



Governors State University

Martin Luther King Jr.

Breakfast Event

Engaging, Encouraging, and Empowering GSU Lives

Thursday, January 19th  8:30 – 10:30 AM CST

Hall of Honors

[Virtual Link](#)

Breakfast Reception

Welcome

Dr. Joi Patterson, Chief Diversity Officer

Introduction of GSU President

Mr. Brave Fung, Civil Service Senate President

Opening Statement

Dr. Cheryl Green, President

Scholarship and Performance

Dr. Janelle Crowley, Chief of Staff

Writing Competition

Dr. Rashidah Muhammad, Professor

Song Selection

Mr. Keith Briggs, Building Services

Introduction of Keynote

Dr. Konya Sledge, Dir. Center for Student Engagement and Intercultural Programs

Keynote Speaker

Mr. Frederick Yeakey

Introduction of Panel

Dr. Marlon Cummings, Div. of Education Chair

Panel Discussion / Q&A

Closure

Mr. Kevin Brookins, Board of Trustees

For more information visit <https://www.govst.edu/dei/>

Dr. Cheryl Green, President

Dr. Cheryl Green brings more than 30 years of professional experience in higher education to her role as the sixth President of Governors State University, and the leader of the Jaguar family. A passionate educator and administrator, Green believes fiercely in the power of education to change lives. Throughout her career, she has pioneered the innovation of academic enrichment opportunities and student success initiatives that promote increased retention and graduation rates for first generation and non-traditional college students.



Most recently, Green served as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, as Interim Chancellor for the University of Wisconsin Whitewater, and as Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at Tennessee State University.

Before her time at TSU, Dr. Green served at Chicago State University in a variety of administrative and academic roles, including director/chair of the counseling department, inaugural dean of first-year students, acting associate director of career placement, and as a tenured associate professor of counseling. In addition, Green served as the statewide representative for 2,700 faculty and staff in her role as the Grievance Officer for the University Professionals of Illinois (UPI) Local 4100 for seven public universities.

Her fiscal experience includes the budget management of more than \$300 million at three universities. Throughout her career she has served as the primary or contributing author for multiple grants which yielded more than \$15 million in revenue. Most of her scholarly research has been focused on increasing student achievement and delivering community-based health initiatives for diverse student populations.

Green's commitment to making a difference is evidenced by her service to the community, which spans the United States and has included serving on ten different advisory boards or boards of directors. Currently, she serves on the Manchester University Board of Trustees, the Association of Governing Boards (ABG) Council of Presidents, the Inaugural Presidential Ambassadors Council of the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), the Will County Center for Economic Development Board of Directors, and the Southland Development Authority Board of Directors. In the recent past, she has been active on the Howard Hughes Medical Institute STEM Grant Advisory Board of UW Madison, the Forward 50 Advisory Board for the National Association of Student and Financial Aid Administrators, and the Milwaukee based Gift of Adoption Wisconsin Board of Directors.

Dr. Green is the proud recipient of Chicago Crain's 2021 Notable Black Leaders and Executives, and the Illinois Black Hall of Fame has honored her as a Woman of First Distinction. She is a proud member of the Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc.-Will County Black Diamond Chapter and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®. In March 2022, Dr. Green was awarded the Excellence in Education award by the Central Regional Director of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, and in June 2022, she was recognized as one of The Top 50 Women Leaders of Illinois in 2022 by Women We Admire. In August 2022, she served as an Honorary Grand Marshal of the historic Bud Biliken Parade. Additionally, *Newsweek* recently featured Dr. Green in a profile that discussed the university's 2022 ranking in *U.S. News & World Report* for being one of the top 25 best Midwest schools for social mobility.

Green has a Ph.D. and master's degree in counseling psychology from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. She obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from Manchester College (now Manchester University) in North Manchester, Indiana. She also holds several National Incident Management System certificates from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Institute and serves as a recognized leader in grievance mediation and conflict resolution.

Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Green is also the loving mother of two adult children who constantly keep her inspired to believe in the worth and potential of all human beings and to make a difference in the world.

Mr. Frederick Yeakey

[Fred Yeakey](#) is currently serving as Vice President of Providence Cristo Rey High School and leads the schools unique Corporate Work Study program that connects high school students with meaningful corporate internships throughout Indianapolis. Fred has been with Providence Cristo Rey for 6 years and has led the school in diverse positions such as Interim President, Vice Principal of Mission and Culture and Dean of Students.



Fred has a background in education/community building that spans over 16 years. He has served in various roles such as directing after-school programming and summer programming for the 100 Black Men of Indianapolis. He received his Master of Arts in Education from Marian University and has an undergraduate degree from Kentucky State University in Public Administration.

He has delivered keynote speaker addresses and workshops at universities, school districts, conferences, and corporate events around the country. Fred has been featured nationally for his work with a Male Mentoring Initiative called "The Barbershop", where he offers free haircuts to male students while grooming them outwardly and inwardly. Through a haircut, Mr. Yeakey establishes character development and empowerment with the focus on educating and retaining males to graduate and make an impact in the communities that they serve.

Fred is married to Danijel Yeakey and together they have three children.

Education:

- MAT, Marian University, 2017
- BA, Public Administration, Kentucky State University 2001

Awards and Recognition:

- Indianapolis Business Journal 40 Under 40 – 2022
- Stanley K. Lacy | Leadership Indianapolis – Class XLV
- Junior Achievement of Central Indiana – Indy's Best and Brightest in Education 2020
- Kentucky State University Distinguish Alumni Under 40 – 2020

Fred.yeakey@gmail.com

MLK Writing Contest Winners

We would like to thank all the MLK writing contestants for their wonderful entries.

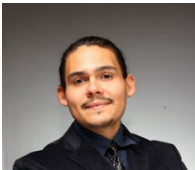
1 st Place	David Harper:	An Open Letter “Dear Martin Luther King”
2 nd Place	Porshe Glass:	Poem “The Dream in Translation”
3 rd Place	Dominika Cudzich:	An Open Letter “Open Letter to Dr. King”

Mr. Kevin Brookins, Board of Trustees, Vice Chair

Mr. Brookins is a retired senior executive of ComEd. He is an exceptional leader who navigated exceptional sea change in the way that ComEd operates its system and delivers benefits to customers. His expertise and strategic vision helped ComEd drive improvements in several key business areas including operations, customer service, communications and diversity and inclusion. He is also an influential and dedicated leader in the Chicagoland community and in the energy industry through the many boards that he served on where he has demonstrated commitment, versatility, effectiveness, and moral integrity that together makes him an outstanding board member. He has a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Howard University and an MBA from Governors State University. He and his wife, Melonese, reside in Olympia Fields, Illinois.



Panelists



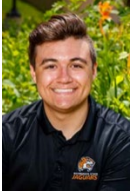
Andres Cornejo is one of many Governors State University (GSU) students who received valuable hands-on experience as a student worker. Andres describes his time as a social media coordinator for the Department of Marketing and Communication as one of the most impactful experiences he’s had at GSU. Post-graduation, he’ll be expanding on what he’s learned in that role as a graduate student in GSU’s Master of Business Administration program.



Lluvia Hernandez Aguirre is a first-generation Mexican American student here at GSU. Lluvia is working towards completing her final semester for a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a minor in psychology. However, her journey at GSU does not end there as she is planning on continuing her education at this institution and obtaining a master’s degree in business administration as well. In addition to being a student, Lluvia also is a New Student Program leader in the Academic Resource Center and is the student representative on the Board of Trustees.



Chaundrea Jenkins is a Governors State MBA student with a Finance concentration. She has worked as a graduate assistant at the Center for Student Engagement and Intercultural Programs for the past two years. She strives to connect with the students to cultivate the best experience for each student here at GSU.



Logan Krska is a Senior Community Health major who has been accepted into GSU's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program. Logan is a proud member of our University's Honors Program, and he is helping create a community of scholars through his efforts as Honors Program Student Council Co-Chair. Logan serves the campus community by providing non-academic support as a Center for the Junior Year Peer Mentor and by giving tours to prospective students as an Admissions Student Ambassador. He continues his passion for helping others through his efforts as a Rehabilitation Aide at a local Athletico Physical Therapy.



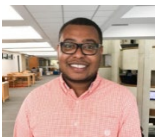
Emmanuel Lopez is a first-generation Latinx professional who is currently the Assistant Director of Transfer Admissions as well as a Co-Advisor for ALAS at GSU. He also serves as the Vice-Chair for the Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement (HACE) Chicago Auxiliary Board. He has obtained an associates, bachelors, masters, and honorary degree from 3 different institutions.



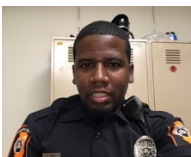
Michelle Marshall received her associates degree in liberal arts from South Suburban College, followed by a semester here at GSU in 2015, Michelle went on to receive her bachelor's degree in American Sign Language-English interpretation, from Columbia college Chicago, only to return to GSU 7 years later, as a current graduate student in our communications, media and performance program. Michelle also serves as the current president of Black Student Union here at GSU."



Christopher McBride has over 6+ years of experience in Student Affairs. He obtained his master's degree in Adult and Higher Education from Northern Illinois University. Chris continued his journey at Governors State University Fall of 2019 serving as the Coordinator for Student Clubs/Orgs, he now serves as the Coordinator for Greek Life.



Lester Moody is a Chicago native, and alumni of Governors State University, earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration, with a focus in finance. He played multiple roles while a student, with being a part of the GSU Male Success Initiative. He currently is the Retention Coach in the Academic Resource Center.



Officer DeSean Quinn has been working at Governors State University DPS for 1 year. He graduated from the police academy on August 11, 2022, from the University of Illinois Police Academy. Officer Quinn graduated from Homewood Flossmoor High School and Western Illinois University. Also, he is starting his master's degree program in Healthcare Administration this Spring semester at Governors State University. Officer Quinn is excited to obtain another short-term goal and is looking forward to balancing a career and going back to school!

MLK Writing Competition Pieces

Engaging, Encouraging, and Empowering All GSU Lives
poem, letter, or essay

Prizes: 1st Place \$250, 2nd Place \$150, 3rd Place \$100

Sponsored by President Cheryl Green

Dear Martin Luther King, Jr., by David Harper

Thank you. You saw the daily plight of the children of an oppressed people whose ancestors were forced into the country of America as captives – stripped of their names, language, and culture – only to serve a foreign nation who cruelly and savagely ruled over them in rigor. You saw the daily plight of the children whose ancestors were finally allowed freedom to escape the horrendous institution of slavery in 1865. Though granted freedom from slavery in 1865, the African American race continued to face oppression in the country of America. In 1896, the Supreme Court established 'separate but equal' doctrine with Plessy vs. Ferguson, enabling the expansion of growing segregation or "Jim Crow" practices across America, with many states codifying segregation in state constitutions and local laws and ordinances. (American Anti-Slavery Timeline). By 1910, every state in the former Confederacy fully established a system of legalized segregation and disfranchisement (American Anti-Slavery Timeline). You, Dr. King, were born less than two decades later in 1929. So, you grew up witnessing first-hand the daily plight of racial injustices in the lives of African Americans – who in your generation faced the ill treatment of segregation and discrimination. Instead of withdrawing into passiveness or hopelessness, you took a stand. You became a prominent figure in the civil rights movement and helped fight for the dignified rights African Americans possess today.

Your efforts in the civil rights movement proved to be very effective and powerful. In 1963, you helped organize the March on Washington, an assembly of more than 200,000 people at which you made your famous "I Have a Dream" speech (Encyclopedia Britannica). The march was so impactful and compelling that it helped produce the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin (Legal Highlight). The act also made illegal employment discrimination, granting African Americans more privilege to careers and employment opportunities. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the rights African Americans hold today were made possible due to your contributions in the civil rights movement, Dr. King. Furthermore, in 1965, you launched the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) with the aims of pressuring Congress to pass legislation which granted African Americans the right to vote (Encyclopedia Britannica). On August 6th, 1965, seven months after the launch of SCLC campaign,

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, calling the day "a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield" (Encyclopedia Britannica). From that point on, African Americans were granted the right to vote and continue to hold that right to this very day. Although you were laid to rest on April 4th, 1968, your contributions to the civil rights movement can still be seen in today's society. Today, African American can freely use the same libraries, schools, theaters, restaurants, hotels, swimming pools, and various public places as Americans of other ethnicities due to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Furthermore, African Americans continue to utilize their right to vote based on the Voting Rights Act of 1965; in 2008, the very first African American president of the United States was elected. To acknowledge the variety of rights have grown to have today is to acknowledge you, Dr. King, as a catalyst to the blossoming of positive change in the treatment and perception of African American lives.

African Americans have indeed come a long way since the days of slavery and segregation. However, to not acknowledge the racially based hardships African Americans continue to face today is to blindly ignore the dismal realities African Americans face today. According to Psychology Today, "While African Americans comprise only 12% of the US population, the number of African American males who are incarcerated in U.S. prisons greatly exceeds the number of white males in prison. The homicide rate in the U.S. for African Americans aged 18-34 is nine times higher than it is for whites. The life expectancy for African Americans in the US is substantially lower than the life expectancy for whites." These issues, Dr. King, are only a portion of the list of oppressions and injustices African Americans continue to experience in America in 2023. To know that America has grown to be more compassionate and inclusive towards African American lives is very soothing and relieving. However, extensive work remains to be done in America to be fully compassionate and inclusive towards African American lives today. And, it is you, Dr. King, who gives me strong determination that this hope of mine will one day become a reality. In your well-renowned "I Have A Dream" speech, you stated, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." I too, Dr. King, share this dream and have strong hope that it will stand true in the country of America for all races, minorities, sexes, and nationalities. It is your visionary dreams and optimistic beliefs for equality in America that too brings me hope and confidence in the equality of our country. So, Dr. King. I would like to end this letter with the same words with which I began: thank you. Thank you for your relentless efforts to fight against the deep-seated, ingrained system of oppression in America. Thank you for your courageous activism in the civil rights movement

which continues to manifest today. And, thank you for your wise tactics of nonviolence that proved to be effective. I, on behalf of all Americans who strive for equality and justice, thank you.

The Dream in Translation, by Porshe Glass

*When I was a child, my mother told me,
"Dr. King had the right sort of dream,"
One of peace and equality,
For all life's flavors,
Not just chocolate or vanilla.*

She asked me to explain what I thought it all means,

I took a breath and began.

*You want to be fair,
Stop trying to compare,
Your skin, my skin,
your *Hair,
with mine,
Life is too short,
Stop wasting time.*

*You want to be known,
Man...
Woman...
Stay in your zone,
Actions speak loud,
Spread love to **All People** the world will be proud.*

*You want to be free,
Quiet your words,
Life and death is in your tongue,
Forget gossip,
It grows big like a tree,
Producing *Strange Fruit,
Please end the misery.*

*You want to be wise,
Use fresh eyes,
No more me,
No more you,
Let's be we,
Show what we can do,*

*To heal the world,
Break racial ties that bind.*

*You want to be brilliant,
Remember this truth,*

**People make the world go round,*

*Hate,
Riots,
Color based promotions,
Unfair pay,
This *Hand that rocks the cradle, of life,
Neither you, nor I,
can live this way,*

*The world cannot turn if skills lay dormmate,
trodden to the ground.*

*Soaked with blood,
Laden with lies,
You are not the right,
gender,
color,
or size!*

Words of this world heating like brick and blackening eyes,

*The *Dog Days Are Over,
Stop the abuse,
And start something new,*

*To dream big like Dr. King,
It all starts within,
You must take a good look,
At the Man in the Mirror,*

*A better future,
It can come true,
Just remember,
We have work to do!*

Open Letter, by Dominika Cudzich

First and foremost, it's an honor to speak with You directly. Did You know that on the third Monday in January every year, the United States honors Your legacy of fighting for equal right? As a federal holiday, banks and post offices are closed on that day! Your push to ban nuclear weapons, end the Vietnam War and lift people out of poverty through labor unions and access to health care is recognized annually. You are known for leading the movement to end segregation and counter prejudice against Black Americans in the 1950s and 1960s largely through peaceful protests. Let us not forget that your speech sparked a movement which helped created the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, ending racial segregation in the United States and earned You a Noble Peace Prize, magnificent job! It outlawed segregation and enfranchised Americans who have been barred from the poll through intimidation and discriminatory state and local laws.

Since then, Jim Crow laws have been banned. Black women have entered office! Shirley Chisholm was the first black woman to be elected to the United States Congress for seven terms from 1969 to 1983. Obama was elected as the 44th president of the United States, becoming the first African-American president of the United States. The Fortune 500 List has a Record Number of Black CEOs that include Roz Brewer, David Rawlinson, Robert Reffkin, Frank Clyburn, Marvin Ellison and Thasunda Brown Duckett.

Your speech 50 years ago, started a trend. It had and continues to have a significant impact on everybody today. In February 2021, the Premier League launched its No Room For Racism Action Plan, which outlines a series of commitments and targets to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and increase opportunities across the game. This movement would probably not exist without You.

However, no matter how much the states progressed since the 1950s, racism still lingers today. In 2013, Black Lives Matter Global Foundation, Inc. started a mission to eradicate white supremacy and build a local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes as a response to Trayvon Martin's murder. In brief, Martin, a Miami high school student, was in Sanford visiting his father. Dressed in a hooded sweatshirt, he was on the way back to his father's fiancée house, after buying a bag of skittles and a bottle of juice. He was spotted by Zimmerman, an insurance-fraud investigator who was captain of the neighborhood patrol at the Retreat at Twin Lakes, which recently had experienced a series of break-ins and burglaries. Zimmerman called the non-emergency line of the Sanford police to report Martin looked suspicious then ignored a police dispatcher's advice not to follow the young man. Moments later, gunfire rang out. When officers arrived, Martin was dead on the scene. As a nation, we continue to work toward Your dream of equality. We will not let You down. Peacefully, through the power of prayer, and continuous hope for equality, we, as a nation, can achieve those goals. No matter the challenges we face today such as the Trayvon Martin shooting, all we can do is hope that people like Zimmerman do not exist. Also, we can pray for people like Zimmerman who have unexplainable hate towards innocent Black people. Mother Teresa once said "I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us, and we change things." It is up to us individually to see the change we seek.

We can also speak out against white supremacy that continues to exist in our post-racial society by joining movements such as Black Lives Matter.

In addition, we can help spread the word of the BREATHE Act bill. The BREATHE Act bill is a proposal for a federal omnibus bill, presented by the Electoral Justice Project of the

Movement for Black Lives. People are rising up against all the ways that the criminal-legal system has harmed and failed to protect Black communities. It seeks to divest Federal Resources from policing and incarceration and ending federal-legal system harms, including the 1994 Crime Bill and reparations for the War on Drugs, to invest in new approaches to community safety utilizing funding incentives, to allocate new money to build healthy, sustainable and equitable communities for all people and hold officials accountable and enhance self-determination of Black communities.

Although a lot of bad news continues to occur today, I think that we need to focus on the good that has come out of Your speech. Major movements are conquering the globe, people are pushing bills, the voice of racial equality is loud and can be heard. Thank You for Your time.

Special Thank you



We want to thank the following individuals for their time and talent in preparing for this event. In addition, we want to thank the program participants for their words and inspiration. Most of all, we would like to thank Dr. Martin Luther King for his words and actions that brought us to this time and place. In the words of Dr. King, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Keith Briggs

Kevin Brookins

Karen Caesar-Smith

Marlon Cummings

Brave Fung

President Green

Johnsie McAuley-Davis

Rashidah Muhammad

Konya Sledge

Laura White

Departments:

DMLD

Facilities

ITS

MarCom

Andres Cornejo

Lluvia Hernandez Aguirre

Chaundrea Jenkins

Logan Krska

Emmanuel Lopez

Michelle Marshall

Christopher McBride

Lester Moody

DeSean Quinn

Clayton Brown

Solomon Cardona

Qiana Clay

Dominika Cudzich

Taylor Fason

Mia Gasperini

Porshe Glass

Jennifer Gonzalez

David Harper

Youbode Joway

Jillian Lee

Michelle Marshall

Tyler Miller

Joseph Provine

Roberto Salas

Tina Johnson- Stephens

Jakiya Sutton

MLK 2023 Team

Joi Patterson, Janelle Crowley, Konya Sledge, Melanie Whitelow