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THE
FELLOWSHIP
HALL

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CHESRAY DOLPHA

BAC ARTIVISM FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM MANAGERS + MENTORS

DRIA BROWN & NIA AKILAH ROBINSON

THE FELLOWSHIP HALL PROJECT MANAGER

DRIA BROWN

THE FELLOWSHIP HALL PRODUCTION MANAGER

RACHAEL HARRIS

The Broadway musical *Wicked* is proud to be the lead sponsor of the BAC Artivism Fellowship. This year's Fellowship is also made possible by the generous support of Sonja and Jonathan Perkins, AT&T, The Elphaba Fund, Diana DiMenna, Abigail Disney, and the many other donors that supported this initiative.

THE HONORABLE

COURTNEY JAMISON

The Honorable, is a project archiving and celebrating the legacy of some of the first Black women judges in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As the daughter of one of these judges, creator/writer/director, Courtney Jamison, witnessed firsthand how her mother and fellow Black women navigated the judicial system with grace, integrity, fairness, and discernment.

In this virtual proof of concept, a cast of 7 Black women will embody Justice Cleo E. Powell, Judge Aundria D. Foster, Judge Birdie H. Jamison, Judge Eileen A. Olds, Judge Angela E. Roberts, Judge Margaret P. Spencer, and Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris. This iteration consists of theatricalized excerpts from interviews held with the judges exploring themes of integration, being “the first”, their law school experiences, coming of age during the Black Power movement, the intersectionality of Black womanhood, discretion versus power, “ole white man” kind of justice, liberation, motherhood, and their hopes for the future of the judiciary. While honoring their legacy, this project also calls to action much needed changes in the judiciary moving forward. In order to create a more equitable and fair system, we must highlight the ways in which judges are not represented in numbers that reflect the population. From 2017-2020, more than 230 judges were appointed to the bench by the former President. These judges were overwhelmingly white, male, and conservative. Taking inspiration from the anthropological work of Zora Neale Hurston, as well as Heidi Schrek’s *What The Constitution Means to Me*, The Honorable is also intended to use theatre and documentary filmmaking as a means of demystifying the judicial system. Through the firsthand recollections provided by Black women, we get more intersectional insight and accessible knowledge.

Listening to Black women is an act of revolution. Sit and listen to their memories, anecdotes, and lessons... preserve and pass on their stories.

COURTNEY JAMISON (CREATOR/WRITER/DIRECTOR)



Courtney Jamison is an award-winning multi-hyphenate artist born and raised in Richmond, VA. She is a graduate of James Madison University and the Yale School of Drama MFA Acting Program, where she took part in the development process of many new works as an actor, writer, and director. Courtney starred in and produced *Slave Cry*, about representation in the industry and taking down the Confederate monuments in Richmond. It won the 2019 Commonwealth Award for Best Short Film at the Virginia Film Festival and recently screened at the 2021 Pan African Film Festival. Her directorial debut, *Day 74*, won the 2020 Curbside Shorts Film Challenge Grand Prize sponsored by Women in Film LA, IMDbPro, and ReFrame Project. Some acting credits include *Slave Play*, *If Pretty Hurts... Ugly Must Be a Muhfucka*, *Some Bodies Travel*, *The Three Sisters*, and *The Winter’s Tale* (Yale Drama); *The Suffragists* (The Public Theatre/Sundance Institute Workshop); *School Girls*; or, *the African Mean Girls Play* (MCC Theater); and *Assassins* (Yale Repertory Theatre) Thank you to Mom, Dad, Jai, Nia, Dria, the Broadway Advocacy Coalition, all the 2020 fellows, this remarkable cast for their time and generosity, the Judge Aunties who raised me, and my “soul squad” who has been so encouraging throughout this process! www.courtneyjamison.com

ACTORS and JUDGES

*Actors' Equity



JUSTICE POWELL

The Honorable Cleo E. Powell has served on the Supreme Court of Virginia since 2011. She has the distinction of being the first and the only African American woman to serve on that Court. She received her undergraduate degree, with distinction, from the University of Virginia (UVA-1979) and her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law (1982). Justice Powell began her judicial career on the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights General District Court in 1993, She was elevated to the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Circuit Court in 2000 and then to the Court of Appeals of Virginia in 2008. Justice Powell has maintained the distinction of being the first African American woman judge at each level of the judiciary where she has served. She is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including Virginia Women in History (2013); Strong Men & Women Excellence in Leadership (2011); Virginia Women Attorneys Association 2010 Leader in Diversity; Virginia Lawyers Weekly Influential Women of Virginia (2010); Metro Richmond Women's Bar Association, Woman of the Year 2009; and the YWCA's Outstanding Women of the Year (2001). In 2011, Justice Powell began leading

the Rule of Law Day at the Capital in conjunction with the Diversity Conference and the Young Lawyers Conference of the Virginia State Bar. The purpose of the program is to educate local middle and high school students about the Rule of Law principles and the operations of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Held annually at the Virginia State Capital and the Virginia Supreme Court, approximately 300 students are engaged in a day of learning while discussing legal scenarios with attorneys, judges, and law enforcement officers. Justice Powell chairs the Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee and serves on the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference of Virginia. She gives her love to her family for their unconditional love and support. Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you saith the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you."



SHAUNETTE RENEE WILSON * (Justice Powell)

Shaunette is a proud New Yorker and an impassioned filmmaker having written, directed and produced her own projects. After receiving her MFA in Acting from the Yale School of Drama she has consistently worked in film and television, most notably Showtime's *Billions* opposite Damian Lewis, and Marvel's *Black Panther* opposite Sterling K. Brown. Other credits include Hulu's *Into the Dark: Treehouse* and can currently be seen on Fox's *The Resident* as Dr. Mina Okafor. She is the recipient of the 2015 Princess Grace Award (Grace LeVine Theater Award)



JUDGE FOSTER

The Honorable Aundria D. Foster became the first African-American woman judge in her hometown of Newport News, Virginia, in 1991, when the Virginia General Assembly elected her to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations (J&DR) Court. During her thirteen year tenure with the J&DR Court, Judge Foster became the first African-American woman to serve as their Chief Judge and she established the first Juvenile Drug Treatment Court in the Hampton Roads area. She is also credited with establishing the foundation for their first Family Drug Treatment Court. In 2004, Judge Foster was elevated to the Seventh Judicial Circuit Court, where once again, she distinguished herself as the first African-American woman to serve in that capacity. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Foster was an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in Newport News. In that capacity, she helped establish the first Domestic Violence Intervention Program in Virginia. Previously, she also was an attorney with the Peninsula Legal Aid Center, where she represented low income clients in a variety of civil matters. Her outstanding career as a lawyer and a judge in Newport News is filled with many notable honors,

awards and accomplishments. Judge Foster retired from the Circuit Court Bench in 2011, but continues to serve as needed all over the State on the Recall/Substitute Judge List with the Virginia Supreme Court. She gives honor and thanks to her wonderful family for their unconditional love and support, with special recognition to her devoted late husband, Ezekiel Foster, Jr., their three awesome children and four absolutely perfect grandchildren. One of her favorite quotes is from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."



AVA MCCOY (Judge Foster)

A native of Glenn Dale, Maryland, Ava is an alum of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and holds a B.S in Dramatic Arts; Film and Television Production from St John's University. Her passion for performance sparked at an early age, performing in school productions from the age of nine. She spent six years as a member of AfroModa Theatre Dance Company. Other credits include Macbeth (Connelly Theater), The Unusual Tale of Mary and Joseph's Baby (SoHo Playhouse), 125th and FREEdom (National Black Theatre). She was nominated for an AUDELCO Award for her portrayal of Ismene in Classical Theater of Harlem's: Antigone (Richard Rogers Amphitheater). During quarantine of 2020, Ava co-produced the IMDb/Women in Film/ReFrame/Curbside Shorts award winning short film, Day 74.



JUDGE JAMISON

The Honorable Birdie Hairston Jamison became the first woman judge in the General District Court in the City of Richmond (Virginia) in 1991. During her 24 year tenure on the Bench, she was elected by her colleagues to serve as the first woman Chief Judge of the Thirteenth Judicial District and she was elected to the Statewide District Court Executive Committee. Judge Jamison was also appointed by the Chief Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court to numerous leadership committees and she helped to research, write and present the nationally acclaimed "Hardcore Drunk Driving" Judicial Education Manual to judges all over the country. Prior to Judge Jamison being elected to the Bench by the Virginia General Assembly, she had received numerous honors and awards and she was recognized throughout the state as a trailblazer in the legal profession. She was the first African -American woman to serve as an assistant Commonwealth's Attorney in Roanoke, Virginia and she also was the first woman to serve as the Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Richmond. Additionally, she served as an assistant Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Virginia, in the Criminal Litigation Division,

arguing appellate cases in State and Federal Courts. Judge Jamison has always been a dedicated community service volunteer and in her retirement, she continues to mentor hundreds of students and young lawyers. She is a proud graduate of the College of William and Mary, BBA (1979) and JD (1982). Her favorite motto is "Unto whom much is given, much is expected." She wants to express sincere gratitude to her family for their love and support, with a special "shout-out" to her wonderful children, Jai and Courtney for always making her smile!



CHALIA LATOUR* (Judge Jamison)

CHALIA LaTOUR is a 2020 Tony nominee for her work in the critically acclaimed Broadway production of *Slave Play* and a recipient of the inaugural Antonyo award for Best Featured Actor in a Broadway Play. Originally from Stockton, California, La Tour is a multi disciplinary artist in theatre, television, film and visual art. She is committed to work that promotes social justice and the intersections of humanity. **Film:** *The Future is Bright*, *Love Repeat* and *Three Pregnant Men*. *The Future is Bright* had the honor of screening at the inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival. **TV:** *The Good Fight*, *The Code* and *Elementary* on CBS. **Off-Broadway:** *Slave Play* (New York Theatre Workshop), *The Review or How to Eat Your Opposition* (Women's Theatre Project), *The Danger: An Homage to Strange Fruit* (JACK). **Regional:** *Cadillac Crew* (Yale Repertory Theatre), *Cymbeline* (Yale Repertory Theatre) La Tour is an alumna of the Yale School of Drama MFA Acting program and The British American Dramatic Academy. For more information on her work follow @chalialatour on Instagram.



JUDGE OLDS

The Honorable Eileen A. Olds was born in Salisbury, NC and raised in Chesapeake, VA. She received a B.A. with Distinction from the University of Virginia; and a Juris Doctorate from the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary. She made history in 1995 when she became one of two African Americans and the first female Judge of the First Judicial Circuit of Virginia. She was then and remains the only Virginian elected as President of the American Judges Association in 2007. She was inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society as a Distinguished William and Mary Alumnae in 2017. Featured in *Ebony*, *Port Folio*, *Distinction*, *University of Virginia*, *William and Mary*, and *Court Review* magazines, and quoted in numerous periodicals including the *Virginian Pilot* and the *New York Times*, Olds retired as a Judge of the Chesapeake (VA) Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court after twenty-four years of service on July 1, 2019. Eileen is also the award winning author of "Twin Expectations: Raising the Bar, Raising Expectations, Raising Children!" She cherishes the memory of her mother, Frances (Puddin') and her beloved, Earl Robinson, for their profound impact in her life. Many thanks to Fran, (her identical twin sister) and to nephew and niece Brett and Bria for everything!



PAIGE GILBERT* (Judge Olds)

Paige’s latest theatrical performance was Bessie in The Rose Tattoo at Broadway’s American Airlines Theatre. After reprising the role of Gifty in the Drama Desk Award Winning School Girls; Or The African Mean Girls Play, Paige returned to MCC Theatre as Octavia in BLKS. Film credits include: Late Night and Adam, both official selections of the 2019 Sundance Film festival. On the small screen, her credits include the HBO series, “The Deuce” and “High Maintenance.”



JUDGE ROBERTS

The Honorable Angela Edwards Roberts has the distinction of being the FIRST African American Woman Judge in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 1990 , the Virginia General Assembly elected Judge Roberts to preside in the City of Richmond’s Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. This achievement opened the door of opportunity for other highly qualified African American women lawyers to also be elected by the Legislature to the Virginia Judiciary. Judge Roberts has a long and distinguished record of being “the first” African American/Woman to accomplish/participate in many educational and career opportunities. She was the first African American Chief Judge for the Court where she presided. Prior to her election to the bench, she was “the first” African American female assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney for the City of Richmond. Additionally, she was “the first” African American assistant bar counsel for the Virginia State Bar. Judge Roberts has been recognized by numerous legal, civic and social organizations for her outstanding contributions to the legal profession and for her dedicated service to the children and families of Richmond and throughout the State. Notably, she was inducted

into the Virginia Lawyer’s Hall of Fame, earned the ODBA Lifetime Achievement Award and was named an Outstanding Woman in the Law by the YMCA. She earned her undergraduate degree from Virginia Tech and her Juris Doctor from the Emory University School of Law. Since her retirement, Judge Roberts has enjoyed spending time on the golf course and putting on her judicial robe whenever she is needed as a substitute judge in Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts throughout the State. She always gives honor and praise to God and to her family for their love and inspiration with special thanks to her ninety year old Mother, Mrs. Annie Anderson , her husband, Roscoe (an attorney) and their two adult sons, Anthony (Olivia) and Justin. Judge Roberts reflects on the careers of her judicial colleagues’ success by quoting Maya Angelou, “Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it.”



ANTOINETTE CROWE-LEGACY* (Judge Roberts)

Antoinette Crowe-Legacy graduated in 2018 from the Yale School of Drama. She currently resides in New York City where she has played in “If Pretty Hurts Ugly Must Be A Muhfucka” by Tori Sampson and “BLKS” by Aziza Barnes. You can catch her in the film “Passing” and she is currently starring in the television show “Godfather of Harlem” on Epix.



JUDGE SPENCER

The Honorable Margaret P. Spencer formally retired as a Richmond (Va) Judge in September 2014. She was originally elected by the Virginia General Assembly to the General District Court bench in 1994. Subsequently, Judge Spencer became the first African American woman to serve on the Richmond City Circuit Court bench in 1998, when she was elevated to that position by the Virginia Legislature. She was also the first woman to serve as the Chief Judge for that Court. Judge Spencer, a graduate of the University of Virginia (UVA) and the Howard University School of Law, continues to serve as a retired/substitute judge and is frequently recalled to preside in Circuit Courts throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. After law school, she directed the Alexandria Legal Aid Society and was an attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Previously, she also served as a Senior Appellate Attorney in the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division in Washington. DC and as an

Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Litigation Division of the Office of the Attorney General in Virginia. Additionally, Judge Spencer shared her wealth of legal knowledge by teaching as a law professor at the College of William and Mary School of Law, as an adjunct law professor at the UVA School of Law and as a valued Judicial Instructor at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada. Judge Spencer was instrumental in the creation of the Richmond Adult Drug Treatment Court and held a leadership role in the successful implementation of that Drug Court. Additionally, she served as a consultant with the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and helped to develop Drug Treatment Courts all over the country. She has received numerous awards, honors and recognitions for her stellar career in the law. Notably, Judge Spencer has been an invaluable mentor to many law students, young lawyers and new judges. She sends all her love and “light” to her loving family for their support, and extends special appreciation and love to her husband, The Honorable James Spencer (US District Court-Retired) and their son, Dr. Stephen Spencer and his wife, Annie.



MARION GREY (Judge Spencer)

Marion Grey is a New York City based actress and poet. On stage she's played Sarah in Ragtime, Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Irinia in Three Sisters, and Jesus in Godspell. Offstage she develops her love of language through writing poetry and studying Italian. She holds her Bachelors Degree from James Madison University and is in her second year of graduate study at The Juilliard School.



JUDGE TALTON-HARRIS

The Honorable Alfreda Talton-Harris retired in 2016 as Chief Judge of the Suffolk Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. A native of Southampton County, Alfreda Talton-Harris graduated as salutatorian from Riverview High School. She earned a bachelor's degree from Spelman College and a law degree from American University. Alfreda Talton-Harris practiced law in Norfolk, inspired students as an assistant professor at Youngstown State University, and served the City of Suffolk as an assistant prosecutor. In 1992, Alfreda Talton-Harris became a judge of the Suffolk Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court of the 5th Judicial District of Virginia, where she presided with great fairness and wisdom for nearly 25 years. Alfreda Talton-Harris also worked to strengthen and enhance the Hampton Roads community as a member of numerous civic and service organizations, including as vice chair of the Franklin City School Board and past president of the Old Dominion Bar Association; she is currently a member of the YMCA Black Achievers Program, Girlfriends, Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and First Baptist Church of Franklin. A woman of great integrity, Alfreda Talton-Harris has served the City of Suffolk and the Commonwealth with the utmost professionalism and dedication. After her well-earned retirement, she continues to seek new opportunities to serve the community and spend more time with her husband, Alvin, and their daughters, Aliste and Alexa.



DRIA BROWN* (Judge Talton-Harris)

Dria is a multi-hyphenate artist and community gatherer/caregiver living and working in Lenapehoking (Brooklyn). In community with the Broadway Advocacy Coalition she holds many titles- Co-Program Manager of the Artivism Fellowship, Project Manager for The Fellowship Hall, Theater of Change Facilitator at Columbia Law School and Chief of Staff of the organization. As a storyteller Dria has her BFA in Acting from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and has performed in multiple National Tours, Regional productions, off-Broadway and is the voice of Miss Evangeline in Man in the High Castle's Resistance Radio. www.driabrown.com #abolitionisselfcare.