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Leadership Connections

How do leaders manage vision during challenging times? Explore their mindsets to achieve victory.



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“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

— Howard Thurman, theologian, philosopher, author, and Morehouse College alumnus

THE TIME IS NOW, THE PLACE IS MOREHOUSE



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Vision and VICTORY

CONFERENCE

EXPANDING
BLACK EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP



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This ICLS inaugural event will inspire all – workers seeking ownership, small businesses, startups and new graduates seeking to cooperate and combine, or retiring owners seeking intergenerational wealth transfer and legacy.

Be inspired as ICLS releases original research on employee ownership that may well contribute to closing the racial wealth gap.

Plan for a new economy where both wealth and risk are shared as the Black Employee Ownership movement organizes capital and employees to cooperate and succeed.

Witness the launch of the Morehouse Mapping Project on Black Employee Ownership, a guide that identifies BEO enterprises and cooperatives across the U.S.

Connect with colleagues, advocates, and other experts as we debate ways to build and strengthen Black employee ownership within our communities.

Labor Leader Electrifies Crown Forum

By Patrick Darrington • Photos by Phil McCollum

When AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond came to Morehouse College to keynote the Crown Forum, he delivered a message of inspiration, empowerment, and reality — especially to the students among the crowd of 500 guests.

“Young workers, you need the support of the labor movement, now more than ever,” he told them during the signature event, a communal event this past February sponsored by the International Comparative Labor Studies (ICLS) program. “And we are committed to being right there, working alongside you to build a country that is fair and where you can reach your best and fullest potential.”

Prior to his speech, Redmond spoke passionately to ICLS staff and guests about the dynamics between labor unions and the Civil Rights Movement. Redmond mentioned icons such as A. Philip Randolph (who founded the nation's first major Black labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters) and Bayard Rustin (a principal organizer of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963).

Redmond's affable personality and love of history prompted him to discuss his personal story growing up in Chicago with family roots in Mississippi as sharecroppers. He said the labor movement was integral to his story and current success.

Although Redmond's parents were in unions and involved in the labor movement, he had his sights set on being a professional football player. However, an unexpected injury during his senior year of high school upended those plans and Redmond went to work at the same steel mill where his father worked and got involved in the union, United Steelworkers Local 3911.

Redmond, the highest ranking Black official in the history of the labor movement, detailed the efforts labor organizations such as the AFL-CIO that fight tirelessly for better wages, better healthcare, better pensions and better working conditions. He discussed the benefits of unionization and how worker power can change lives.

“In just two generations, my family went from Mississippi sharecroppers, to being impoverished on the south side of Chicago, to me becoming the highest ranking African American in the history of the labor movement,” Redmond said. “See, that's the power of a union job.”

Redmond also advocated for continuing diversity in labor, citing the success of AFL-CIO President Elizabeth H. Schuler, the first woman elected president of the federation and who has served since 2021. Redmond encouraged young people to continue building a positive legacy.

“The labor movement needs you,” Redmond said. “We need you as members. We need you as activists and as leaders. We're counting on you to lead the way, to continue to push our diverse and inclusive labor movement forward,” Redmond said. “The labor movement

AFL-CIO
AMERICA'S UNIONS

is the place where everyone is welcome, where workers can stand together and march together and fight together in pursuit of the greater good. Through our strength, our solidarity, we can overcome the longest odds and together build a society that is just and fair and a future that works for all of us.”

Patrick J. Darrington is a reporter based in Mobile, Alabama, for AL.com, a digital news outlet. He is a Morehouse alumnus, Class of 2022, with a bachelor's degree in political science.

Fred Redmond
*Secretary-Treasurer
American Federation
of Labor and Congress
of Industrial
Organizations
(AFL-CIO)*





“The labor movement needs you. We need you as members. We need you as activists and as leaders.”





“ This is an exciting time because ICLS continues to push collaboration with neighborhood advocates, professionals, and other schools as we try to figure out how to uplift the economic lives of African Americans — now and for generations to come. ”

— Marc Bayard,
senior advisor for ICLS

Report Objectives



New Research, New Guide, New Connections Spotlight Conference on Black Employee Ownership

Practitioners from every discipline touching the Black community and from every region of the country gathered recently at Morehouse College to share information and discuss pooling those resources, particularly via employee ownership for Black workers. The 4th Annual National Conference on Black Cooperative Agenda, a Black solidarity economy movement assembly, met in June and was supported by the International Comparative Labor Studies (ICLS) program at Morehouse. **ICLS will extend the discussion with its “Vision and Victory Conference: Expanding Black Employee Ownership,” November 12-14 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.** Meanwhile, the ICLS team sent a buzz through the Network for Developing Conscious Communities (NDCC) conference with a historical review of ICLS by Dr. Cynthia Hewitt, ICLS director; a preview of new research on employee ownership that may help close the wealth gap by Dr. Taura Taylor, ICLS interim director; and a Morehouse Mapping Project, which will spotlight BEO enterprises and cooperatives across the U.S., led by Jessica Fulton, an economist working with ICLS.



Information is Inspiration

Commentary by Ron Hantz

Morehouse College is known for many great social movements, so when the Network for Developing Conscious Communities (NDCC) in Washington, D.C., was looking for a place to hold its 4th Annual National Conference on Black Cooperative Agenda in Atlanta, Morehouse College was a natural. The historical significance remains huge, and the legacy unmatched.



Ron Hantz is Founder and Executive Director of the Network for Developing Conscious Communities in Washington, D.C.



"This is King's place," I thought to myself during the opening session in mid-June, fully aware that my event had somehow connected with Morehouse's Black Employee Ownership conference, November 12-14 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

Like Dr. King and Morehouse, the NDCC mission encompasses education and empowerment. Specifically, we work for the development of sustainable Black communities by engaging Black-led civic organizations through rebuilding and helping under-resourced neighborhoods obtain funding and investment.

It is this dedication to economic and social parity that was so touching as the International Comparative Labor Studies program offered guidance and assistance to the NDCC event. Special thanks to the ICLS leadership — Dr. Cynthia Hewitt, director; Dr. Taura Taylor, interim director; Marc Bayard, senior advisor; and Ilana Lucas, project coordinator — for quickly recognizing our shared vision.

Black worker ownership is the pivotal piece that connects ICLS and NDCC. Ownership means economic sovereignty. It means control of your financial decisions, your financial whereabouts. It's ownership by the people. It means they have a stake in decision-making about wages, how they're treated, what benefits they get.

Why does it matter? Because Black people have invested time and energy into other people's businesses. It's time for us to invest in our own businesses,

"It's time for us . . . to grow our own vision about how we want to see ourselves economically, how we want to build wealth within our community."

to grow our own vision about how we want to see ourselves economically, how we want to build wealth within our community. This is the paradigm we find ourselves in.

Critics may say, "That sounds cool but there are headaches that I don't have now as an employee that I would have as a boss." That's true. But the reward . . . being able to determine your own outcome; to be a participant in the decision-making process of a business. To have a stake in ownership. Oh, it means everything.

But let's be real: You still will have to paddle upstream. Ownership doesn't erase the struggle; it changes the hustle. When we talk about Black employee ownership, we're talking about giving opportunities as opposed to extracting wealth and income, and exploiting labor. Bottom line, we're talking about reassigning resources to an economic growth model.

So, yes, it will be an uphill battle for a time, but you've got to keep the bigger picture in mind. Because the big picture is about building new wealth, generational wealth, and a new way of thinking about money, investment, communities, and generational wealth.

Business Ownership Dreams Collide With Reality

Commentary by Joyce Walker-Tyson

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s iconic "Mountaintop" speech placed a major focus on the need for Black economic empowerment and also was a reminder of the resources available to make that dream a reality.

"Now, we are poor people." Dr. King said. "Individually, we are poor when you compare us with white society in America...(but) collectively we are richer than all the nations in the world, with the exception of nine...That's power right there, if we know how to pool it."

Small group discussions during the recent meeting of the Network for Developing Conscious Communities (NDCC) prompted me to think about the issues, stumbling blocks, and solutions surrounding Black Employee Ownership, the focus of a Morehouse conference in November.

Let's examine an ideal scenario in which the baby boomer small business owner has decided to retire. He and his 200 employees agree that the business should continue to provide jobs and services or products that benefit the community. So, each of the employees invests ... say \$2,500 ... and buys out the retiring owner for his asking price of \$500,000.

Except ...

In 2020, nearly 99 percent of the Black-owned businesses in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell metro area had fewer than 10 employees, according to research by Dr. Taura Taylor, interim director of ICLS. Many of those workers lived paycheck-to-paycheck with no company pension or 401 savings plan from which to withdraw buyout funds.

Even with the ideal scenario, what is the business/governance model? Does it become an unwieldy 200-owner partnership?

"If you have something as small as a family-run corner store, many of the financial and legal concerns are very similar to what you encounter in a corporate M and A (mergers and acquisitions) operation," said Julian M. Hill, a professor, attorney and founding co-director of the Community Development & Entrepreneurship Law Clinic at Georgia State University in Atlanta. "Too often, people fail because they get overwhelmed and give up."

Mark Smith's first attempt at a do-it-yourself owner-worker handoff fell flat but he has not given up. Smith, who grew up in his family's floral business in Detroit, moved to Atlanta a decade ago and took a job with an

"I'm 67 years old so I'll be wanting to give this up in the not-too distant future."

— Mark Smith,
a florist and business owner in
Atlanta.

older Black florist who indicated she wanted him to take over the business. The two agreed that the clientele, supplies on hand and equipment would go to Smith. The former business owner would retain ownership of the physical plant and derive her income from Smith's lease payments.

Dr. Taylor dubbed the arrangement "one of the many creative workarounds we sometimes have to try." Unfortunately, the original owner kept postponing her retirement until Smith moved on and secured another location and a hefty loan to get himself established.

"I think she's still working," Smith said. "I'm 67 years old so I'll be wanting to give this up in the not-too-distant future. I want to keep the business in the (Black) community. We weren't a huge concern in Detroit, but we were able to offer some part-time work to a few people. We trained some young people that otherwise might not have picked up those work skills. And we were a neighborhood presence where



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For Morehouse alum, philanthropy is a labor of love

Jason Garrett knew of Morehouse College's reputation as a leadership factory for young Black men and the undergraduate sanctum of Dr. Martin Luther King. But each year he discovered that the school's true magic were the stepping stones into places revered for their privilege and mission.

"People are not just material beings, they're spiritual beings," says Garrett, a 2006 graduate with a bachelor's degree in business administration. "Morehouse provided the models and examples of people who exhibited that reality."

The Newark, New Jersey, native also demonstrated a love of education, earning a master's in business administration from Bentley University and a master's from Harvard Divinity School. He is also a licensed minister in COGIC, the Church of God in Christ.

Now married with three children, Garrett finds himself in a unique position to impact people and organizations as Senior Vice President of Faith, Bridging and Belonging for the Freedom Together Foundation. Garrett's program area is one of five. The others are Democracy, Gender and Racial Justice; Community and Worker Power; Movement Infrastructure and Explorations; and Reproductive Health, Medical Research, and Community Grants.

Ironically, money is not the solution for some applicants, even though the foundation has about \$400 million at its disposal.

"It's not just giving people money," says Garrett "It's also thinking about the best way to help set them up for success ... whether we're helping people in the inner city or working on issues related to immigration, or helping to create opportunities for people who have been denied the right to vote."

While Garrett admits it is not easy to ignore the Benjamins, he argues that money is not a panacea for all problems.

"Sometimes we don't give grants. Sometimes our main intervention is bringing the right people together in a room to develop strategies," he maintains. "Sometimes it's shedding light by helping to conduct the right research. Sometimes things need to cook and mature and don't need the intervention of outside money."

Garrett took time from a wildly busy schedule to talk to *The Collective's* Mike Tucker about the International Comparative Labor Studies program, memories of Morehouse, and contemporary politics. Here are edited excerpts of the conversation:

One mandate listed in your program is to "support work to bridge diverse communities and unite them in the broadest possible coalition for democracy." The current national leadership says diversity, equity, and inclusion are anathema to the American spirit. How do you see your work changing with the Trump administration fully in power?

I'll give you a couple of answers because this is a complex question. If you go beyond the current president, the threats that undermine the power of people to have a say, the increased power of corporations and the growing inequality in our country, the evolving structures of democracy that lead people to have less and less trust in public institutions and democratic systems, they increase isolation and loneliness of people that only exacerbate, how people feel about their chances going forward in this country. There are much bigger forces than the one person elected president. Whether he was elected or not, the prescription of addressing systematic elements is not embodied in one person, but in a movement designed

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Dr. Regine O. Jackson: The Art of Humanity in Education

Dr. Regine O. Jackson knows the value of playing the long game, understanding patience, strategic thinking, and resilience will eventually make a difference in the lives of staff, faculty, and students. Positive thinking is not an easy regimen given the short-term demands of daily administration and a federal leadership that cares little for certain constituents.

Still, Dr. Jackson — a professor of sociology and dean of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Media, and Arts Division at Morehouse College — insists that putting one's head down and pushing past the noise is how victories (or, at least, continuous achievements) are won.

A scholar known for her work in Haitian migration and diaspora, race and ethnicity, American immigration, she earned her undergraduate degree from Brown University, and her master's and doctorate from the University of Michigan. During a recent interview with *The Collective*, she talked about her job and bellicose national authorities. An edited transcript follows:

It seems that people needing help is an affront to some. What then is the job of social scientists?

This is what we've been training for, right? This is what we do best at the Humanities, Social Sciences, Media, and Arts division. All of our departments and programs and co-curricular programs and initiatives are invested in these questions of social justice, whether we're talking about economic justice, sustainability, social movements from the perspective of the arts, training journalists and other media professionals interested in capturing, documenting what's going on . . . but also being that engine of social change. These are some of the ways that I see us responding to this moment as scholar-teachers and students we're sending out into the world — preparing them to respond and be engaged.

Education is under attack. Our history as Black folks, whether in Africa or the diaspora is under attack. How do you handle that not only as a woman of color but as an administrator who must push programs forward?

There's a part of me that acknowledges that it's easy to get stuck in the day-to-day, to focus on making sure the faculty have what they need, the students have what they need, the staff is taken care of, and that these programs grow . . . that they are well-resourced with human resources as well as financial resources, but also feel their accomplishments and activities get the spotlight sometimes.

“Many of the things that ICLS stands for resonate with my own scholarship and with the mission of Morehouse College.”



Sounds like you're saying despite what the federal government does, despite what DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) dictates come down, you're going to make sure programs keep advancing.

That is the baseline, right? That is what I do, what the team does — we get that done. There's another layer where I'm thinking about decades. I'm thinking about what the division is going to look like in five years, in 10 years, in 20 years? I'm really interested and invested in making sure the work happens while dealing with the crises and the situations that come at us . . . but always keeping an eye toward the future. That's something that moves past this current federal administration, this current political moment. When we adjust our lens to think more broadly, both historically and beyond the crisis at hand, it fuels a certain kind of optimism, a certain kind of vision.

The right vision is essential because there's so much at stake.

Taking it seriously, absolutely, because the consequences are real for us in so many ways, in terms of

funding availability, research projects that have been halted because of the cancellation of federal grants, student Pell grants in jeopardy, staff, plus parent plus loans being tampered with . . . things that are going on at the Department of Education level and the federal government level.

What Department of Education?

Right. We're catching it from all angles but I really try to focus on a bigger picture that tries to look beyond some of those things.

Let's talk about the International Comparative Labor Studies (ICLS) program housed in your department, sociology.

Many of the things that ICLS stands for resonate with my own scholarship and with the mission of Morehouse College. I'm proud that so many other faculty and staff in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Media, and Arts Division division contribute to ICLS.

What would you like to see happen with ICLS and the community, ICLS and new curricula?

Morehouse is located in a booming metropolitan area, and there's so

much room for the kinds of questions and the kind of work that ICLS does. ICLS really does have what it takes to increase campus engagement, internally on the campus. There's a lot of potential for collaborations across those academic divisions with business and economics. We need to bring them in and amplify their role so they can be more center stage.

So, while ICLS is sociology-centered, sounds like you would welcome a continued expansion of labor studies that includes more disciplines?

Absolutely, both outside the division and within the division. Sociology is interdisciplinary at its core. There are so many subfields in sociology, including cultural sociology, where people are studying film and art and music. You've also got folks who are interested in inequality and labor, and the future of work; folks who are doing environmental sociology. That's why I think it was brilliant for ICLS to come out of sociology.

*Interview by Mike Tucker
Photos by Phil McCollum*



Sandra Lee Williams wants to know more about everything and everyone

Sandra Lee Williams is a labor leader with the heart of an educator.

"Education changed our world," says Williams, who invokes the past to make her point. "Think back to the times of Freedmen's Bureau (a U.S. government agency that assisted the formerly enslaved). We had used books, but we still managed to learn."

Paying homage to past struggles while making the most of academic, vocational, and community connections is vital to the work Williams performs in an array of civic and professional roles: president of the Atlanta-North Georgia Labor Council, which includes 18 counties, 60 affiliated unions and about 70,000 members; deputy political director of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), and she serves on the local boards of the NAACP and the Democratic Party.

She says the flurry of activity keeps her grounded and in touch with a common element that runs through all the communities she serves, especially as a union official.

"We are all working people," says Williams, who earned her bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis and her master's from Webster University in

suburban St. Louis. We all want what's best not only for our families, but our communities."

Williams says the current administration is not helping. If she had a chance to meet with President Trump, she says her message would be direct and unflinching: "Your policies are destroying the middle class . . . hurting people who live in my community. And as I talk to friends and colleagues across the country, they see the same impact. You believe the tariffs, if given enough time, will provide income and economic stability for the United States. What we are seeing in the short term is that people like me nearing retirement are afraid to even look at their 401K for fear that they will have to add more years to their work life in order to survive. Yeah, that's real talk."



Perhaps such candor is the result of being raised in a labor household. She says her father, Samuel Lee Williams, was a machinist, teamster, organizer, and Pullman Porter. Her mother, Mary Louise Williams, was a nurse who became a homemaker. Her reverence for what her parents accomplished coupled with a healthy respect for history has created a stalwart spokesperson for working people.

Despite the ongoing challenges, the mother of three and grandmother of five will not be driven to despair, preferring to maintain optimism through her ancestors, while building new pathways through education.

In a recent interview with Mike Tucker of *The Collective*, Williams talked about her connection with Morehouse College and a personal connection to one of the first labor actions she learned about — Atlanta's Washerwomen Strike of 1881, when 20 laundresses organized for higher pay, respect and a uniform rate. Here are edited excerpts from that conversation:

What inspiration do you gain from the Washerwomen Strike?

I can remember days when my grandmother and other women who belonged to my church and community took in laundry to make additional money to help their children, grandchildren go to school, go to college to get a better education. We understand the value of education in our community, and the difference that it makes. It breaks my heart when (President Trump) talks about destroying the Department of Education, undermining civil rights, undermining voting rights laws — everything we have worked for in my lifetime to achieve.

You are passionate about education, so let's talk about the International Comparative Labor Studies (ICLS) program at Morehouse College.

My union, the RWDSU, was one of the first donors. We have a vested interest in a cornerstone of this community; Morehouse has a tradition of excellence that we wanted to be a part of. And we know that education changes all things.

How important is it that ICLS grow and encompass more of the community?

Education and service to the community is part of the mission of



African American women and girls doing laundry around 1900. Location unknown. Photo: Library of Congress

ICLS and Morehouse. The young men that are in the program will begin to understand the need and the importance of organizing common folk, organizing workers for a better life — for pay, for equity, for inclusion . . . understanding that we are all equal; but the equalizer often is education. The young men who come out of the program . . . some will have political science degrees, some will go on to law school and work for places like the ACLU. There is a great need for people to defend the rights of others, particularly in Black and Brown communities.

Do you see ICLS as a stepping stone to other academic pursuits?

We need good labor leaders. It is definitely a stepping stone to understanding — whether they go on to graduate school, which I always encourage, or whether they come out and go to work for an international union. We have a number of jobs. We have people that do political analysis, work analysis. Those skills that they learn in the ICLS program are very easily used in the labor movement. When I talk about labor unions to students at ICIS, or any students or any people, I want them to know that labor, while changing, hasn't changed completely. We have trade unions, predominantly run by white males.

But what I do want people to know is by being engaged and involved, that's where we make the change.

Not only are you educating in terms of the social, economic, and political structures, you're teaching people about their value as workers.

That's absolutely correct. We are invaluable. There is no company that can run without the workers. If the workers do not show up, not one chicken goes through that plant.

“It breaks my heart when (President Trump) talks about destroying the Department of Education, undermining civil rights, undermining voting rights laws — everything we have worked for in my lifetime to achieve.”



May Day 2025

ICLS on the line for workers and justice



May Day: A Legacy of Labor Action

May Day, recognized annually since 1886, commemorates the Haymarket Square Massacre in Chicago and serves as a global day of action for labor rights. Traditionally, the International Comparative Labor Studies (ICLS)

program has honored this day on campus, focusing on education, advocacy, and organized efforts to advance workers' rights. ICLS also stresses the origins of May 1st as a day of spiritual affirmation of women workers and advocacy of love, reproduction and agriculture in the ancient African tradition of Osiris (Ausar), also known as Dionysus in Europe. But this year, labor activists seized the opportunity to broaden their reach and amplify their message.

Echoing the National Day of Action declared by labor coalitions nationwide and spearheaded by the Chicago Teachers' Union, protests erupted across the United States. Participants in the "Stop the Billionaire Agenda" march convened before the Georgia Capitol, issuing a powerful call to end the unjust hoarding of wealth — a practice directly impacting the economic realities of all working-class individuals.

This vital action garnered support from a diverse array of Atlanta organizations, including the Georgia AFL-CIO, GLAHR, the Working Families Party, the Movement for Black Lives, and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. The Morehouse Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, whose members include ICLS faculty, overwhelmingly voted to endorse the action.

ICLS remains steadfast in its commitment to grassroots organizing. Our core mission is to foster intellectual discourse that paves the way for a more liberated and just society. We strive to cultivate a fundamental understanding of how economic systems organize our labor, time, and money, and how we can collectively enhance our communities' economic standing.

We recognize that advocacy and organized action are foundational pillars of the labor movement. Historic May Day protests and strikes have been instrumental in securing significant advancements for the working class, including the establishment of the five-day workweek and the eight-hour workday standard.

Despite these gains, the pressure to thrive in America persists. We are currently witnessing relentless attacks on immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, women and children, veterans, and organizations dedicated to education and science. The shared economic challenges and vulnerabilities to political upheaval demonstrably transcend all American identities. This is where the labor perspective offers a unifying force: Work is a universal experience, providing common ground for collective action.

Advocating for oneself and in solidarity with other workers directly enhances our working and living conditions. The collective energy of shouting, chanting, and marching alongside friends, colleagues, and compassionate strangers on May Day underscored the immediate and profound impact of unified action. Despite the serious context, the day was ultimately filled with joy and triumph.

Commentary by Dr. Cynthia Hewitt
and Ilana A. Lucas

Photos by Ilana A. Lucas



“The collective energy of shouting, chanting, and marching alongside friends, colleagues, and compassionate strangers on May Day underscored the immediate and profound impact of unified action.”

Dr. Cynthia Hewitt is the Avalon Professor of Sociology and Director of the International Comparative Labor Studies (ICLS) program. Ilana A. Lucas is Project Coordinator for ICLS.

Business Ownership Dreams Collide With Reality

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people felt comfortable. I want that to continue here."

Smith said he would like to form a collaboration with suppliers or related industry owners to make that happen.

The vast majority of conference participants represented collaboratives or cooperatives whose missions included helping Black business owners and would-be owners connect with each other and with the resources they need to succeed – government, corporate, educational and private programs.

"You can't draw lines between the needs in our communities," said Carl Redwood of Pittsburgh's Steel City Housing Co-op. "We work specifically with housing but the family that needs housing also needs work to maintain that housing, and education and training to secure that job. Ultimately, what we strive for is to take that man from homelessness to entrepreneurship where he can provide a job for the next man."

The interconnectedness of needs, services, and programs for the sake of overall community betterment is a major tenet of the Black Economic Empowerment Movement spearheaded by the late Nelson Mandela as he took over leadership of South Africa.

According to a statement published by the Mandela Foundation, "Nelson Mandela believed in creating a society where everyone ... (has) equal opportunities. By promoting policies that ensure equal access to education, healthcare, and economic resources, Mandela's principles were aimed at bridging economic divides and inequality and ultimately creating a more inclusive economy."

"I'm not sure exactly what we can offer but I'm grateful to be here

to learn what we may be missing and what partnerships we might be able to form," explained Naomi Thompkins as she chatted with other conferees during a break between sessions. Thompkins is Cooperative Development Fellow at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund in East Point, Georgia.

Black wealth, reportedly \$5.39 trillion, might be seen as substantial by some. But it must increase about twenty-five fold to close the gap and reach the level of white wealth – an estimated \$134.58 trillion. Clearly, inaction is not an option.



Joyce Walker-Tyson is a freelance writer and deputy administrator of Walker House, a family-owned adult foster care facility in Muskegon County, Michigan.

For Morehouse alum, philanthropy is a labor of love

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to undermine the power of Black and Brown people. People's lives will be threatened, not only their livelihoods, their jobs, but in fact, their very lives. That has led us to know that we have to provide some immediate support and relief for people who are the most vulnerable and most threatened.

You possess an open-minded perspective and even though you've worked in eminent places, you still possess a spirit of service. Did Morehouse do that for you?

Morehouse provided the models and examples of people who exhibited the reality that we're more than material beings, that we're spiritual beings. From Crown Forums; a range of speakers coming in; serving in the community; to sitting in Andrew Young's house and talking about his story with a group of, you know, 11, 12 Morehouse guys sitting in his home and talking about movement work ... people and examples who were very different from a profit motive.

Sounds like they made an impression.

They embodied the notion of not just service, but of a commitment to doing something beyond material things for the sake of humanity. That's what Morehouse did for me.

And now ...

I'm working in philanthropy, which is the love of human beings; the work of figuring out how we steward resources to help people.

Any words of advice for your Morehouse brothers just starting their journeys?

I remember my freshman year at Morehouse and while I may not have known what I was going to do, where I would go, I knew anything was possible. I was seeing sophomores and juniors and seniors doing things that

Philanthropy is a labor of love

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blew my mind.

Such as ...

Everything from oratorical skills, to the starting of businesses, to the ways they were serving the community. At every level, it is often good to see somebody who might look like you, just to encourage you. What I would say is: Be focused on the journey, and not the destination. There are a number of people who are in place to support your growth and well-being. At each step of the journey, value relationships and the thing that you were created to do, not the material things that you were created to get but the thing that spiritually God created each one of us to do. And while bills and student loans and a range of other things are real, I made the choice not to take the big investment banking job because I knew for me that connection to serving people fed my soul.

When you alluded to coming together and viewing things in unique ways, that is what ICLS is attempting to do. Do you wish labor studies were more pronounced in your business studies?

The labor studies program would shed light on how I wanted to bring about changing the community, giving me a certain economic analysis and understanding of why things are the way they are in our economy. Why do certain people thrive? What are the conditions? What are the rules? What are the values that are supported? The current structures and what needs to shift for people to be liberated, for people to thrive.

- Continued on 19

“It’s critical to understand even why at an institution as esteemed as Morehouse students were not pointed towards labor unions when, in fact, a lot of the Black people were able to send their children to Morehouse because they were part of labor unions.”

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Contact Us For More Information

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**CUNY SCHOOL OF LABOR
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For Morehouse alum, philanthropy is a labor of love

- Continued from page 15

Dr. King was all about helping working and poor people gain access to a better life. ICLS is currently thinking about launching a course focused on Dr. King and labor. What elements should be included?

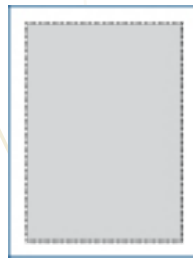
While we may glamorize his "I Have a Dream" speech, we don't often glamorize that he spoke out against militarism and economic injustices. When you put Dr. King in today's context, the actors are different, but the threats are similar, even greater as the increasingly concentrated power is shifting to tech companies in ways that was fully with insurance and finance and maybe a couple other industries. How do you take what Dr. King was saying back then and apply it to the current landscape of labor and corporate power today?

Are you saying labor studies is finally getting the attention it deserves in various curricula?

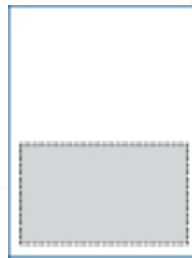
It's critical to understand even why at an institution as esteemed as Morehouse students were not pointed towards labor unions when, in fact, a lot of the Black people were able to send their children to Morehouse because they were part of labor unions, like my mother and father. You have to look at the corporate influence in the money that those institutions give that very well support and create opportunities. And it's designed to have workers and attract workers of color to work inside those institutions that operate on a certain paradigm, which is very different from what the labor paradigms are. And so, we have to be curious why things work the way they work, and who benefits, and at what cost, and why do you see an increased concentration of power among corporations and a decrease in not only union density, but the number of unions and union percentage? You have to ask why?

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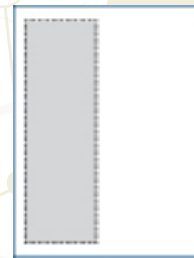
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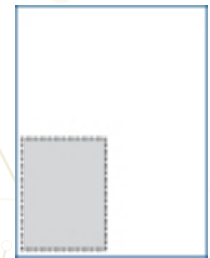
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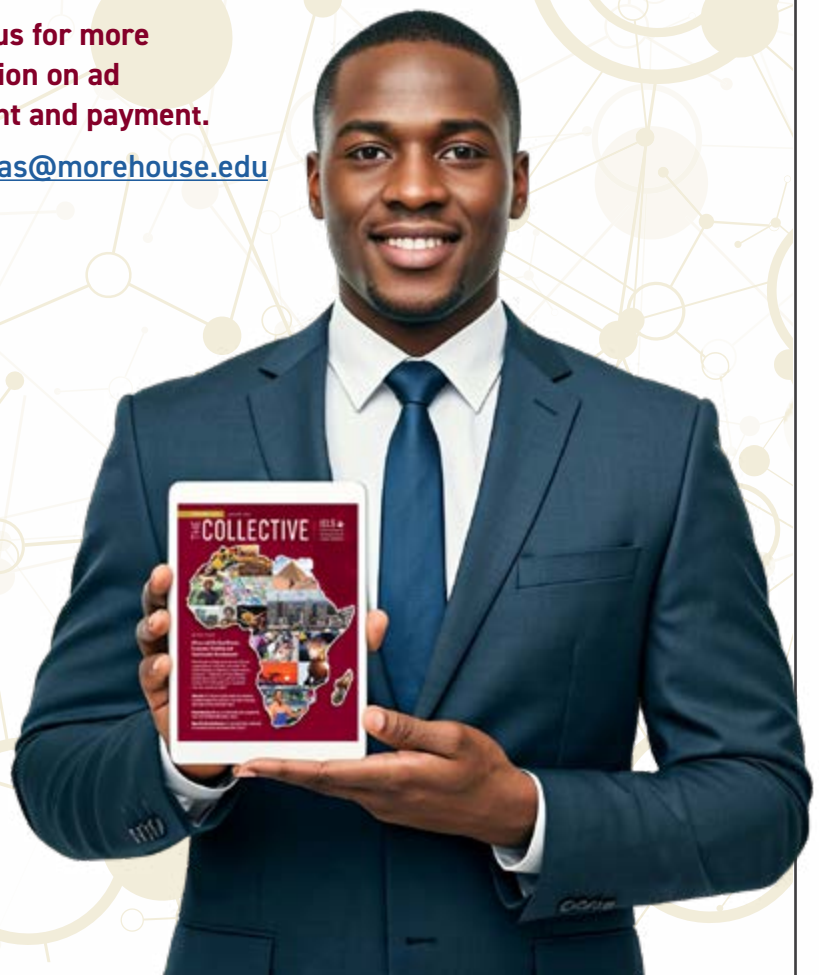
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