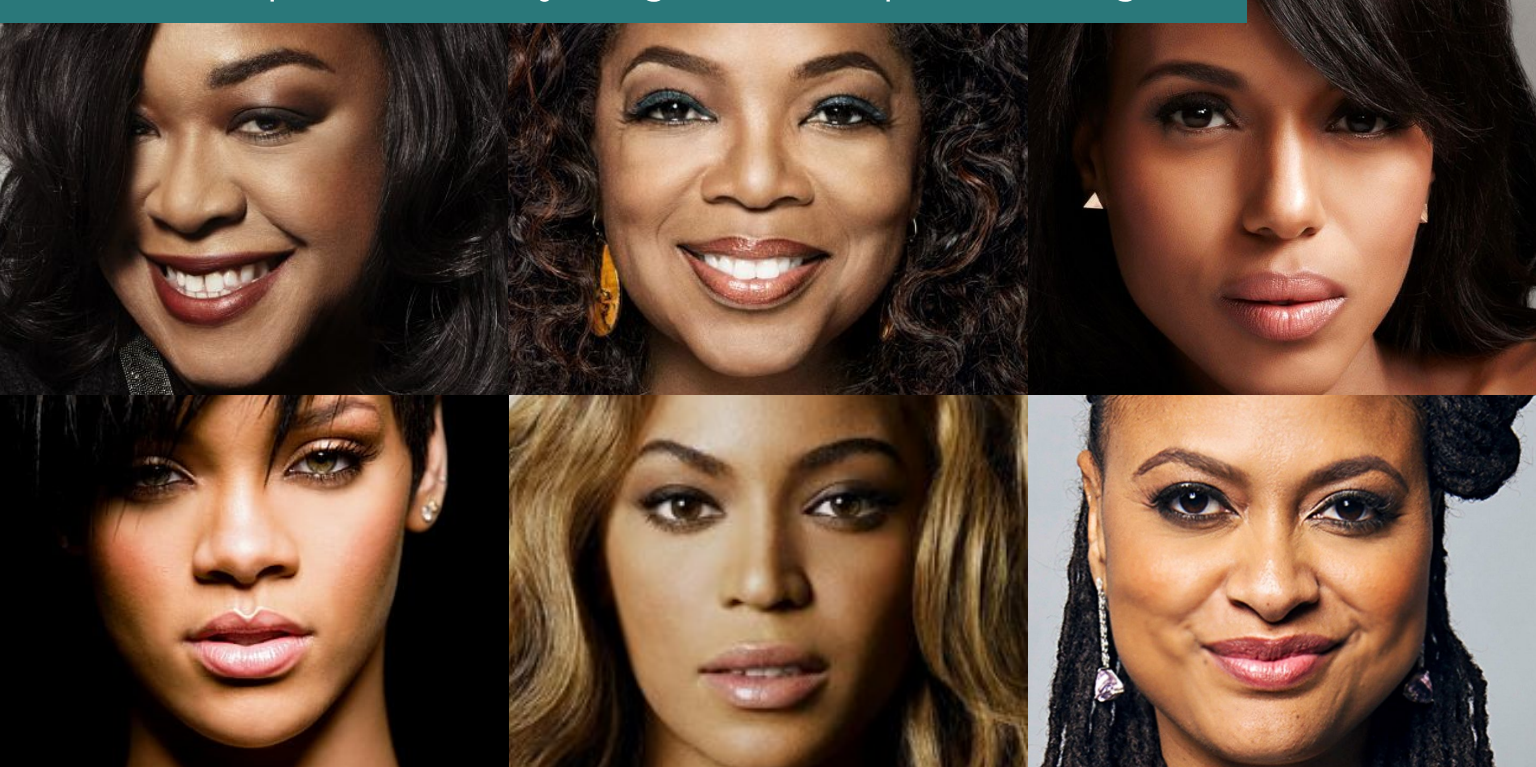


# CULTURAL ICONS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



The Iconic Impact Initiative by Bridge Philanthropic Consulting, LLC



## WOMEN AND PROTEST



By Tashon Macon, Ph.D, Jennifer Jiles, and Dwayne Ashley

# Introduction



## **The New Philanthropy Frontier: W.A.P.: Women and Protest**

We are living in a historic moment, a tipping point—one where conversations about anti-racism and racial equity are prevalent. It is a moral imperative that the philanthropy sector embraces new shining examples, expand the narratives it expresses, and diversify the people it showcases. Philanthropy must consistently reflect donor diversity in an authentic, meaningful way and not merely as an opportunity to 'check-the-box' and feel as though benchmarks of showcasing the many shades of philanthropy have been met.

Donors of color have always existed. They are generous, charitable, and have historically engaged in robust philanthropic support of the civil rights, human rights, and social justice movements of our time. This fact is not new, but it may be news to many people. The commitment to highlighting and connecting with Black philanthropists in a manner that honors cultural competency and distinction is the new frontier.

Before renowned philanthropists Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford, and John D. Rockefeller were even born, Black women were philanthropic leaders, and though unsung, were often at the forefront of social change. Women such as Julia Williams, Bridget “Biddy” Mason, and Sarah Mapps Douglass organized and funded anti-slavery movements in 19th century America.

As Maya Angelou said in 1978, “Out of the huts of history’s shame, I rise. Up from a past that’s rooted in pain, I rise.” And, today, as showcased in this position paper, W.A.P.: Women and Protest, Black women are leveraging their platform on the world stage to build a culture of philanthropy and advocacy for social justice.

With an African-American woman as the first Madam Vice President, history is being made. As delighted as I am at this monumental event, I am more delighted that Black Women keep lifting their voices despite the challenges and barriers that threaten to block their path. It is a virtue for which society owes a debt of gratitude.

As a former Philanthropic Chief Executive Officer of a Fortune 100 company foundation and a current Advisory Board Member of Bridge Philanthropic Consulting, I know that this inflection point in our society is the perfect time to pivot to a more just world. We can do more than be on the precipice of change. We can push for it and accept nothing less.

Like the Black women highlighted in this paper have lifted their voices and took bold steps to lead change, it is time that the philanthropic sector promotes the value of African-American philanthropic professionals and perspectives to the C-Suite. It is time that African-American philanthropic firms are financially positioned to be grant makers, not only fundraisers.

It is time that the lived experience shows up across all tiers of leadership so that those we serve can see themselves rising from their social position. They will then know that their social location is not a destination. They will know that hardships are not defining, but directional. They will feel empowered to do what the disenfranchised often do – decide that a better way is possible and push towards it. Join us. It’s a journey in which you will not merely be an observer but an active participant and a change maker. This is your time to really make a difference, to be a pioneer in changing the face of philanthropy. How will you use this moment to make sure what you do is not just transactional but transformative?

### **Vivian Pickard**

CEO, *The Pickard Group*

Member, *BPC Corporate Advisory Board*



Images via Forbes Magazine, NegroNews, BBC News, Cardi B's Instagram, Getty Images/Stephane De Sakutin

# WAP: Women And Protest

Despite the challenges presented, famous and influential black female artists have contributed to social change and the social justice movement by speaking up and out about what women deserve and pushing the conversation and the envelope to dismantle inequality. These Sheroes' voices are being raised to a higher pitch as they, as public figures, use their platforms to hold society accountable for its actions against black persons.

A recent study published by the American Psychological Association found that even though Black women across the United States have been marching for decades at the forefront of protests demanding justice and equality, they are still disregarded by the very social justice movements they support. "Black women are often overlooked in people's conversations about racism and sexism even though they face a unique combination of both of these forms of discrimination simultaneously," said Stewart Coles, lead researcher of the study.

However, since the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, rappers like Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B are leaders in creating a breakthrough among American entertainment and cultural icons. Their voices are being heard with unprecedented clarity and power. The two have given their raunchy women's empowerment anthem "W.A.P." a new meaning: Women And Protest. Paramount is a commitment to protest and stand up as women of color. We mean a willingness to take the heat and speak out publicly to take their rightful place as women of power.

Billie Holiday was at the forefront in taking that protest path when she sang "Strange Fruit," a song released in 1939 about racist lynchings. Concurrent to this watershed cultural moment, events following the release of the song will be dramatized in *The United States vs. Billie Holiday*. The film stars Grammy-nominated and Billboard and Soul Train award-winning Andra Day and is directed by Oscar-nominated Lee Daniels (*Precious*) and written by Suzan-Lori Parks (a Pulitzer Prize finalist, Tony Award, Obie Award, and NAACP Award-winning playwright and screenwriter); it is scheduled to be released on February 12, 2021, by Paramount Pictures. The drama delves into the Federal Bureau of Narcotics' quest to imprison Holiday on drug charges as retribution for her singing political songs like "Strange Fruit" and her dedication to integrating audiences.

Nina Simone followed Holiday, singing other music in the same protest spirit. Do yourself a favor and watch the critically acclaimed and Oscar Nominated, "What Happened, Miss Simone?" (Netflix).

The incomparable 4X Grammy Award, Tony Award, Emmy Award, and NAACP Image Award-winning Lena Horne, too light-skinned to star opposite leading Black actors of her day but performing in a society that wouldn't give her the chance to star alongside Whites, achieved stardom despite segregation and systemic and structural racism. Lena Horne later participated in the March on Washington in 1963 and countless other rallies. Aretha Franklin's music was frequently a type of protest that demanded "R-E-S-P-E-C-T."

But as Coles said, those efforts were often overshadowed. Now, we have a new cadre of Black women who have stepped forward with unprecedented boldness, brashness, and confidence. They are pushing the envelope and driving engagement.

In this position paper, we salute African-American females on the entertainment and cultural stage who are taking the protest path in new directions.



# Megan Thee Stallion & Cardi B



Before Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, Black women almost never had spoken out with such raw, uncensored, unvarnished candor. They are leaders of a new generation and have emerged despite considerable pressure. Oprah Winfrey, the wealthiest and probably most beloved African American woman of all time, has advocated for a more traditional approach,

with leaders stepping up in an organized fashion instead of high-profile individuals speaking out to protest in an uncoordinated way.



In October 2020, rapper/singer Megan Thee Stallion gave Saturday Night Live viewers a performance unlike any seen before in the series' first 45 seasons. Her "Savage" performance was targeted directly at Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron after no indictment was filed against police officers in the killing seven months earlier of Louisville emergency medical technician Breonna Taylor.

The words "Protect Black Women" were prominent on the screen behind Megan. Then, just as the song was starting to wind down, the audio and image of gunshots interrupted the music, and the voice of Malcolm X from his 1962 "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself" speech rang out: "The most disrespected, unprotected, neglected person in America is the Black woman. Who taught you to hate the texture of your hair? The color of your skin? The shape of your nose? Who taught you to hate yourself from the top of your head to the soles of your feet?" Activist Tamika Mallory's criticism of Cameron came next: "Daniel Cameron is no different than the sellout Negroes that sold our people into slavery."

Finally, with a fierce gaze, Megan punctuated the performance with these words: "We need to protect our Black women and love our Black women. Because at the end of the day, we need our Black women. We need to protect our Black men and stand up for our Black men because, at the end of the day, we're tired of seeing hashtags of our Black men."

The power of media, especially music, has brought a boost of empowerment and entertainment to everyone during the Coronavirus pandemic's challenging times. Given the turbulent and unprecedented times and impact of COVID-19, W.A.P.'s song brought much-needed joy and humor. In the spirit of Madonna's Like A Virgin, W.A.P. is a song and video that will not be easily forgotten. It is a sexually empowering, iconic, and huge hit globally. When released, W.A.P. immediately conquered the #1 spot on the charts and consumer views, staying there for four (4) consecutive weeks in the face of aggressive conservative criticism; nonetheless, it racked up 142 million views.



**When the song W.A.P. debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart, Cardi and Megan celebrated by donating to fans in need. "We're partnering ... to give away a total of \$1 million to celebrate all you powerful women out there," Cardi tweeted. "Tell us why you or a woman you know can use a piece of the \$." Tweeted Megan: "To all everyone supporting #W.A.P.! We see you!!"**

According to U.N. Women, the irrefutable economic effects of COVID-19 caused many women-dominant industries such as hospitality, food service, retail, and entertainment to lose approximately a "WAPPING" 60% of their income globally. These facts' unearthing highlighted the disproportionate struggles of being a working woman, as those industries cannot telecommute and are often underpaid.

Further, it earned massive critical acclaim for its outright female body-positive and sex-positive lyrics. There was no 'shaming' to be found. *Slate Magazine* stated: "W.A.P. may be breathlessly direct, but it also continues a long legacy of risqué and risk-taking female pop artists, and the heated reactions -- empowerment, ownership, exploitation - ignited by their expressions."

While their power as protestors has been discussed, there is one other critical point: like so many of their famous sisters, the two women are not only giving by putting their reputations on the line but philanthropically as well.

The record-breaking song's release helped women find a newfound acknowledgment for the female voice during a difficult time. The number of views solidified an unstoppable momentum of women deciding to take agency of their bodies, especially in a cultural and political environment seeking to normalize misogyny.





# Lizzo

Lizzo has exploded onto the scene and made her mark on the music scene in an unmistakable manner while displaying a philanthropic bent. It took several years for Lizzo's music to make a dent, but there was no turning back when it did.

Lizzo is clearly driven by her past. She lived in a car at one point and struggled with her mental health, including depression and anxiety. Even as her fame soared and she was booked at some of the world's most prestigious festivals—such as Coachella and Austin City Limits—she carved out time to support mental health and suicide prevention organizations. By far, she was the biggest star to appear at "Live. Life. Love: Concert for Suicide Prevention" in November 2019. She came out at the concert to acknowledge she is a survivor and came dangerously close to not making it through.

Addressing anyone who had been in her shoes, she said: "I don't know if you need to hear this message, but we need you. ... I am so glad you're still here. I know what it feels like to be unhappy, I know what it feels like to be depressed, and I also know what it feels like to survive it. ... If you know anyone who is dealing with emotional or mental illness—please play them my music—and be there, be a support system."

**“I don't need  
a crown  
to know that  
I'm a queen.”**

Her unashamedly plus-size shape has also driven her to speak out for women. As she sings in "Scuse Me": "I don't need a crown to know that I'm a queen."

After the killing of Floyd in Minneapolis, she stepped to the social justice platform, where the Detroit-born singer was living when her recording career took off. Lizzo knows the streets where Floyd lived and died and where protests erupted.

"I saw one of my friends say, you know, 'F\*\*kin' cop just shot another Black man. Let's all head out,'" she told Vogue's, Claudia Rankine. On Instagram, days after the killing, Lizzo wrote: "Protest is not the end of progress, it is the beginning." The post received almost 300,000 likes and 3,000 comments.



# Rihanna

The singing star has let her feelings be known on social media. She erupted on Instagram after Floyd's killing to demand justice. "If intentional MURDER is the fit consequence for 'drugs' or 'resisting arrest'... then what's the fit consequence for MURDER???" she posted on Instagram in May with a photo of Floyd.

She vented again a month later to demand justice for Taylor. "Her killers are at home watching Netflix on the couch. W.T.F. is America?!" she posted on Instagram. Rihanna, Lizzo, Megan Thee Stallion, Mary J. Blige and Paula Abdul were among numerous celebs who were successful in demanding that New York repeal a law to shield personnel and disciplinary records of police officers, correction officers and firefighters.

Rihanna was among a group of 400 entertainers who called for police reform after Floyd's killing.

However, in her acceptance speech at the 2020 NAACP Image Awards, she showed a different side, preaching unity. "The 'If it's your problem, then it's not mine.' 'It's a woman's problem.' 'It's a Black people problem.' 'It's a poor people problem.' How many of us in this room have colleagues and partners and friends from other races, sexes, religions? Show of hands? Well then, they want to break bread with you, right? They like you? Well then, this is their problem, too."

**"People are judging you because you're packaged a certain way - they've been programmed to think a black man in a hoodie means grab your purse a little tighter."**



# Beyoncé



It was pop powerhouse Beyoncé in whom intergenerational African-American women found a modern-day icon who was willing to put her star power on the line and genuinely face significant risk. In 2016, she laid the foundation for bold, high-profile protests with her album "Lemonade." Her song "Freedom" is an anthem for empowerment. It invokes the historical subjugation of African Americans by slavery and broaching the issues of police brutality. The video included the mothers of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner holding portraits of their dead children.

The song that provoked the most fury, however, was "Formation." The song alludes to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and violence against Black people. But the lyrics were not what provoked the fiercest backlash from the police community. The video, the release of which came on the heels of the police-related deaths of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, did that. In it, she stood on top of a New Orleans police cruiser sinking into the water as a message against police brutality. In the end, houses in the background, and even Beyoncé herself sink, suggested it's not just police brutality that she was targeting.

Her performance of the song at the Super Bowl, where she and dancers wore costumes paying homage to the Black Panther Party of the civil rights era, put the song front and center.

"The fact that Beyoncé used this year's Super Bowl to divide Americans by promoting the Black Panthers and her anti-police message show how she does not support law enforcement," said Javier Ortiz, president of the Miami Fraternal Order of Police.

**Beyoncé, however, said she was not delivering an anti-police message. "I have so much admiration and respect for officers and the families of officers who sacrifice themselves to keep us safe," she said in an interview with Elle magazine. "But let's be clear: I am against police brutality and injustice. Those are two separate things."**

Despite the anger over the killings of Martin, Castile, and others, and despite creating the Black Lives Matter movement, no decisive action against police brutality resulted. She raised her game in 2019 with the release of the concert documentary "Homecoming" and her performance at the Coachella music festival, where she served as the first headliner. The performance at Coachella, with the documentary revealing the detailed run-up to the festival, was a tribute to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The use of orchestral samplings of Southern greats like C-Murder and Juvenile and the incorporation of classic marching band fight songs celebrated the HBCU culture.

She also has been active in Africa through her BeyGOOD philanthropic foundation financially and through her voice. In October, she released a statement supporting the anti-police brutality movement in Nigeria after many were killed by security forces.



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*"It is my hope that society learns and accepts that passion and protest are twin flames. The women featured in this paper embody both in immeasurable ways. Black women have historically been on the front lines. Now, it's time that they and all that they hold dear and desire are at the front of the line. Give them what they came for: freedom, justice, and liberty for all."*

Tashion Macon, Ph.D.

**"The story [of Blacks] has been told from one point of view for too long."**



# Ava DuVernay

Ava DuVernay's work has been making an impact on the big and small screen. Her 2014 film "Selma" opened eyes to the 1965 voting rights marches. She directed hundreds of actors, both Black and White, in restaging civil rights protests. "When They See Us" addressed the wrongful conviction of the teenage boys known as the Central Park Five. Her Netflix documentary "13th" examines the legacy of American slavery up until today. In 2018, only 14 percent of Hollywood directors were Black. All but one of them were male: DuVernay was the exception.

After the Floyd killing, DuVernay introduced the Law Enforcement Accountability Project, which aims to support Black and female artists who focus on police violence.

"The story [of Blacks] has been told from one point of view for too long," she told the *New*

*York Times*. "And when we say story, I don't just mean film or television. I mean, the stories we embrace as part of the criminalization of Black people. Every time an officer writes a police report about an incident, they're telling a story. Look at the case of Breonna Taylor and her police report. They had nothing on it; it said she had no injuries. That is a story of those officers saying, 'Nothing to look at here, nothing happened!' But that's not the story that happened because if she could speak for herself, she would say, 'I was shot in the dark on a no-knock warrant in my bed. So when you think of her story and multiply that times hundreds of thousands of people over the years in communities of color, specifically Black communities, a single storyline has led the day, and we need to change that storyline,' she added. "And to do that, you have to change who the storytellers are."

**“We look at ourselves to get better and do better. When we say we're committed to diversity —it's diverse from what?”**



# Kerry Washington

Kerry Washington has cast an eye on the entertainment industry for its failure to have Blacks represented properly in its ranks and among its honorees. She was nominated for, but not win, an Emmy for Lead Actress in a Drama Series for her role as Olivia Pope in Shonda Rhimes' "Scandal," one of many victims of the Emmy Blackout. The role had made Washington the first Black actress to headline a primetime network drama series in over 30 years. She was also the first Black actress nominated in the category in 20 years.

"We have to be willing to look at ourselves, regardless of what industry we're in," she told E.T. Online. "We look at ourselves to get better and do better. When we say we're committed to diversity—it's diverse from what? We're still

centering whiteness as the most important thing and inviting diversity around that."

Washington paid tribute to Black lives lost to injustice in the Broadway play, "American Son." She later made the play into a film, released in 2019 on Netflix.

"I had a wall in my dressing room at the theater dedicated to images of a lot of these young men," she told Deadline. "Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile... And women, too, like Sandra Bland. When a new incident happened, I would add pictures to that wall because it felt to me like the play was, in some ways, a magnificent prayer to the unraveling of these injustices. I was constantly adding pictures to it until it took up the entire wall."



# Shonda Rhimes

**"People of color are not sassy or dangerous or wise. And, believe me, people of color are never anybody's sidekick in real life. I created the content that I wanted to see and I created what I know is normal."**

Shonda Rhimes, creator of "Grey's Anatomy," "How to Get Away with Murder," and "Scandal" has made her mark as a pioneer in the T.V. industry, casting strong, complex people of color in her shows' lead roles. She was also among 300 prominent actresses and female agents, writers, directors, producers, and entertainment executives who formed an ambitious, sprawling "Time's Up" initiative to fight systemic sexual harassment in Hollywood and in blue-collar workplaces nationwide.

Rhimes also has spoken out on police brutality. She posted a photo on Instagram of her with members of the Grey's Anatomy cast taking a knee in support of N.F.L. players protesting

racial injustice. "I think: By kneeling, players don't disrespect the flag. They ask the U.S. to respect the flag. They ask us to make the anthem true for all of us," she tweeted in 2017.

Rhimes was vocal in 2016 when many were blaming the Black Lives Matter movement for the shooting of five police officers in Dallas. "If I hear one more idiot suggest that #BlackLivesMatter incited this... The level of ignorance is stunning," she tweeted. "Just absolutely stunning."

Rhimes has her own website where she posts articles such as "The Fight for Racial Justice Is a Movement, Not a Moment."



# Oprah Winfrey

Oprah may have taken a bit of criticism for being a traditionalist. However, there's no denying she has been giving of herself powerfully. Breonna Taylor's picture appeared on the cover of O magazine, marking the first time in the publication's 20 years that anyone but Winfrey appeared on it. The accompanying article was topped with four ways to demand justice: signing a pair of petitions, calling officials in Louisville and the state of Kentucky, donating to the Louisville Community Bail Fund to aid protesters in Taylor's hometown, and using the hashtag #SayHerName, so no one forgets Taylor's.

Winfrey and her team amplified the message by erecting 26 billboards across Louisville, displaying the O cover—one billboard for each year of Taylor's life. The billboards included a powerful quote from Oprah: "If you turn a blind eye to racism, you become an accomplice to it."

In 2020, her OWN cable network held a two-night town hall event called "OWN Spotlight: Where Do We Go from Here." It premiered the same night as the funeral for

**"If you turn a blind eye to racism, you become an accomplice to it."**

Floyd and included conversations with Ava DuVernay and Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams, whose voter registration efforts contributed to Joe Biden's upset victory in that state in the November election. Winfrey held the event because although she had aired numerous shows on racism, she found Floyd's killing to be a "true tipping point." Her goal was to help set the course for durable change in the fight against systemic racism.

**"I feel like my entire life has been a protest. My production company is my protest. Me not wearing a wig at the Oscars in 2012 was my protest. It is a part of my voice, just like introducing myself to you and saying, 'Hello, my name is Viola Davis.'"**

A close-up portrait of Viola Davis with dark, wavy hair, wearing a white blazer over a dark top and large, teardrop-shaped earrings. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

# Viola Davis

Viola Davis, with neighbor and "The Help" co-star Octavia Spencer, wanted to be among the throngs protesting in Los Angeles after the killing of Floyd. However, Spencer talked her down, pointing out the COVID-19 health risk to themselves and their loved ones. But they found another way to be heard. They staged a neighborhood demonstration with friends and family members in Studio City, wearing masks that made them unrecognizable. Davis' sign read "AHMAUD ARBERY," referring to the 25-year-old Georgia man killed while jogging after being pursued by White men in a pickup truck. She and her husband also produced the acclaimed limited docuseries "Two Sides," examining the deaths of Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, and others killed in encounters with police.

That was hardly her first protest. She told Vanity Fair: "I feel like my entire life has been a protest. My production company is my protest. Me not wearing a wig at the Oscars in 2012 was my protest. It is a part of my voice, just like introducing myself to you and saying, 'Hello, my name is Viola Davis.'"

In 2015, Davis became the first Black woman ever to win an Emmy for lead actress in a drama for "How to Get Away with Murder." She agreed to star in it on behalf of African-American women and the LGBTQ community: the show allowed bisexuality and wigless, makeup-free grief to enter the conversation. "The Help" made its mark as a powerful movie showing that racism is a farce.



**"For as long as structural racism exists, there will be generations of young people of colour who do not start their lives with the same equality of opportunity as their white peers."**

# Meghan Markle

The biracial Markle faced considerable headwinds as a member of the royal family. In 2016, the Daily Mail published a story with the headline, "Harry's girl is (almost) straight outta Compton," portraying the L.A. neighborhood of Meghan's mother, Doria, as "run-down" and "gang-afflicted." She and Prince Harry have since given up their royal duties to start a new life.

One topic she has spoken out about has been the killing of Floyd. Markle, who lived in L.A. during the 1992 riots after four police officers were acquitted in the beating of Rodney King, spoke at the private, all-girls Immaculate Heart school in Los Angeles in a surprise virtual graduation speech for her alma mater.

The duchess recalled a teacher telling her, "Always remember to put others' needs before your own fears."

"Because George Floyd's life mattered, and Breonna Taylor's life mattered, and Philando Castile's life mattered, and Tamir Rice's life mattered, and so did so many other people whose names we know and whose names we don't know."





# Naomi Campbell

The stilettos of Naomi Campbell are steeped in service.

Famous supermodel Naomi Campbell has used her modeling career as a platform to rise to the occasion of philanthropy.

Starting her career at the age of 15, Naomi Campbell was the first black model to appear on the cover of *TIME* magazine as well as be found on France's, Russia's, the United States', and Britain's *Vogue* magazines. While working in the modeling industry for 34 years, she has advocated for diversity in the fashion industry, particularly in the current time, together with the Black Lives Matter movement. She believes this movement will open an opportunity for diversity in the beauty and fashion world as brands are now making more inclusive products as well as opening the

**“The sky has never been the limit. We are our own limits.”**

market to people from different backgrounds. Moreover, her dedication to charity work was initially discovered in 2005 when she established two organizations: Fashion for Relief and We Love Brazil. These organizations raised awareness and funds to aid the fight against poverty in Brazil, relief for areas impacted by natural calamities such as Hurricane Katrina, and earthquakes in Haiti

and Japan in 2010 and 2011. She has garnered attention for talented fashion designers from Africa and the Middle East and highlighted their work through hosting fashion shows, auctions, and VIP gala dinners. Naomi Campbell also emphasizes the importance of representing the African community in global fashion and supporting them as she states: “Africa has never had the opportunity to be out there and their fabrics and their materials and their designs be accepted on the global platform. It shouldn’t be that way.”

Additionally, she promotes this idea through social media as well, as she started a hashtag #NaomiAfrica to present her efforts and passion for philanthropy. Her promotion of the causes she cares about such as the fight against AIDS, poverty, and the attention for aid to disadvantaged communities in the Middle East has allowed her fans and colleagues to contribute to the cause.

Most recently, Naomi valiantly stood for giving Black trans people a seat at the table, and rather than just being the “diversity hire” or a “trend,” she hopes that there will be room for their voices to be heard and respected by their

coworkers. The No Filter with Naomi show, a YouTube sensation, is an unfiltered conversation with the most well-known innovators in the fashion and beauty space. With special guests such as Anna Wintour, Cindy Crawford, Ashley Graham, Karlie Kloss, Paris Hilton, Serena Williams, and more, Naomi Campbell is undoubtedly solidifying her space as a change agent and cultural innovator, leveraging her incredible platform and success for positive change across industries around the world.

In this anti-racist watershed moment that we are experiencing as a society, Naomi has stepped forward challenging us to not only be the change we want to see in the world, but to audaciously ask for the change we want to see in the world, further fortifying her philosophy: “The sky has never been the limit. We are our own limits.”

Naomi Campbell continues to push boundaries, challenge the status quo, and use her fame to emphasize the progressive change in the world of fashion and beyond through philanthropy.

Without women who refuse to surrender their seats to women who are glass ceiling crashers, what is there to aspire to? Bridge Philanthropic Consulting recognized this watershed moment in culture, this inflection point, as an opportunity to emphasize the proactive actions made by amazing Black women who use their status to confront the status quo, who are not after a title, but transformation and by doing so create a safe and sacred space for women to raise their voices while also negating the narrative set forth by society.

Georgia’s Stacey Abrams showed what a determined woman could do with her critical voter registration efforts in the November 2020 election. Now, Black girls have another role model to look up to—Kamala Harris, the

first woman elected as vice president of the United States.

“While I may be the first woman in this office,” Harris vowed upon being elected, “I will not be the last, because every little girl watching [this speech] sees that this is a country of possibilities.”

With a commitment to strengthen the call to action with unabashed fierceness, the black female voice for progressive change is present -- front and center. This kind of philanthropy—giving of one’s time and resources—is something that builds a nation and empowers people.

**To Bridge Philanthropic Consulting, nothing could be more important.**

# The Authors

The team of writers on this position paper are with Bridge Philanthropic Consulting. The team has more than 60 years of experience in the philanthropy and pop-culture industries.

## **Vivian Pickard** *President & CEO of the Pickard Group and former President of the General Motors Foundation*

Pickard is an accomplished Fortune 500 executive with expertise in corporate and community relations, marketing, strategic planning, public policy, health care, and philanthropy. Her depth of knowledge in developing strategy and overseeing giving efforts in the areas of education, health, human services, environment, and community development led to General Motors philanthropic leadership recognition on a national and international level. Pickard serves as a board member of Fifth Third Bank-Eastern Michigan. She has been instrumental in helping to develop strategic initiatives for improving the organization's bottom line.

Additionally, Vivian serves on numerous boards including: Inforum, The Parade Company, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Sphinx Organization, Black Women's Agenda, and National Cares.

She is a member of the Executive Leadership Council, the International Women's Forum, and Women Corporate Directors. She serves on the executive committee for The Links, Inc. She was appointed as one of five on the Medical Marijuana Licensing Board for the State of Michigan, which ended in April 2019. Pickard has served as president of the Black Women's Agenda, and Board Chair of Inforum, a highly acclaimed professional women's alliance.

Pickard earned her Master's in Business Administration from Central Michigan University and a Bachelor's degree from Ferris State University. She also received an honorary doctorate degree from Ferris State University. Pickard is widely known and well respected for her leadership. Her accomplishments have been acknowledged by the many awards and recognitions she has received throughout her career.

## **Tashion Macon, Ph.D** *Partner, Culturalist*

With almost twenty years of exceptional achievements in both the for-purpose and for-profit realms, Tashion Macon is widely known as a leading marcom and traditional/transmedia expert with an unwavering emphasis on results. A true visionary, Tashion sees changes and trends in the market before anyone else, frequently finding extraordinary and lucrative opportunities by innately recognizing what can be different and better. After she predicts the future, she gets in front of it. A gifted and highly respected culturalist and strategist, she regularly originates marketing and communications strategies that dramatically influence new consumer realms. She helms pace-setting marketing initiatives that generate multi-million-dollar profits

and successfully managed and navigated \$400MM media budgets to drive double digit percentage boosts in ROI. With a rare meteoric mind and transformational ability to galvanize like-minded people, she collaborates with corporate and client leaders to mobilize cross-functional teams. She is regularly sought out as a subject matter expert in pop culture, global social enterprise, philanthropy, politics/policies and impact programming and crafts important conversations that become part of the social lexicon.

Tashion holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology and a Master of Business Administration in Strategic Marketing. She has a number of professional affiliations and associations.

## **Jennifer Jiles** *Partner, Professor*

Jennifer Jiles is an award-winning strategic communicator, writer, magazine editor, producer, and college educator. She has held managerial or senior level positions across private industry, nonprofit organizations, higher education, and arts and entertainment. Her areas of expertise include strategic planning, campaigns, editorial, media, crises, and change management. Over the years, Jennifer has also built an appreciable track record in fundraising communications strategies. Most recently, she was

a member of the Global IT vice president's leadership team for Dell SecureWorks, a leading cyber intelligence company. Jennifer led the global corporate communication function for the company. She has worked with more than 25 organizations, including AT&T, UPS, Walmart, BET, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. Jennifer has been faculty at Georgia State University since 1999. She holds membership in the Technology Association of Georgia and the Public Relations Society of America.

## **Dwayne Ashley** *Founder and Chief Executive Officer*

Dwayne Ashley is renowned for his bold, strategic thinking and wise counsel in philanthropy. He is a successful entrepreneur in the course of his career, he raised more than \$750 million. A fearless and authentic solicitor, he is committed to social justice and helping organizations of color maximize their fundraising success. He advises non-profit, philanthropists and influencers globally.

A powerhouse of energy and a passion for fundraising, Dwayne has managed capital and annual campaigns and spearheaded development for such notable organizations as the Jazz at Lincoln Center, Success for Kids, 100 Black Men of America, the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, the United Negro College Fund,

and the United Way of Texas Gulf Coast, among many others.

Dwayne is a thought-leader in the field and he has shared valuable concepts in numerous articles and in four books. They include Eight Steps to Raising Money: Measuring Your Fundraising Impact, Word for Word Publishing; 8 Winning Steps to Creating a Successful Special Event with Carol Campbell, Director of Events at Prairie View A&M University; I'll Find A Way or Make One: A Tribute to HBCUs with noted journalist Juan Williams and Dream Internships: It's Not Who You Know, But What You Know! He is an alumnus of Wiley College and the University of Pennsylvania Fels School of Government.

