



May 2023

THE DEEP BENCH

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of African American Affairs

The Office of African American Affairs is proud to recognize Black professionals throughout New Mexico who are committed to impacting the lives of Black New Mexicans. Their education, expertise, and experience have poised them to be leaders in their careers, in the public and private sectors.

Each month we recognize individuals, spotlighting their accomplishments and their impact on New Mexico. If you would like to nominate a Black professional (including yourself) to be in the Deep Bench, please send your name and contact information to Charlycia.Strain1@state.nm.us



Donavan Price

Community Involvement:

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority,
Inc. - Eta Beta Sigma Alumnae
Chapter Roadrunner Food Bank
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Mind&Melody, Inc.
United Way of NorthernNew
Mexico

Degree and Alma Mater:

University of New Mexico-Los Alamos – Associates of Arts in Pre-Business Administration
University of New Mexico– B.B.A in General Management – In Progress

Current Position:

Administrative Assistant – Enterprise Bank & Trust – Los Alamos

Donavan Price is a Columbus, Ohio native who joined the Los Alamos community in November 2017. She is the Administrative Assistant to the Market President of Enterprise Bank & Trust in Los Alamos and has a strong focus in community outreach. Donavan has received her Associate of Arts in Pre-Business Administration with honors from the University of New Mexico-Los Alamos and will be starting at the UNM Anderson School of Management in fall 2023 to pursue her B.B.A. in General Management. She is an active member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. As volunteerism is a passion, Donavan frequently serves various communities through packaging foods at Roadrunner Food Bank, singing and playing percussion-based instruments for residents living with Alzheimer's/Dementia at The Beehive Assisted Living Home, being a "BIG" sister via Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region, and being the Chair for her sorority chapter's Project Cradle Care initiative, which donates significant items to New Futures School in Albuquerque. When wanting to relax, you can find her spending precious time with her husband of 24 years, playing with their 7-year-old daughter, and sharing cooking basics with their 19-year-old son. For leisure, Donavan enjoys karaoke, attending stage productions, creating voiceover work for businesses and nonprofits, bowling, and crafting glitter tumblers.

What do you believe are the strengths of the NM Black Community? I feel our communities are strongest when we work as a collective towards common causes. All too often across the nation, we see a separation based on factors of classism or elitism which only aids in the destruction of our people. Here in New Mexico, we understand how small of a demographic we are statistically and yet, showcase how mighty our voices and actions can be. Having conversations with local government, embracing inclusivity, and building relationships within our neighborhoods to understand certain needs are some of the ways our communities continue to share resources and services. While the works that we do have a significant impact on the Black community, our outreach vastly benefits people of color throughout our state as well.



What can NM do to attract more Blacks to our state?

Be more vocal about what Black people contribute to our state! I'll be the first to tell you, New Mexico was never on my radar to visit, let alone reside in. I thought all it had were mountains, sand, and cactus fields. Implicit bias at its finest. After visiting with our close friends who already lived here, The Land of Enchantment made a lasting impression on us. My husband and I had to trust God and take a leap of faith. We knew we wanted our children to experience more than city life and for us to thrive in our professional lives, so we moved to Los Alamos. Here, those who identify as Black/African American make up 1.5% of the 19,000+ population according to the 2022 U.S. Census Bureau. I can look around town and see we've grown since then, yet I feel our presence is still minimally felt. I would love to see New Mexico promote the existing websites that provide information about black-owned businesses and create ads that include more of our faces. We work here, we live here, and we give here. That should be recognized daily and not just during a designated month.

What do you want your influence on the NM Black Community to Be?

I want to be known as an example of what it is to give back. Volunteering is an essential part of learning humility and empathy. Each day that we wake up, not having to battle a substance abuse addiction, not wondering where our next meal is going to come from, and knowing we get to come home to a place that feels safe, is an opportunity to help someone else who doesn't currently experience those same luxuries. Saying things like "Well, that's THEIR choice." or "There are plenty of jobs they can apply for." holds judgement against a person and their path, of which we've not walked. We fear what we don't understand, and I truly desire that people be more cognizant of those around them without so much fear. As humans, we have a responsibility to help our fellow man and whether you feed a stranger or take out the trash for a neighbor, a little goes a long way.

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If you have any questions, please call
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Brennan Bowman

Degree and Alma Mater: Bachelor of Arts Psychology and Master of Urban Education: School Counseling PreK- 12 Norfolk State University Norfolk, VA

Current Position(s): Professional School Counselor/ Academic Success Coach

Community Involvement:

Active member of the Albuquerque Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, A member of the Juneteenth planning committee, and an Appointed member of the CYFD Policy Advisory Council

Brennan LaToya Holloway Bowman was born and raised in Portsmouth, VA. She is the daughter of the late Vanessa L. Garedo and the late Anthony Holloway Sr.

Brennan is a product of Portsmouth Public Schools graduating from Woodrow Wilson High School in 2004. After high school, Brennan pursued and completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Norfolk State University. In 2013, Brennan decided to return to school to pursue a Masters of Arts in Urban Education with a concentration in School Counseling.

In 2010 Brennan married fellow Spartan and college love Brian Bowman, and they have three wonderful children Arianna (16), Josiah (11), and Bryce (5).

Being a transplant to Albuquerque, NM, Brennan holds School Counseling licenses in both Virginia and New Mexico. Brennan has over 17 years of experience working with children and families in many capacities from teaching PreK to Geriatric Case Management. Currently, Brennan is a middle school counselor and the CEO of With a Village, an academic success coaching service. Here she works with students and their families to redefine what success looks like for them, while creating a village for every young person to be successful. Recently, Brennan was appointed to the CYFD Policy Advisory Council by the Governor of New Mexico.

A favorite quote that Brennan lives by is, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. - Maya Angelou.

What do you want your influence on the NM Black Community to Be?

As a Black educator, I would like my impact to be one centered around improving the conditions in the academic environment, thus inspiring them to pursue their educational goals. This can be achieved by advocating for the educational, social, and emotional needs of Black students. In spaces where Black students are underrepresented, Black students, and their unique needs, can go unaddressed. Establishing and fostering connections between members of the professional community and young adults will create a village that will empower those young adults to overcome challenges and reach their full potential. Leveraging the diverse background of the Black community, incorporating diverse perspectives, histories, and experiences will create a more engaging and meaningful environment in which youth will thrive. Advocating for equity in access to community resources and support systems will ensure all students, especially Black students, have the best opportunity to succeed academically and in life outside of the academic setting. Creating a safe space for the emotional expression and development of young adults is another area in which I would like to leave an impact. Our young adults are facing new and increasingly difficult challenges in an always-changing world. Those young adults need to be equipped with the tools and given the space in which to process the emotions associated with navigating their challenging reality. Serving as a mentor, I can offer guidance and support as they navigate their emotions, develop critical thinking skills, and move into a position of self-advocacy, becoming agents of change and our future leaders.



What can NM do to attract more Blacks to our state?

Attracting more Black people to New Mexico requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on creating an inclusive and supportive environment that will allow Black students, professionals, and families to thrive and grow. One of the keys to creating an environment that will allow for individual and community growth is strengthening educational institutions, and these institutions being a stepping stone to new opportunities. Effective educational institutions not only address the academic needs of the population, but the social and emotional needs as well. It is necessary to educate the whole person to unlock the potential that lies within and for them to achieve their goals and allow them to become a productive member of the community. A holistic approach to education will establish platforms for open conversations about race, equality, and social justice. This will position us better, as a society, to address the root causes of issues and effect lasting change. The resulting socioeconomic improvements will serve as a draw for new and productive members of the community. Another key to creating an environment that will attract Black people to New Mexico is effective representation in the policy-making process. Collectively we need to hold our elected officials, at every level of government, accountable for the decisions that they make and the policies they put in place or support. We need to be active participants in the democratic process, advocates for our community members, and take a particular interest in elections from the school board and city council to general Presidential elections.

What do you believe are the strengths of the NM Black Community?

Throughout history, Black communities have shown remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. Despite facing numerous challenges, they have persevered and overcome obstacles through determination, strength, and a sense of community support. The NM Black Community is no different. Here, there are strong leaders and advocates who work towards social justice, equality, and community development. These individuals play pivotal roles in advocating for the rights and needs of the community and effecting positive change. I believe that the NM Black Community is so diverse. Those of us in the Black Community come from all over including right here in New Mexico. The beautiful thing about diversity is, it comes with many different lived experiences, perspectives and beliefs. When we come together as a community, we have a way of using each other's strengths to make us better.



Marco Harris

Degree and Alma Mater: Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education
Master in Educational Leadership

Current Position(s): Principal of Highland High School

Community Involvement:
Executive Board member of the Albuquerque Public School Principal's Association (APSPA)
UNM Alumni – Black Alumni Chapter
Cooperative Educational Services (CES)
Member Achieve Excellence Rising Participant

Marco Harris I was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California, where I graduated from Santa Barbara High School in 1990. I came to the University of New Mexico in the Spring of 1991 and graduated in the Summer of 1996, with a Bachelor of Art in Secondary Education with a focus of social studies. I became part of Albuquerque Public Schools, upon graduation, for 26 years. I was a middle school special education and regular education teacher at Kennedy Middle School for 8 years. I became the Assistant Principal of Wilson Middle School in 2004, after the completion of the Cooperative Educational Administrative Internship Program (CEAIP). As a Community School Leader, I became the Principal of Wilson Middle School in 2008. By 2013, WMS wasn't only transformed into a Full-Service Community School, but we also increased our priority school designation from an "F" to a "C". In 2014, I had the unique opportunity to become the Principal of Highland High School, the oldest standing high school with the most diverse student population in APS. Hornet Nation has increased its graduation rate by 16% (64.6%) over the last 8 years under my leadership.



What do you want your influence on the NM Black Community to Be? Create an environment that is inclusive/safe for all our community members, so we can be our unique selves. In addition, create an awareness of the resources we can access to increase our opportunities for success.

What can NM do to attract more Blacks to our state? Listen to Black voices on social media, Respect the intelligence of Black women and men, Be clear about what your brand stands for, Demonstrate authentic support for Black Communities, Give credit where and when credit is due.

What do you believe are the strengths of the NM Black Community? Team players, perseverant, resilient, creative, humorous, social intelligence, and self-regulation.



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