THE UNITY COLLABORATIVE
The Cornerstone of Organizational and Community Success



2026 LEGAL SUMMIT

THE CASE FOR LEADERSHIP

September 29, 2026 | 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

WELCOME

Dear Summit Attendees,

On behalf of **The Unity Collaborative**, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the **2026 Legal Summit: The CASE for Leadership.**

Leadership is often tested not when the answers are easy, but when the path forward is complex. In moments of change and uncertainty, the decisions we make, the voices we listen to, and the principles that guide us matter.

That is why we are here.

The CASE for Leadership brings together leaders and emerging leaders from across the legal profession, business, government, higher education, the judiciary, and our communities to engage in thoughtful conversations about the intersection of law, leadership, governance, and organizational effectiveness.

Throughout today's Summit, I encourage you to listen with curiosity, ask meaningful questions, and remain open to perspectives that may differ from your own. Our goal is not for everyone in the room to think alike. It is to create space for thoughtful dialogue, deeper understanding, and practical ideas that strengthen how we lead.

At **The Unity Collaborative (TUC)**, we believe leadership carries both opportunity and responsibility. The choices we make today influence the cultures we create, the institutions we strengthen, the people we serve, and ultimately, the legacy we leave behind.

Thank you to our speakers, moderators, partners, sponsors, volunteers, and each of you for choosing to be part of this important conversation. We are especially grateful to **Wayne State University and the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights** for their partnership in bringing this Summit to life.
As you move through today's program, I leave you with one question:
When leadership is required most, what will your decisions say about the leader you choose to be?

Welcome to The CASE for Leadership. We are so glad you are here.

Warmly,



Darlene King - Turner

Chief Executive Officer
The Unity Collaborative

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Strategic Advisor & Former CMO



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WAYNE STATE Office of Inclusive Excellence

THE UNITY COLLABORATIVE

The Intersection of Organizational and Community Success

2026 LEGAL SUMMIT

The Case for Leadership

Summit Agenda

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2026 | WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Student Center, 2nd Floor, Grand Ballroom | 5221 Gullen Mall, Detroit, MI 48202

TIME	SESSION / SPEAKERS	ROOM / LOCATION
8:00 – 8:30 AM	**REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST** Registration desk opens | Breakfast | Networking	Grand Ballroom 2nd Floor
8:30 – 8:50 AM	**WELCOMING REMARKS** The Unity Collaborative and Wayne State University	Grand Ballroom 2nd Floor
8:50 – 9:30 AM	**KEYNOTE FIRESIDE CHAT** *Before the Verdict: Truth, Tension & the State of Justice* Explores how leadership and sound judgment shape justice, public trust, and institutions. Justice Noah Hood | Michigan Supreme Court — **Keynote Speaker** Darlene King-Turner | The Unity Collaborative — **Moderator**	Grand Ballroom 2nd Floor
9:30 – 9:40 AM	**INTERIM BREAK**	Grand Ballroom Foyer 2nd Floor
9:40 – 10:40 AM	**What Holds Up in 2026: Law, Risk & Real-World Application** Examines current legal and regulatory developments and their real-world impact on organizations and decision-making. • Sandy Harvey | Exodus Consulting Group — **Moderator** • Jacqueline Freeman | J.D. Cooley Law School • Dr. Peter Hammer | Wayne State Law School • Ray Littleton | Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC. • Chief Judge Jeremy Bowie | 50th District Court	**Hillberry A** 2nd Floor
9:40 – 10:40 AM	**Access, Representation & the Future of Law: Building the Next Generation of Legal Leaders** Explores strategies to expand access, strengthen representation, and prepare the next generation of legal leaders. • Kristina Bilowus | Michigan State University College of Law — **Moderator** • Nicole M. Smithson | Oakland County Indigent Defense Services Office • Dr. Courtney Griffin | University of Detroit Mercy School of Law • David Braxton | Mike Morse Law Firm	**Hillberry B** 2nd Floor
9:40 – 10:40 AM	**From Policy to Practice: Leading Effective Organizations in a New Legal Era** Discusses how evolving legal and regulatory changes influence leadership, governance, and organizational strategy. • Alicia Edwards | Michigan Department of Human & Health Services — **Moderator** • Jerome Crawford | Pleasantrees Cannabis Company • Michelle Crockett | Honigman, LLP	**Hillberry C** 2nd Floor
9:40 – 10:40 AM	**Power, Precedent & Protection: Navigating Civil Rights in a Shifting Climate** Examines the current civil rights landscape and strategies to protect rights and advance equity. • Professor Steven L. Winter | WSU Law School	**Hillberry D** 2nd Floor
10:40 – 10:50 AM	**INTERIM BREAK**	Grand Ballroom Foyer 2nd Floor
10:50 – 11:50 AM	**PANEL DISCUSSION** *The Verdict Is Now: Power, Responsibility & the Future We Choose* Brings together cross-sector leaders to discuss the responsibilities of leadership and opportunities to strengthen justice, public trust, and organizational effectiveness. • Dr. Donyale Padgett | Wayne State University — **Moderator** • Donnell Campbell | Global Inclusion Executive • Megan Sellers | Oakland County, Michigan Government • Erika Bryant | Butler Davis, PLLC. | State Bar of Michigan • Eric Williams | Detroit Justice Center	**Grand Ballroom** 2nd Floor
11:50 AM – 12:00 PM	**CLOSING REMARKS** Darlene King-Turner | The Unity Collaborative	Grand Ballroom 2nd Floor

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Justice Noah Hood



Served from May 27, 2025 through present

Justice Noah P. Hood was appointed to the Michigan Supreme Court effective May 27, 2025, for a partial term ending on December 31, 2026.

Previously, he was appointed to a partial term on the Michigan Court of Appeals in March 2022 and won election later that year. During his time on the COA, he served on the Rules Committee and Education Committee.

From 2019 to 2022, Justice Hood served on the Third Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan in the Criminal Division, presiding over felony cases in Wayne County. From 2021 to 2022, Judge Hood also presided over the Veterans Treatment Court, a problem-solving court docket that targets underlying issues affecting justice-involved military veterans.

Previously, Justice Hood worked as an Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) in the Eastern District of Michigan, where he prosecuted fraud and opioid-related offenses involving medical professionals. Previously, as an AUSA in the Northern District of Ohio, he specialized in prosecuting fraud, money laundering, public corruption, and white-collar crime. In May 2018, he received the U.S. Treasury Department FinCEN Director's "Law Enforcement Award" for effective use of Bank Secrecy Act data in safeguarding the nation's financial system. In December 2018, he received a certificate of appreciation from the U.S. Secret Service Director for his superior efforts and contributions to the Secret Service's law enforcement responsibilities. He has also been recognized by the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Prior to his federal service, Justice Hood worked as a litigation associate at Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone. During that time, Michigan Community Legal Resources recognized him for his pro bono work on nuisance abatement in Detroit.

Justice Hood is a proud graduate of Cass Technical High School in Detroit, Yale College, and Harvard Law School. He is a member of the Wolverine Bar Association, Association of Black Judges of Michigan, and the Detroit Bar Association, of which he became a fellow in 2023. He currently serves on the Plymouth United Church of Christ Board of Deacons. Justice Hood, a native Detroiter, continues to live in Detroit with his wife and son.

SPEAKERS



David Braxton
Attorney
Mike Morse Law Firm



Erika Bryant
Attorney & President
Butler Davis, PLLC.
State Bar of Michigan



Jeremy Bowie
Chief Judge
50th District Court - Pontiac, MI



Donnell Campbell
Global Inclusion Executive



Jerome Crawford
Chief Legal Officer
Pleasantrees Cannabis Company



Michelle Crockett
Labor & Employment Partner
Honigman, LLP



Jacqueline Freeman
Attorney | Senior Director and Special Advisor to the President for Engagement, Civil Rights, and Title IX
J.D. Cooley Law School



Dr. Courtney Griffin
Assistant Dean for DEIB
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law



Dr. Peter Hammer
Director of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights |
Professor of Law
Wayne State Law School



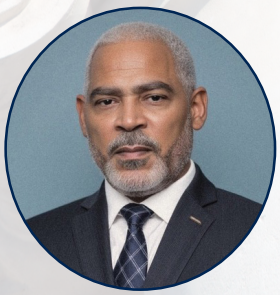
Ray Littleton
Equity Partner
Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC.



Megan Sellers
Deputy County Executive
Oakland County
Michigan Government



Nicole M. Smithson
Principal Attorney
Oakland County Indigent Defense Services Office



Eric C. Williams
Legal Director
Detroit Justice Center



Steven L. Winter
Walter S. Gibbs Distinguished Professor of Constitutional Law
WSU Law School

TO VIEW SPEAKERS BIO, PLEASE CLICK HERE

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Kristina Bilowus
Assistant Director for Career Services
Michigan State University
College of Law



Alicia Edwards
State Administrative Manager
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services



Sandy Harvey
President & Chief Inclusive Strategist
Exodus Consulting Group



Darlene King-Turner
CEO
The Unity Collaborative



Dr. Donyale Padgett
Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence
Wayne State University



Investing in Michigan

Some days, it looks like a hard hat at a job site. Other days, it looks like help reaching a family right when it's needed. And still others, it looks like bringing together communities for a 120-mile canoe race. Across Michigan, energy projects support new businesses and local jobs — bringing added tax revenue that strengthens schools, roads and public services. At the same time, partnerships with community organizations and foundation backed programs connect neighbors to support close to home.

Growth and care, showing up together — you can count on us to be where Michigan lives and works.

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Whatever's ahead of you, we're beside you.

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BRIGHTER FUTURES.
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INVEST IN DETROIT'S NEXT GENERATION

Battier Take Charge Guide Detroit empowers high school students with the tools, relationships, and real-world opportunities to graduate, succeed in college or career, and lead with purpose.

COLLEGE & CAREER ACCESS
Scholarships, exposure, and guidance to open doors.

MENTORSHIP & NETWORKS
Meaningful relationships with professionals and community leaders.

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES
Workshops, site visits, and hands-on learning opportunities.

LIFE SKILLS & LEADERSHIP
Building confidence, character, and the tools to thrive.

More Than Students
FUTURE LEADERS.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

DONATE
Invest directly in student success.

MENTOR
Share your time, knowledge, and experience.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES
Support with internships, job shadowing, or workplace experiences.

PARTNER
Collaborate with us to create more opportunities for Detroit youth.

INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED?
EMAIL ME AT wyman@battiertakecharge.org

PEOPLE | PURPOSE | OPPORTUNITY | DETROIT

A STRONGER DETROIT STARTS HERE.

2026 YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

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BUILD YOUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

We invite businesses and organizations to connect with students through workforce development opportunities, internships, resources, and career exploration.

TOGETHER, WE CAN DEVELOP TOMORROW'S LEADERS.



WHY PARTICIPATE?

ACCESS EMERGING TALENT
Connect with motivated students eager to learn and grow.

STRENGTHEN YOUR BRAND
Increase visibility and showcase your commitment to the next generation.

BUILD YOUR TALENT PIPELINE
Identify, engage, and develop future interns, co-op students, and full-time employees.

MAKE A LASTING IMPACT
Invest in students and communities while helping shape Michigan's future.

WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Participate in the Career Fair
- Host an Exhibit
- Provide Speakers or Mentors
- Offer Internships or Job Shadowing
- Become a Sponsor
- Become a Strategic Partner

OCTOBER 15, 2026

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PARTNER. INSPIRE. HIRE.
Help shape Michigan's future workforce while building stronger communities today.

Learn more at:
theunitycollaborative.org/events/youth-leadership-summit-2026/

NATIONAL

BLACK MEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

PURPOSE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP

LEAD. SERVE. ELEVATE.



WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 2, 2026

HUNTINGTON PLACE
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

CALLING ALL BUSINESSES!

BUSINESS COMMUNITY *Expo*

The **Business Community Expo** is your opportunity to showcase your business, build meaningful connections, and engage with leaders and professionals from across industries.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

- Showcase your business, products, services or organization
- Connect with leaders, professionals, and decision-makers
- Build new relationships and explore business opportunities
- Increase visibility and grow your brand

$2,500 GRANT OPPORTUNITY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

BLD BLACK LEADERS DETROIT

Selected eligible businesses and community organizations will have the opportunity to be considered for a $2,500 grant.

IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE GRANT, **YOU MUST BE REGISTERED AS A VENDOR FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY EXPO.**

TWO EASY STEPS!

1 REGISTER AS A VENDOR

Reserve your booth in the Business Community Expo.

VENDOR REGISTRATION

https://theunitycollaborative.org/black-men-in-leadership-conference-2026/

2 APPLY FOR THE GRANT

Complete the grant application for consideration.

GRANT APPLICATION

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TTYDHQL

Grant applications alone do not constitute registration.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Michigan-based Black-owned business or community organization
- ✓ In operation for at least one (1) year
- ✓ Must be registered as a vendor for the Business Community Expo
- ✓ Must complete and submit the grant application

★ REGISTER. SHOWCASE. CONNECT. ★

BE PART OF THE EXPERIENCE.

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QUESTIONS?
info@theunitycollaborative.com
www.theunitycollaborative.org

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PEOPLE. PERSPECTIVES. POSSIBILITIES. A STRONGER TOMORROW.

DIFFERENT GENERATIONS. A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

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BLACK MEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

PURPOSE. PEOPLE. PROGRESS.

DEC 2, 2026

HUNTINGTON PLACE
DETROIT, MI

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

DR. CORNEL WEST

Philosopher. Activist. Thought Leader.



WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Black men at all career stages | Executives & emerging leaders
Community leaders | Educators & students | Entrepreneurs
Policy makers | Allies and advocates for equitable leadership

- PURPOSE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP
- COMMUNITY CENTERED IMPACT
- MENTORSHIP & ADVOCACY
- ALLYSHIP IN ACTION

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- Lead with generational fluency
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- Drive long-term impact

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NOVEMBER 2-6, 2026 I JANUARY 25-29, 2027
DETROIT, MI



Different Generations. A Brighter Future.

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STRONGER PEOPLE | STRONGER ORGANIZATIONS | STRONGER COMMUNITIES

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FOR ATTENDING THE

2026 LEGAL SUMMIT:
The Case for Leadership



The Unity Collaborative (TUC) is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that helps employers, institutions, and public agencies build cultures of inclusion, opportunity, and belonging. Founded on a fourfold purpose — education, advocacy, collaboration, and support. TUC works with organizations to strengthen workforce engagement, develop leaders at every level of the enterprise, and translate stated commitments into measurable operating practices.

For event and general information contact:
ivy@theunitycollaborative.com

For corporate partnership and membership contact:
info@theunitycollaborative.com

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