how she has negotiated her time as a midshipman in the COVID-19 environment, as a midshipmen striper, leadership in activities [illegible] the [illegible]



ICYMI 07.11.20 | In Case You Missed IT

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# BDPA2020

## U.S. Navy Announces First Black Female Tactical Aircraft Pilot



*— Above, LTJG Madeline Swegle, USN, is the Navy's first Black female tactical fighter pilot.* (U.S. Navy photos by Anne Owens/Released)

Student Naval Aviator LTJG Madeline Swegle, USN, assigned to the Redhawks of Training Squadron (VT) 21 at Naval Air Station (NAS) Kingsville, Texas, exits a T-45C Goshawk training aircraft following her final flight to complete the undergraduate Tactical Air (Strike) pilot training syllabus on 7 July 2020. (Inset photo, above)

NAS KINGSVILLE, TX. — July 7, 2020 — The US Navy's first Black female fighter pilot has earned her wings, according to the service. The Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA), Rear Admiral Robert D. Westendorff, USN, celebrated LTJG Swegle for [illegible] ievement writing: "BZ to Lt. j.g. Madeline Swegle on completing the Tactical [illegible] aviator syllabus. Swegle is the U.S. Navy's first known Black female [illegible] and will receive her Wings of Gold later this month. HOOYAH!"



[illegible] flight officers [illegible]

# Commemorating Women's History Month





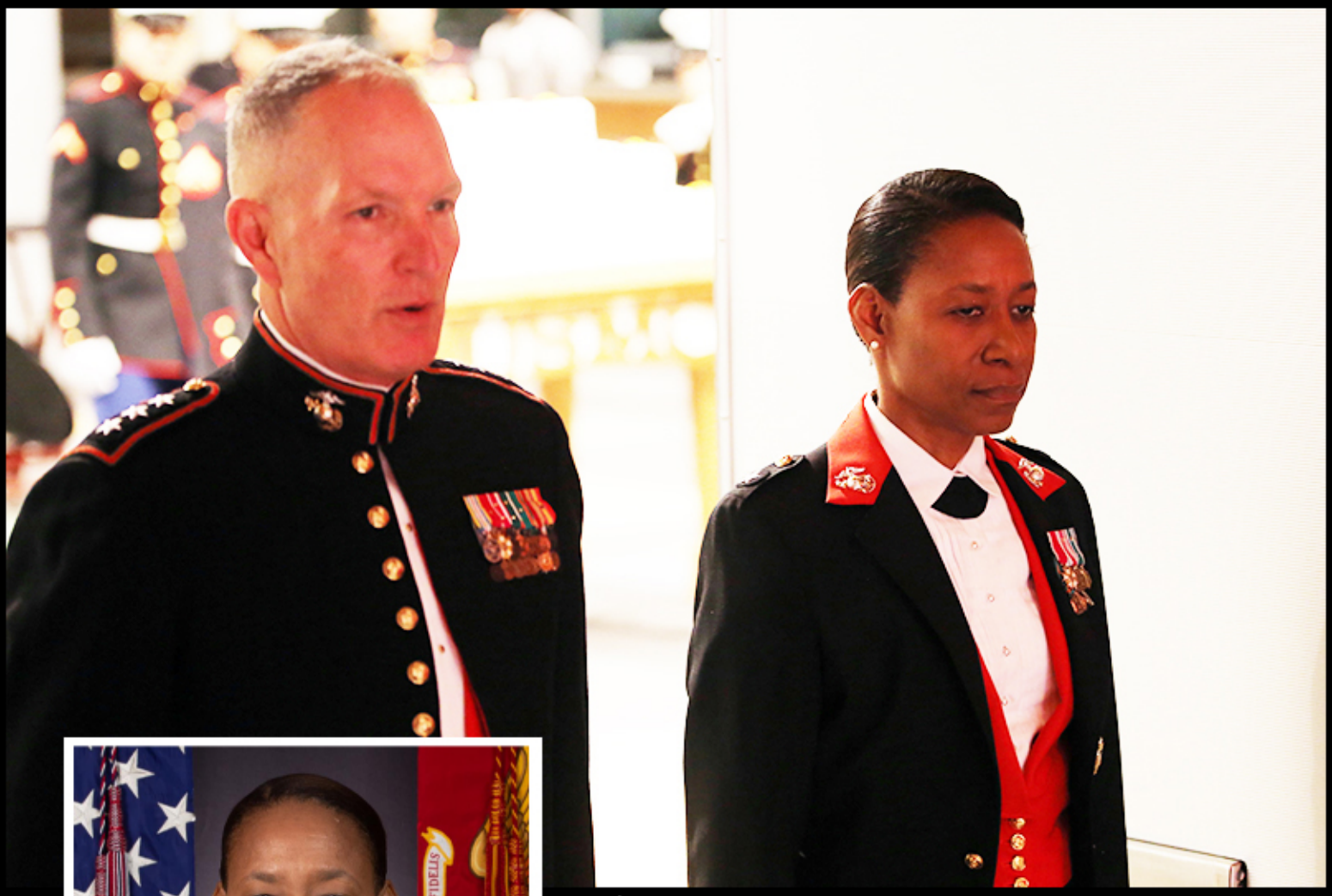

***Raven Stevenson*** was a senior on BDPA's Greater Columbia, SC High School Coding Competition (HSCC) team when she won a full 4-year **Naval ROTC** scholarship to Duke University in 2009. In 2013, she received her commission in the U.S. Navy. Ensign Stevenson was National BDPA's first HSCC Alumna to receive a commission in the U.S. Armed Services. Already promoted twice, Lieutenant Stevenson was assigned to the Naval ROTC Unit Atlanta Consortium where she served as Assistant Professor Naval Science and Surface Warfare Advisor at Morehouse College. She was elected to serve as Director, **BDPA South Region**.

# Commemorating Women's History Month




Marines from the ***National Naval Officers Association*** (NNOA) assigned to the Marine Corps Systems Command in Quantico, VA served as judges during NBDPA's Regional **High School Computer Competition** (HSCC) and coding events at Bowie State University in June of 2008. Students from Hartford, CT (above), Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC vie for scholarships and internships during annual BDPACON events.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



USMC photos




Major General Lorna Mahlock, USMC, is deputy director of cybersecurity for combat support at the National Security Agency (NSA) at Ft. Meade, Maryland, where she is charged with preventing and eradicating threats to security systems and critical infrastructure.

Prior to her new assignment, she served as Director, Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) and the Deputy Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, General Mahlock immigrated to Brooklyn, New York and enlisted in the Marine Corps. She was commissioned as an Officer in December 1991. In 2018, she became the *first* black woman to don the rank of Brigadier General in the U.S. Marine Corps.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



Photpgraphs © VAI Consulting and Training, LLC :: Vernice "FlyGirl" Armour, Inc.



U.S. Marine Corps Captain ***Vernice "Fly Girl" Armour*** became the first African-American female naval aviator in the Marine Corps and the first African American female combat pilot in the U.S. Armed Forces. She served two tours piloting an AH-1W Super Cobra in Iraq. Today, this decorated veteran serves as a great motivational speaker, consultant, publisher, and coach. Her grandfather was a *Montford Point Marine* and her father served as a Marine in Vietnam.

Pick up and read her book:
***Zero to BREAKTHROUGH***

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# Commemorating Women's History Month





USCG and NNOA photos

In December 2023, Captain Zeita Merchant, United States Coast Guard, made history when the U.S. Senate confirmed her nomiation to Rear Admiral. Captain Merchant became the first Black woman selected for flag rank in the U.S. Coast Guard's 233-year-history. She has been a member of the armed services for over two decades.

Captain Merchant is a graduate of Tougaloo College, she holds her master's in public administration from George Washington University, and a doctorate from the National Graduate School at New England Institute of Business. Captain Merchant is shown above with Coast Guard leaders during NNOA's Golden Anniversary events in Annapolis, MD.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



U.S. Coast Guard photo



© 2014 bdpatoday

***Lucinda Cunningham*** is recognized as the first African American female to be promoted to the rank of Captain (O-6) in the United States Coast Guard.

In 2014, the United States Coast Guard was National BDPA's Washington, D.C. Chapter Federal Sponsor of the Year. While assigned to U.S. Coast Guard Cyber Command, CAPT Cunningham particpated in BDPA's outreach and community technology award programs.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month





Photographs courtesy Department of Veteran Affairs and National BDPA. (Above) 2011 Chapter of the Year, BDPA New York.

**Dr. LaVerne H. Council** is the national managing principal for Enterprise Technology Strategy and Innovation, responsible for the planning, growth and execution of Grant Thornton's U.S. Advisory business. She recently served as Assistant Secretary for the Office of Information and Technology and chief information officer (CIO) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Confirmed by the 114th Congress, Dr. Council became the first female CIO of a Cabinet-level federal agency in June of 2015.

Dr. Council is a "*BDPA Champion.*" With senior executive **IT** rolls at **Dell** and becoming the first global CIO for **Johnson & Johnson**, she supported local chapters and National BDPA's ***IT Showcase***.

# Commemorating Women's History Month




Photographs: ***digitalundivided*** and ***BIG Accelerator***




**Kathryn Finney** is one of the most influential women in tech and is recipient of numerous awards, including the *White House Champion of Change* and *Echoing Green Fellowship*. Ms. Finney, a second-generation BDPA alumna, is the Founder and CEO of ***digitalundivided*** and daughter of the late Robert Finney, Past President of National BDPA's Twin Cities Chapter in Minnesota. Ms. Finney also was a Student Member of BDPA's Twin Cities' team. Ms. Finney is the Managing Partner of Genius Guild, a $20 million dollar venture fund and studio investing in amazing Black founders.

# Commemorating Women's History Month






Founded in August 2012 by U.S. Air Force veteran ***Jackie Lopez*** with her husband Michael, **Premier Enterprise Solutions, LLC** provides health-related IT services, cloud-based application development, and program management office (PMO) support to civil and defense agencies, the intelligence community, and private sector entities. Awards include multi-million dollar contracts with both the U.S. Department of Transportation and DOD. Premier was a 2019 sponsor of National BDPA's High School Computer Competition (HSCC) coding championship team from Washington, D.C.



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# Supporting BDPA's development of America's next generation of STEM and technology leaders.

Premier Enterprise Solutions, a Woman-owned, SDVOSB providing value-driven IT and program management solutions

# Commemorating Women's History Month






***Dr. Margaret Wood*** is the Founder and CEO of WOOD Consulting Services, Inc. Dr. Wood launched her career as an Intern with the National Security Agency (NSA). Today, her firm manages a multi-million dollar prime contract for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and multi-million dollar portfolios for Defense and the Intelligence Community. Dr. Wood is an alumna of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and recepient of BDPA-DC's Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2017.

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WOOD

Consulting Services, Inc.

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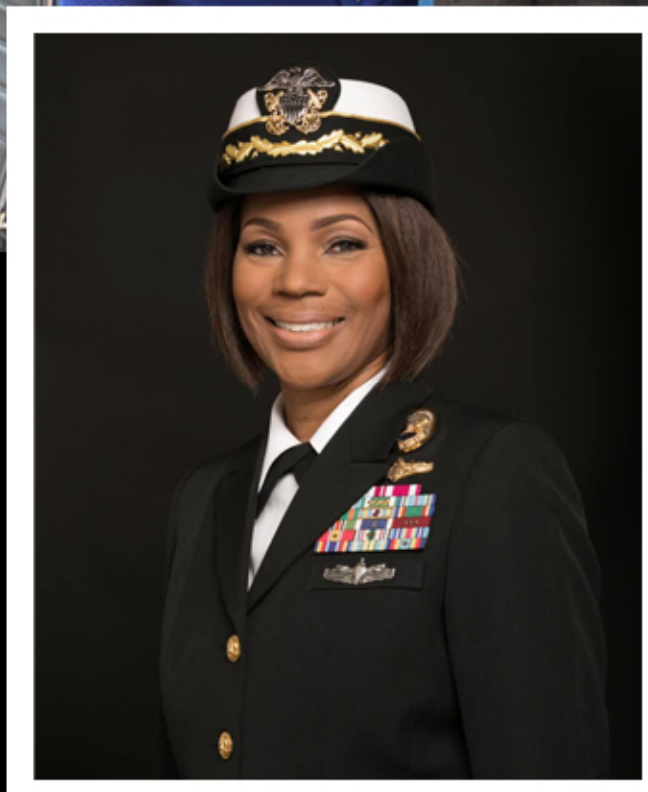
WOOD's superior understanding of quality principles help advance service levels beyond client expectations.

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Systems Engineering • Cyber Security • Mission Assurance

# Commemorating Women's History Month



SBA and Navy photos

As founder and Chief Executive Officer of Dobbs Defense Solutions, LLC, **Erica Dobbs** oversees wide-ranging aspects of the company's daily business operations. Erica is a U.S. Navy veteran with over 35 years of leadership, management, and business experience in I.T. and cybersecurity.

As a senior executive, she provides leadership and strategic direction for her company. She is responsible for domestic and global business operations. Her senior management role spans leadership, policy, and portfolio management for her firm's business, revenue, growth, processes, and client delivery.

Erica has an MBA and a Master of Science Degree in Cybersecurity from the University of Maryland Global Campus.

Congratulations

# Erica Dobbs

**President/CEO**
**Dobbs Defense Solutions**



One of *The Daily Record's*
Top 100 Women
In Maryland

DOBBS
DEFENSE SOLUTIONS

# Commemorating Women's History Month




Photo courtesy: Jaida A. Photography and Natalie Madeira Cofield



***Natalie Madeira Cofield*** is serving as Assistant Administrator for SBA's Office of Women's Business Owners. **Walker's Legacy** is an organization she created to inspire, equip and empower professional women with enterprising goals. Ms. Cofield is an *honors* Information Systems graduate from the **Howard University School of Business.** Cofield has spoken for global technology companies which include BDPA mission partners such as **Dell**, **Facebook**, **Google** and **IBM**. BDPA Members and women-owned business executives (above) attended *Walker's Legacy CBCF Reception* for 2015 in Washington, D.C. at Google.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month







"I was accepted into all five schools that I applied to with full scholarships: University of Maryland (College Park), Spelman College, Columbia University, Duke University, and Stanford University. I have given this testimonial to just give a small example of how **BDPA** is impacting the community on a large scale."

***Stephanie VanPutten,*** CEO Blendoor
Founder, ***Visible Figures***
($2.1 Billion in collective capital raised since 2017)
Stanford University Alumna
MBA from MIT's Sloan School of Management

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# Commemorating Women's History Month




AFRL Seeks eVTOL Partnerships With HBCUs • BDPACON22 Heads to Atlanta

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Visit **bdpatoday.com** for more news, events, internships, tech careers, and scholarship deadlines

## AFWERX Agility Prime: The World is Ready to Fly ORBs

**DAYTON, OH**—Over two hundred companies around the world are developing transformative vertical flight aircraft for urban/advanced air mobility (UAM/AAM), using electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL, or some prefer autonomous-eVTOL or hybrid-hVTOL) technologies. These aircraft may incorporate non-traditional electric or hybrid propulsion for manned or unmanned operation, with an onboard pilot, remote pilot, or autonomous control.

For years the DoD has explored how a modular "bus," similar to a satellite bus or universal serial bus (USB), could enable vast VTOL use cases. This bus concept, from the Latin origins "omnibus," meaning "for all," is central to a strategy that looks to quickly extend the potential benefits of this technology to all, by quickly expanding the market and use cases.

These vehicles are not drones, helicopters, airplanes, cars, trucks, motorcycles, SUVs, and some would adamantly say they are not flying cars. However, they might support similar missions. ORBs could enable distributed logistics and sustainment, with particular utility in medical evacuation, firefighting, civil and military disaster relief, search and rescue, and humanitarian relief operations.

We believe the world is ready to fly orbs, so join with us to help accelerate their time to market!



AFWERX, a program office at the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), connects innovators across government, industry and academia. To read more on AFWERX, eVTOL, FAA, and emerging intermodal transportation technologies, follow industry updates across BDPA's social media channels.
→ https://bdpatoday.com





NEXTera ENERGY


***Ms. Anissa Lumpkin*** (right) is a Tennessee State University alumna and Lead Program Manager for the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) Small Business Office.

***Tenaiya King*** (left) is a North Carolina A&T State University Multimedia Journalism graduate and **BDPA Member**. She is an Air Force JROTC alumna, supporting HBCU teams in Dayton, Ohio as an intern in 2020 before transitioning to her full-time role in admin support and social media coordinator.

# Commemorating Women's History Month




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(L-R) J.E.F. CEO Dr. Orissa Massey and J.E.F. CTO Bryan Bemley address annual BDPA Awards Banquets at Bowie State University. Dr. Jesseye Talley, Morgan State University, shares her research paper during a BDPA I.T. Showcase. (Inset) Dr. Jesse Bemley (J.E.F. Founder) with Shiree Brown (J.E.F. Chairwoman.)

**Meet the *First Ladies of JEF***

Joint Educational Facilities, Inc. (JEF) is an all volunteer non-profit community-based K-12 organization founded in 1982 that primarily works with middle or senior high school students to teach them **advanced computing sciences** and **contemporary mathematics** topics with an emphasis on intelligent technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence** (Ai), and related topics such as **Data Science**, **High Performance Computing** (HPC), and **Machine Learning**. JEF founded and successfully launched National BDPA's **High School Computer Competition** (HSCC) and the Association's **I.T. Showcase**. JEF is one of the first anchor institutions connected to the DC Community Access Network (DC-CAN) and able to provide a 100 Mbps connection with WiFi to its neighborhood. Chaired by Shiree Brown, JEF owns a legacy of distinguished BDPA Student Members with published white papers, global tech conference participation, and graduate STEM degrees.

# Commemorating Women's History Month






**Traci Wade** is Oracle's DIrector of Diversity and Inclusion. Ms. Wade was honored and received the following awards: Bridging the Gap Award in 2015 by San Francisco African-American Chamber of Commerce, Corporate Champion of the Year in 2012 by **Black Data Processing Associates** (BDPA), Rising Star at the Women of Color STEM Conference in 2013 and winner of BDPA's Outstanding Corporate Contributor in 2013. **BDPA** and **Oracle** have been mission partners since their days at ***Sun Microsystems***.

# Commemorating Women's History Month






Photo credits: Black Girls Code

***Kimberly Bryant*** is Founder and Executive Director of **Black Girls CODE**, a non-profit organization dedicated to "*changing the face of technology*" by introducing girls of color (ages 7-17) to new fields of technology and computer sciences with a concentration on entrepreneurial concepts. Ms. Bryant founded Black Girls CODE in 2011 and was honored by the White House during 2013's Technology Inclusion "Champions of Change" event.

# Commemorating Women's History Month




***Deena Pierott*** is the Founder and Executive Director of the **iUrban Teen** program, a program that exposes "non-traditional" STEM Learners to career opportunities while encouraging high school graduation and extended learning. She was moved to create the program when she served in a governor-appointed role on the Commission on African Affairs in Washington State and observed the increasing high school dropout rate. While the target demographic for the program is African American and Latino Males, the program is inclusive of all youth who fall within the *Non-Traditional STEM* Learners category and has a strong representation of girls as well. In 2013, the White House recognized Ms. Pierott as one of our nation's *Champions of Change for Technology Inclusion*.

# Commemorating Women's History Month



*MMTC* photograph



**Maurita Coley Flippin, Esq.,** MMTC's President and CEO, is a lawyer, social impact leader, and former media executive with extensive experience in media, telecom, and internet law and policy, and business operations. Immediately, prior to MMTC she served as the chief executive officer of Capital Area Asset Builders, an industry leading nonprofit in community economic development and asset building in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Previously, she served on executive management teams at BET Holdings, Inc. Ms. Flippin is 2018's President's Award winner for ***Community Service*** from National BDPA's Washington, D.C. Chapter.

# Commemorating Women's History Month




CREDIT: Byteback photo by Joanne S. Lawton




***Byte Back*** is the 2017 Community Award recipient for National BDPA's Washington, D.C. Chapter. Ms. **Elizabeth Lindsey** was Byte Back's Executive Director and is now the CEO of Urban Alliance.

In October of 2018, Toronto-Dominion (TD) Bank announced Byte Back as one of 10 recipients to receive their inaugural TD Ready Challenge grants. Byte Back will use **$775,000** to expand operations into Baltimore, Maryland.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month





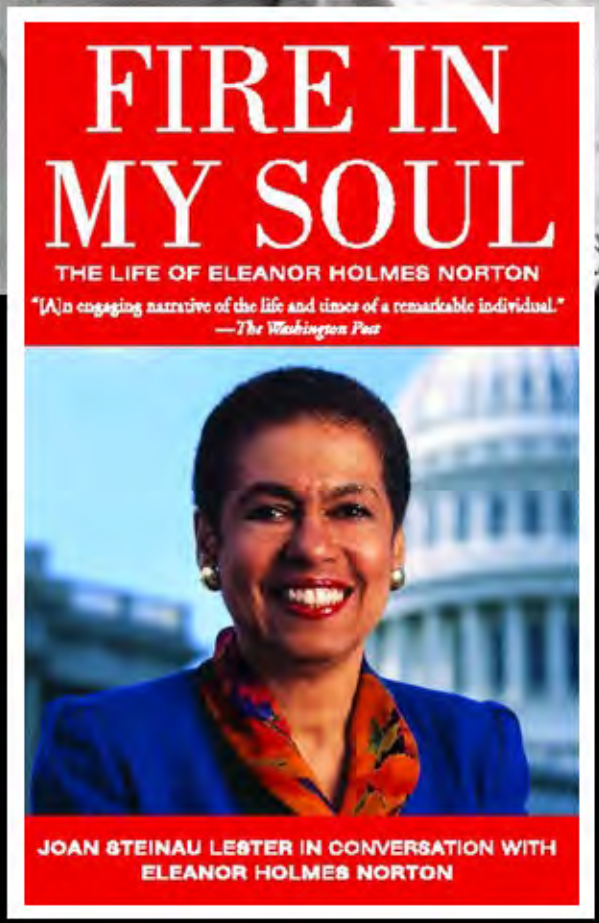
***Janet Emerson Bashen*** is the first African American woman to hold a software patent in the United States. After some time, storing and retrieving information related to her EEO cases became difficult. There was a need for a solution and in 2001, Bashen, together with her cousin Donny Moore who is a computer scientist from Tufts University, developed an EEO app that could be used to securely store information about her cases and called it **LinkLine**. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office granted Ms. Bashen her patent in 2006.

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# Commemorating Women's History Month



(Courtesy Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton's office)




***U.S. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton*** is known in Washington as the "Warrior on the Hill." The book *Fire in My Soul* shares a compelling biography of one of our nation's greatest political pioneers in American history. Today, Dr. Norton's new post as Ranking Member of the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee's Highways and Transit Subcommittee gives her a front seat at the table for T&I reauthorization bills.

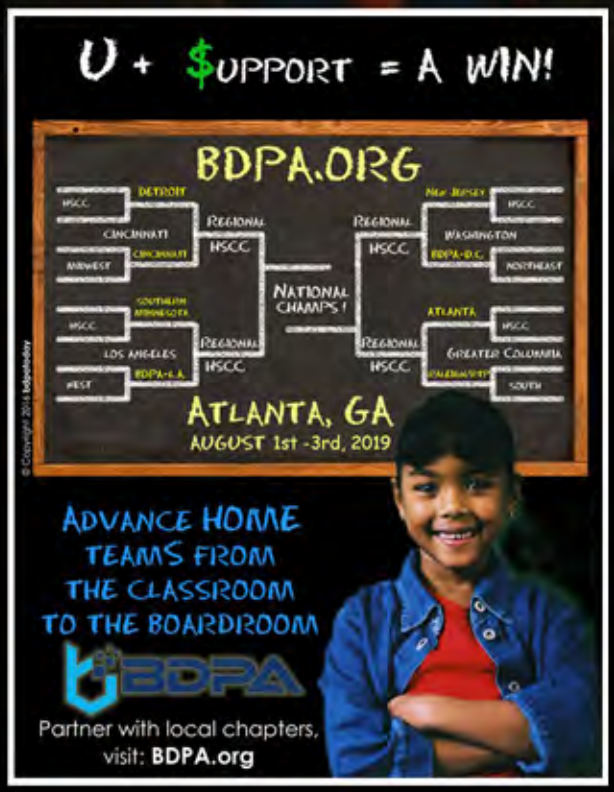
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# Celebrating International Women's Day




BDPA Members and Students at **BDPACON12**

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***International Women's Day,*** March 8th, is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.

Since 1975, **National BDPA** has recognized and continues to support women in Computer Sciences. *International Women's Day* (IWD) has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911 supported by over a million people in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

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# *Blacks In Cybersecurity* Makes History at DEF CON 29







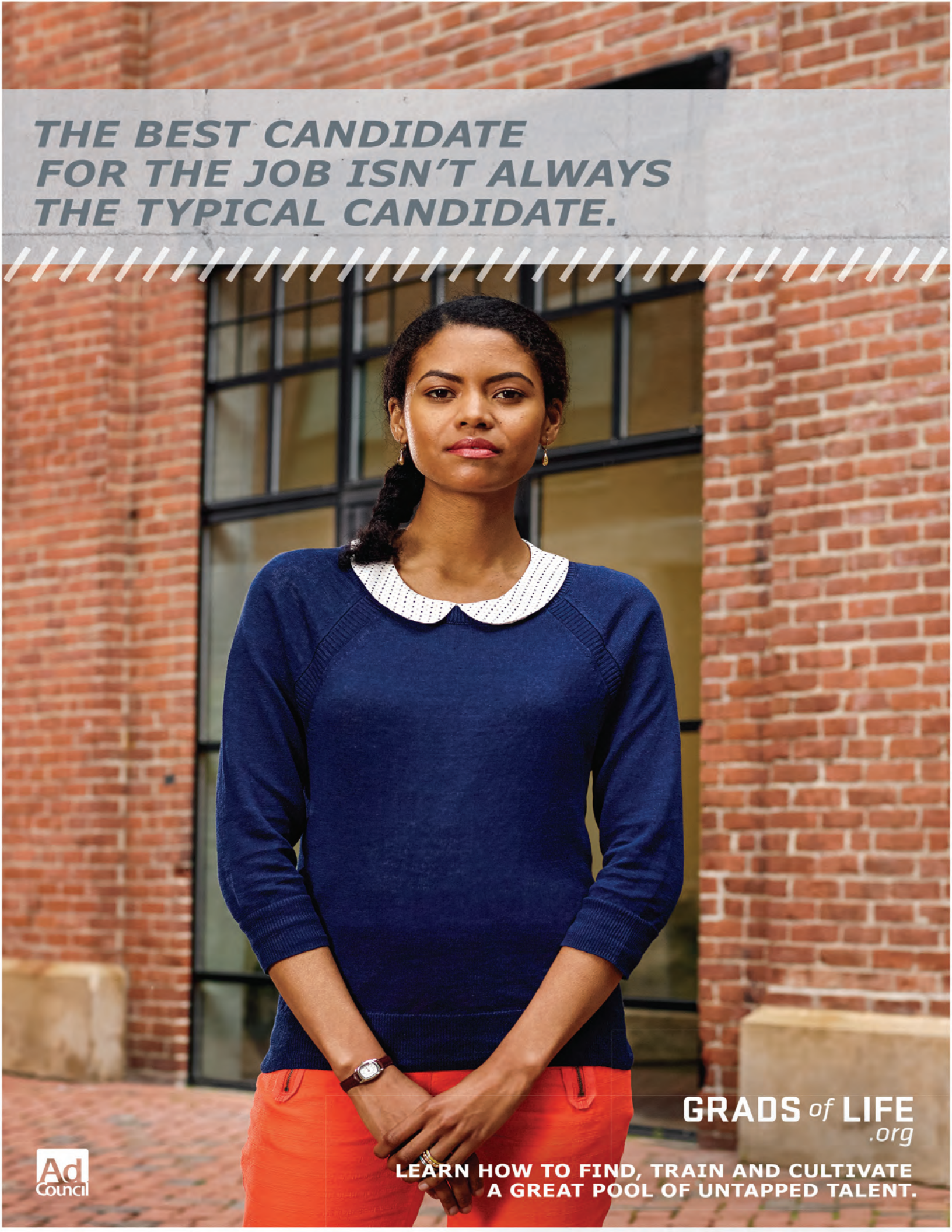
**LAS VEGAS, NV** (BPRW) — Blacks in Cybersecurity known as "BIC" seeks to ignite a cultural change in the Black community through their Cybersecurity education and career pipeline initiatives. Founded by ***Michaela Barnett***, CEO, and ***Alexandria Barnett***, Blacks In Cybersecurity seeks to educate and operate in a way to expose Cybersecurity as a hobby and outlet that can be experienced in any walk of life, in a casual and no-pressure environment. In reimagining the traditional way in which knowledge is shared and presented, and adopting a philosophy that encourages lifelong learning, skill building and "tinkering" with concepts to gain hands-on understanding, BIC seeks to change the face of what a stereotypical Cybersecurity professional or hobbyist may look like.

Since its conception in 2018, BIC has not only been the nexus for the Black Cybersecurity community in Washington, D.C. Metro area with their events and conference series but has expanded globally with over 40+ chapters referred to as "BIC@Locations" and "BIC@Campus" (University chapters) expanding across the United States, Canada, Europe and Africa.

On August 8, 2021 Blacks In Cybersecurity was able to make Black History by having the honor and privilege of being the first black owned and operated competition to be present and to present a Black Badge to the winners of their competition. The DEF CON Black Badge is a "powerful talisman" , awarded to those who have emerged unbeaten from the crucible of an elite DEF CON competition. The competition that receives this badge varies from year to year and seeks to highlight the very best in competitors. Those who receive the badge enter DEF CON free of charge for the duration of their natural life. In participating in this honored pastime of the Hacker community, BIC seeks to continue its work in creating space for and uplifting the Black community in Cybersecurity. bt

*— Source and images:* ***Blacks In Cybersecurity and Black PR Wire***




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