

BEYOND DREAMING

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & LEADERSHIP

SEMINAR 2024

September 29 - October 1, 2024

HOSTED BY



GREGORY B. LEVETT SR.
FAMILY FOUNDATION



DeKalb County
GEORGIA

GREGORY B.
LEVETT
& SONS
FUNERAL HOMES & CREMATORY



C&J Financial, LLC
The Leader in Insurance Assignment Funding™



Batesville

The WILSON PC
PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

EXPRESS
FUNERAL FUNDING
A MESSENGER FAMILY CO.

DORIC
IIIIIIII®

RUSSELL-McCLOUD
& ASSOCIATES



MORRISCREATIVE

OUTFRONT/

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



Dear Entrepreneurs & Leaders,

I am delighted to welcome you to our fourth Beyond Dreaming Seminar, aimed at inspiring and empowering individuals to achieve their full potential through entrepreneurship and leadership. It is an honor to have you join us for this transformative experience and I am sure you will find our discussions insightful and relevant to today's ever changing business world.

The vision behind Beyond Dreaming was to establish a platform where individuals can glean insights and strategies from successful entrepreneurs and leaders and ultimately turn their aspirations into reality. I firmly believe that with the right knowledge, support, and mindset, anyone can accomplish their goals and make a profound impact on the world. Throughout this summit, you can anticipate presentations from top industry experts, interactive workshops, and extensive networking with like-minded individuals who share your zeal for success. Whether you are an aspiring entrepreneur, an established business owner, or an emerging leader, this seminar is tailored to equip you with the tools and resources needed to elevate your career!

My wife Betty and I are also thrilled to announce that a portion of the proceeds from this year's seminar will be allocated to providing scholarships for minority students with a grade point average of 3.0 or below through the Gregory and Betty Levett, Sr. Family Foundation. It is our mission to empower and support young individuals from underrepresented communities to pursue their dreams and achieve academic success.

Dr. Gregory B. Levett, Sr.

Founder & CEO,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons
Funeral Homes & Crematory

ITINERARY

DAY 1

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2024 - THE OPENING

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

REGISTRATION/CHECK-IN

Tesseract Lobby

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

MEET & GREET MIXER COCKTAILS & CONVERSATION

Tesseract

DAY 2

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 - EDUCATION DAY

7:30 AM - 9:00 AM

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:00 AM - 9:15 AM

WELCOME TO BEYOND DREAMING

Dr. Gregory B. Levett, Sr., CFSP, CCO, Founder & CEO,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

9:15 AM - 9:30 AM

OPENING SESSION FAITH BREAK & MORNING CHARGE

Pastor Quincy Lavelle Carswell, II
Lead Pastor, The Covenant Church

9:30 AM - 9:45 AM

WELCOME & HOSPITALITY INTRODUCTION

Damarco McMillian, GM
Thompson Hotel (Atlanta, GA)

9:45 AM - 11:00 AM

IT STARTS WITH A DREAM: NOW THE SET UP

Small Business Administration Lending and Incorporation
Bryan Phillips, Vice-President - SBA Lending, Capital Bank

11:00 am - 11:30 AM

MORNING BREAK

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

MONEY MATTERS: FINANCIAL HEALTH AND PROPER REPORTING PROCEDURES

Tomika Bullet, CPA & Principal
Windham Brannon

1:15 PM - 2:30 PM

LUNCH

Dirty Rascals
Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, CEO Elect
DeKalb County

2:45 PM - 4:00 PM

ADVERTISING & DIGITAL MARKETING

Dave Cohen, Marketing & Advertising Specialist
Nora Chambliss, Digital Media Director
Cox Media Group Atlanta

DAY 2**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 - EDUCATION DAY(CONT.)**

4:15 PM - 5:30 PM

HUMAN RESOURCES: EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Deidree Scandrett, Director of Human Resources,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

5:30 PM - 5:45 PM

AFTERNOON BREAK

5:45 PM - 7:00 PM

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND TALENT OPTIMIZATION

Jason Taylor, Managing Principal, Predictive Success

7:00 PM

FREE EVENING**DAY 3****SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2024 - MOTIVATION DAY**

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:45 AM - 10:00 AM

TAKING REIGNS OF OPPORTUNITY: GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Ron Sanders, Jr., PA-C, President
Bernard Coxton, Jr., PA-C, Chief Operating Officer
Viral Solutions, DriveThru Urgent Care and FirstClass Healthcare

10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

THE POWER OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Shawn D. Graham, Vice President of Technology
Xerox

11:30 AM - 11:45 PM

MORNING BREAK

11:45 AM - 1:00 PM

WEALTH AND STRATEGIC M&A: CREATING GENERATIONAL WEALTH

Megan Thompson, Senior Vice President
Merill Lynch
The Thompson Group

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

LUNCH

Dirty Rascals
Michael Thurmond, CEO
DeKalb County

2:45 PM - 4:00 PM

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT

Dr. Gregory B. Levett, Sr., CFSP, CCO, Founder & CEO,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

4:15 PM - 5:30 PM

BUSINESS ROUND TABLE

Dr. Gregory B. Levett, Sr., CFSP, CCO,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory
Geoffrey Wilson, COO,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory
Rochelle Bard-Holts, Director of Sales,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory
Michelle Gilliam, Gwinnett Chapel Manager, Director of International Affairs,
Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory
Dr. Dub Taylor, Vice President for Institutional Advancement,
Allen University

5:30 PM - 6:00 PM

**CLOSING CHARGE
FAITH BREAK & EVENING CHARGE**

Pastor Quincy Lavelle Carswell, II
Lead Pastor, The Covenant Church

2024 CONFERENCE SPEAKERS & BIOGRAPHIES



DR. GREGORY B. LEVETT, SR., CFSP, CCO

Founder & CEO, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

Gregory B. Levett Sr. is the founder, owner and Chief Executive Officer of Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, Inc. Fully committed to the service of the community, Mr. Levett is a 3rd generation funeral home owner. Inspired by his family's legacy, Mr. Levett has expanded his business from one Chapel in Scottdale, Georgia (established in 1980) to include Chapels in Lawrenceville, Conyers and Decatur, as well as one crematory.

With his dedicated wife Betty by his side, The Levett family has donated over \$1 million to various charities and organizations. Making the largest donation to the DeKalb Medical Center, the hospital named the Gregory B. Levett Sr and Betty H. Levett Emergency Department Reception in their honor.

As a visionary and successful entrepreneur, Mr. Levett is often called upon to share his expertise at conferences and conventions. He also carries the distinguished title of Funeral Director of the Year by American Funeral Director magazine, the highest honor one can receive within the funeral industry.

Mr. Levett was compelled to find a way to share his wealth of knowledge because he is often called upon by aspiring business owners for his secrets to success. The Beyond Dreaming Entrepreneurship and Leadership Seminar is an intimate conversation that will include a Round Table Discussion, Strategies and Expert Advice to help aspiring business owners gain access to take their dreams to the next level. All proceeds will be donated to the Gregory B. Levett, Sr. Family Foundation.



BETTY H. LEVETT

Co-Founder, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

Betty H. Levett, a woman of many talents, is the epitome of a well-rounded and family-oriented businesswoman. Her dedication to bettering the lives of everyone she meets and her commitment to her family inspires those around her. As the eighth of 10 children, Mrs. Levett has devoted countless hours to serving others, a trait she shares with her husband of 48 years, Dr. Gregory B. Levett, Sr.

Mrs. Levett's fiery entrepreneurial spirit has been the backbone of many of her husband's successful business ventures. After discovering her passion for funeral service, Betty graduated from Gupton-Jones College of Mortuary Science in 1988. Together, they founded Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory. Since then, the world-renowned business has expanded to include four locations and a separate facility, Cremation Care of Georgia. They serve over 2,300 families annually and employ 175 staff members. Today, she oversees the multi-million-dollar company while managing the growth of the Gregory and Betty Levett, Sr. Family Foundation.

In addition to her leadership positions in business, Betty Levett is a devoted member and greeter for Saint Philip AME Church, a member of the 100 Black Women of Funeral Service,

and a former board member of the DeKalb Medical Center Foundation. Over the years, she has played critical roles as a board member of the South DeKalb Business Association, a former member of the Eastern Star, a former member of the National Coalition of the 100 Black Women of DeKalb/ Decatur Chapter, and a former member of the Scottdale Child Development Center. Betty also received the illustrious honor of Entrepreneur of the Year by the state of Georgia, presented by Women of Distinction.

Betty's dedication to the community and cultural-based organizations is unparalleled. Through her work, she has demonstrated that her philanthropic endeavors are just as essential as her business work. In 2008, Gregory and Betty Levett made the largest contribution ever by African Americans to the Hillandale DeKalb Medical Center, now Emory Hillandale Medical Center, where the emergency room reception area is named in their honor.

Betty believes in constantly pursuing new goals and continues to achieve her own in business and philanthropy. She aims to show young women that boundaries exist only in their minds. Betty attributes her success to her strong faith in the Lord and a commitment to helping others.

Betty is the loving mother and a devoted grandmother whom she credits with keeping her active and youthful. True to herself and committed to her visions, Betty is an example of how far humility and hard work will take you.



Quincy Lavelle Carswell, II

[Lead Pastor, The Covenant Church](#)

Pastor Quincy Lavelle Carswell II accepted the assignment to serve alongside his father, Bishop Quincy Lavelle Carswell, as the Pastor of The Covenant Church in Decatur, GA, in 2012. For five years prior to serving as Pastor, he faithfully ministered as the Youth and Young Adults Pastor at The Covenant Church. He was ordained as an Elder of the Church of God under the covering of the Covenant Fellowship of Churches in September 2009 and licensed as a Minister of the Gospel in September 2004.

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Pastor Carswell is a graduate of Morehouse College and Luther Rice University & Seminary, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Philosophy, and a Master of Divinity degree. Pastor Carswell is an innovative strategist, thought-provoking teacher, powerful preacher, and charismatic leader. With a heart for people and an unparalleled passion for doing the Lord's work, he has dedicated his life to revitalizing communities, empowering families, and helping individuals discover their God-given purpose.

For over two decades, Pastor Carswell has been favored to stand in pulpits, assemblies, and institutions both locally and nationally, powerfully professing the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ. His dynamic approach to ministry has earned him countless recognitions and rewards, underscoring his commitment to excellence in service and his unwavering faith.

Since August 2022, Pastor Carswell has served as the Chief Chaplain of the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office under the leadership of Sheriff Melody Maddox. In this role, he continues to provide spiritual guidance and support, demonstrating his dedication to the well-being of his community.



Shawn Graham

Vice President of Technology Services, Xerox

As Vice President of Technology, Mr. Shawn Graham creatively develops ethical and complementary uses of Artificial Intelligence in universities, government agencies, and businesses. He is dedicated to transforming operational processes to recapture costs, invigorate employees, modernize outdated systems, and establish competitive advantages that enhance efficiency, profitability, and productivity.

With over 15 years of technology experience, Mr. Graham is a staunch advocate for integrating AI, Augmented Reality, Machine Learning, and advanced technologies like ChatGPT in the workplace. His philosophy centers on aligning technology to meet the specific needs of institutions rather than forcing them to adapt to technology.

He oversees the Information Technology Division for Xerox Business Solutions Southeast in the states of Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and Mississippi.

Under his leadership, the Xerox Automation Team has established themselves as trusted technology advisors through strategic partnerships with industry-leading AI manufacturers, including Microsoft (Gold Partner), UiPath (Gold Partner), ABBYY, Workato, Celonis, and Turbotic, to name a few. For over eight years, this team has been at the forefront of deploying AI solutions, particularly in the form of Xerox Robotics Process Automation (RPA), which uses software robots to automate repetitive and labor-intensive tasks across various organizational processes.

Beyond his professional achievements, Mr. Graham is the co-founder and president of Hope Community, a nonprofit organization with over 400 members dedicated to addressing food insecurity and promoting food RX initiatives in both urban and rural underserved communities. His leadership in both corporate and nonprofit sectors underscores his commitment to leveraging technology for societal good and operational excellence.



Dave Cohen

Marketing & Advertising Specialist, Cox Media Group Atlanta

Dave Cohen is a seasoned advertising specialist with nearly 30 years of experience in helping businesses build their brands, increase leads, and grow revenue. As a Senior Advertising Specialist at Cox Media Group (CMG), Dave excels in creating and executing integrated advertising campaigns across multiple platforms, including traditional media such as radio, TV, and outdoor billboards, as well as digital channels like search, social media, display, and streaming TV. His approach ensures consistent messaging that highlights clients' competitive advantages and meets future customer needs.

Dave leverages extensive research and data from top-tier partners, including Google, Meta, and Amazon, to precisely target ads to ideal potential customers. His clients often describe him as an integral part of their team, recognizing his ability to offer tailored solutions and his unwavering commitment to achieving their growth objectives.

Managing over \$11 million in local advertising for numerous clients, Dave's expertise and dedication have earned him significant recognition. He has received CMG Atlanta's top award seven times in the past 13 years and has twice been honored with CMG's prestigious national accolade, the President's Cup.



Nora Chambliss

Digital Media Director, Cox Media Group (CMG)

As the Digital Media Director at Cox Media Group (CMG) Atlanta, Nora Chambliss spearheads a highly successful digital sales team. She collaborates with clients, CMG media consultants, and leadership to develop integrated strategies that drive exceptional results and deliver significant ROI. Under her leadership, CMG Atlanta's digital revenue and performance have experienced record growth for three consecutive years.

Nora brings over eleven years of expertise in digital marketing, customer-focused solutions, and a deep understanding of the consumer buying journey. She joined CMG in 2016 as a Digital Media Specialist and quickly demonstrated her capability, earning a promotion to Digital Media Director in 2020. Her strategic approach and innovative thinking have been pivotal in elevating CMG Atlanta's digital presence and effectiveness.

Nora holds a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Southern Illinois University and an IAB Digital Media Sales certification, underscoring her commitment to professional development and industry excellence. Nora's accomplishments have been recognized with the 2019 Making A Difference Award and a nomination for LA TV Week's 40 Under 40 in 2022.



Ron Sanders Jr., PA-C,

Co-Founder and President, Viral Solutions, DriveThru Urgent Care and FirstClass Healthcare

Ron Sanders Jr., PA-C, is an Atlanta-based Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant. A distinguished graduate, Ron completed his undergraduate studies at Augusta State University before earning his Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies from the Medical College of Georgia, where he graduated as Valedictorian of his class. His professional journey is driven by a profound passion for medical education, process improvement, and mentorship.

Ron co-founded and currently serves as President for three prominent healthcare organizations: DriveThru Urgent Care, FirstClass Healthcare, and Viral Solutions. In these roles, he manages and oversees finance and strategic planning, develops and manages budgets exceeding \$10 million, \$30 million, and \$20 million, respectively, and spearheads business development. Additionally, Ron plays a crucial role in recruiting and hiring professional staff and assisting in medical operations.

As Lead Physician Assistant at DeKalb Medical Center since 2014, Ron manages a team of 22 physician assistants, oversees scheduling, coordinates department meetings, and performs monthly evaluations. In his role as Director of Clinical Education for California Emergency Physicians since 2013, he trains mid level providers and manages the fellowship program for newly hired physician assistants.

Ron also serves as a Clinical Preceptor for the Emory University Physician Assistant Program, providing an optimal training environment for students in critical care settings. His extensive experience and leadership across multiple healthcare organizations underscore his dedication to advancing medical education, improving processes, and mentoring future healthcare professionals.



Bernard Coxtonton Jr., PA-C

Chief Operating Officer, Viral Solutions, DriveThru Urgent Care and FirstClass Healthcare

Bernard Coxtonton Jr., PA-C, is an accomplished Emergency Medicine Physician Assistant based in Atlanta, GA. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Biology from Morehouse College and a Master of Science in Physician Assistant (MSPA) from the Medical College of Georgia. Before his medical career, Bernard dedicated himself to education as a high school biology and chemistry teacher in DeKalb County, reflecting his deep passion for education and public health awareness.

As the Chief Operating Officer of Viral Solutions, DriveThru Urgent Care, and FirstClass Healthcare, Bernard is pivotal in these organizations' strategic and operational leadership. His responsibilities include overseeing site development and facility build out, recruiting and hiring medical and physician assistants, and designing and implementing efficient patient workflows. Bernard is also instrumental in training and developing medical staff, ensuring high patient care and operational excellence standards.

At Viral Solutions, Bernard manages operations for a CLIA-certified laboratory and oversees surveillance testing programs in public schools throughout Georgia. He designed operational processes for COVID-19 testing and vaccine administration and communicated directly with state officials for contract compliance.

Bernard's extensive experience in emergency medicine includes his tenure at Emory Decatur and Emory Hillandale Hospitals, where he evaluated patients with varying acuity levels, developed fast-track processes, and performed various medical procedures. His leadership and operational expertise make him a valuable asset in the healthcare industry, driving innovation and efficiency in all his roles.

Bernard's unique blend of educational and medical expertise makes him a dynamic leader dedicated to advancing healthcare services and public health initiatives. His commitment to both patient care and team development continues to drive the success and growth of the organizations he leads.



Bryan Phillips

VP of SBA Lending, Capital Bank, N.A.

Brian has been a resident of Georgia and member of the Atlanta business community for 20 plus years.

Originally a CPA, he has been in commercial banking providing financing to small and medium sized businesses for over 25 years. His experience includes the manufacturing, wholesale, retail and service industries. He holds his undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame and a Master's Degree from Northwestern University. Brian resides in Milton GA with his wife Oprail.



Deidree Scandrett

Director of Human Resources, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

Deidree is an original Georgia Peach. Growing up in the S.W.A.T.'s of Atlanta (Southwest Atlanta), she is a proud graduate of "the" Frederick Douglass High School and even prouder alumnae of Clark Atlanta University. Having graduated from the last class of CLARK COLLEGE, in 1991', with a B.A. in Broadcast Management.

Deidree embodies the credence of a professional in human resources. Understanding people and proficiently deploying policies, processes, protocols, and procedures. Deidree's entire career has been alongside the direct leadership of executives. Her span of influence resonates with team members from the C-Suites to the front-line on the streets.

Deidree is a certified Professional in Human Resources (PHR) through the Society of Human Resources (SHRM), a Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator Practitioner (MBTI) and most recently certified in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI through SHRM). A recent retiree from DeKalb County Government, Deidree served 30 years in an administrative capacity. The latter tenure of her time she managed payroll and personnel services for the DeKalb County Public Works Department, Sanitation Division. In addition to overseeing payroll of nearly 700 employees, part of her responsibilities included, employee relations, training and development, on-boarding and recruiting.

Deidree is an engaged servant leader and shares her creative side to various community outreach efforts. Deidree has assisted with the Domestic Violence Task Force, Shop with a Cop, and the Thanksgiving Holiday food give-a-way projects, just to name a few. Two of her proudest charitable efforts are with the Hope for the Holidays annual toys for Christmas event in collaboration with the DeKalb County Child Advocacy Unit of Juvenile Courts and laying the groundwork for establishing a GED program for employees assigned to Public Works.

This love for service to the community extends beyond her employment; but also, where she calls home. Raising her family in Henry County, both she and her husband have volunteered in an array of school, civic and religious community efforts. Deidree strongly believes in FAITH, FAMILY, and FRIENDSHIP. She has a heart for helping others, encouraging the best out of others and is a true cheerleader for others.

Deidree is married to her high school sweetheart, Reginald, who just happens to be the first African – American sheriff in Henry County and is most proud of being the mother of four (4) amazing human beings. She is now affectionately named GIVA to a beautiful little angle, her granddaughter. Deidree's greatest joy is seeing her children and now grandchild, flourish in life as productive citizens and caring human beings. She is an avid reader, loves the beach and dabbles in various forms of creative expressions. Her purpose and mantle in life is to serve as a beacon of hope, to be a living, breathing testimony of God's grace, mercy, and blessings.



Jason Taylor

Managing Principal & Speaker, Predictive Success Corporation Talent Optimization

Entrepreneurial, results-driven seasoned executive with a 22-year successful track record. With extensive experience in Sales, Marketing, Operations, Franchising and Business Development, Jason consistently earned top performance recognition for Sales Leadership.

Accomplished in turning mediocre business units into high performing profit generating centers.



Tomika L. Bullet

CPA & Principal of Tax Controversy, Windham Brannon

Tomika L. Bullet, CPA is the Principal of Tax Controversy at Windham Brannon, a CPA firm headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, where she helps clients resolve their tax disputes including federal and state examinations, debt collection and various tax compliance notices.

Prior to joining Windham Brannon, Tomika worked at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the Small Business/Self Employed (SB/SE) division where she specialized in the management of partnership, corporate and high net worth individual examinations.

Tomika began her career with PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP as an Audit Associate and later transitioned to BellSouth as an Internal Audit Project Lead where she conducted Sarbanes-Oxley testing and other business reviews for internal operations.

Tomika received her Master of Taxation from Georgia State University and Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Tuskegee University. She has been a licensed CPA for over 20 years and serves on the AICPA's IRS Advocacy & Relations Committee. Tomika previously served as the Vice President of Operations for the Atlanta chapter of the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) and past Treasurer of the Atlanta Suburban Alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc and the Atlanta Tuskegee Alumni Club (ATAC).



Megan Thompson

Senior Vice President, Merrill Lynch
The Thompson Group

Megan Thompson is a Senior Financial Advisor, Senior Vice President with the Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and founder of The Thompson Group that is based in Walnut Creek, California.

She graduated from The Ohio State University and has been a Financial Advisor since 2006, first with Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, and now with Merrill Lynch. Over her career she has built a strong base of individuals, families and small businesses specializing in retirement planning, wealth management, investment analysis and estate planning.

Megan currently resides in California- She enjoys skiing, wake surfing, Cross fitting, running and traveling all over the globe with her husband and 2 French bulldogs!



Rochelle Bard-Holts

Director of Sales, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

Rochelle Bard-Holts, a native of Greenville, KY, discovered her passion for funeral service at the age of 15, recognizing the profound impact of providing comfort to families during times of loss. Determined to make a difference, she enrolled in mortuary college at 18 and embarked on a career in the funeral industry. She spent 9 years in Louisville, KY working as an embalmer, perfecting her craft and honoring those in her care with meticulous attention.

Seeking new opportunities, Rochelle moved to Atlanta, where she joined Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Home as an embalmer. Over the years, her dedication and growing skill set led her to be promoted to manager of the South DeKalb Chapel. In this role, she balanced operational duties with offering families compassionate, high-quality service.

Rochelle's leadership and commitment to excellence eventually paved the way for her transition into her current role as Sales Director. In this position, she not only provides support to families but has become a driving force behind the company's sales strategies. Rochelle is responsible for developing comprehensive sales plans that align with the company's objectives and growth targets. She works closely with her team to train and equip them with in-depth product knowledge, ensuring that families can make informed decisions about the services that best suit their needs.

Her role extends beyond training, as Rochelle consistently monitors sales performance, tracks key metrics, and identifies areas for improvement. She collaborates with management to implement innovative techniques to increase revenue, including up selling service packages, introducing new products and maximizing opportunities in at-need sales. Her ability to adapt sales strategies based on changing market conditions has led to significant improvements in revenue growth and client satisfaction.

Outside of her career, Rochelle is a proud mother of two beautiful daughters and a grandmother to one grandson. Family is a central part of her life, and she cherishes every moment spent with them. Through her years in the funeral industry, Rochelle has learned a profound lesson: life and time are precious, and it's important to enjoy them while you can.



Dr. Dub Taylor

Managing Principal & Speaker, Predictive Success Corporation Talent Optimization

Dr. Dub Taylor is a transformative leader, higher education executive, and consultant who leverages his business acumen to drive innovation in higher education, bolster enrollment, and increase graduation rates. He excels at creating dynamic, student-centered educational experiences that merge traditional academia with industry partnerships, preparing graduates to thrive in an increasingly globalizing economy. Dr. Taylor has a deep and authentic commitment to students—particularly first-generation college students from low-income and diverse backgrounds—and has a genuine willingness to support their needs and success. He has also built community academic impact partnerships in urban and rural areas across the United States.

In his current role as Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Allen University, Dr. Taylor has collaborated with various stakeholders to craft an ambitious vision focused on several transformational goals. These include strengthening the College's financial resources through new revenue generation, establishing partnerships that benefit

the College and the community, and moving the institution back to the top of national HBCU rankings. As a visionary leader, Dr. Taylor draws upon his senior executive business experience to build strategic corporate partnerships, consult on legislative initiatives, secure financial resources, and drive university growth. He has achieved impactful results, such as increasing Title III grant funding from \$1.8 million to \$15 million within three years, expanding philanthropic support to 235 new donors in FY22-23, and assisting in securing over \$50 million in funding for capital improvement projects, including the construction of a football stadium.

In collaboration with faculty and staff, Dr. Taylor has initiated targeted recruitment and enrollment initiatives, along with implementing retention strategies that significantly enhance institutional effectiveness to meet regional accreditation requirements. Additionally, he has led the expansion of partnerships with local and state school districts, bolstered alumni relations, and launched a state-wide branding and marketing campaign. He has also traveled nationally serving as an advocate and retention specialist for first-generation & nontraditional undergraduate and graduate students.

Driven by his passion for innovation, he has pioneered academic enrichment and workforce development opportunities through corporate partnerships. Notably, he assisted in partnering with The Boeing Company, BlueCrossBlueShield, Colonial Life, Dominion Energy, and Google, partnering with the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions - Plutonium Modernization Program (Pu PUMP), and he collaborated with the A.U. Agribusiness Incubator to enhance students' career readiness and promote diversity and inclusion.

Dr. Taylor previously served as a full-time faculty member at Strayer University, where he taught and developed undergraduate business and marketing courses online and in person for nearly 4,000 students. Similarly, he has also served as an online adjunct faculty member and program advisor at the University of West Alabama, where he developed curriculum and taught graduate-level global and social entrepreneurship courses and served as a course developer for the institution's Doctorate of Rural Education program. In addition to his prior teaching experience, Dr. Taylor serves as a subject matter expert and course developer for UNCF's Teaching and Learning Center, Training Development Workgroup. Most recently, he designed the course, Advancing High-Impact Donor Relationships: Executive Leadership in Fundraising at HBCUs and has consulted on multiple other projects.

Dr. Taylor is the founder of a leadership consulting practice, which he and his team transformed into a nationally and internationally competitive professional development training firm resulting in long-standing partnerships and increased revenues of more than \$100 million for organizations. Before his appointment at Allen University, Dr. Taylor served in various executive roles, including Owner of Dub Taylor Consulting, President with Sales Gravy, Executive Vice President of Sales & Business Development with BACAS Interventional Pain Management in Houston, TX, Vice President of National Sales for KGB Deals in New York, NY, Regional Sales Director for Aramark Uniform Services in Memphis, TN, and Sales Executive for Coca-Cola Enterprise in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Beyond his administrative roles, Dr. Taylor is an avid researcher, presenter, educator, and highly sought-after business consultant and speaker. In addition, Dr. Taylor is tenaciously committed to the public good and is a known champion for equity, diversity, and inclusion. He volunteers for various nonprofit organizations, such as The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and is an Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated member.

A native of Millry, Alabama, where he was raised on a family farm, Dr. Taylor contributes his relentless work ethic to his upbringing. He received his B.A. in History from Stillman

College, an Executive MBA from the Jack Welch Management Institute, and a Master's Certification in Strategic Selling from the Miller Heiman Group. Most recently, he completed the HBCU Executive Leadership Institute micro-credential program on navigating board governance and the Wharton Executive Education Program on Executive Presence and Influence: Persuasive Leadership Development. Dr. Taylor also holds a Doctorate in Business Administration with a concentration in Leadership from Walden University. He is committed to promoting a culture of academic excellence while strengthening stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the institutions he serves thrive and succeed.



Michael L. Thurmond

CEO, DeKalb County

Michael L. Thurmond won a 2016 landslide victory to become chief executive officer of DeKalb County, one of the most diverse counties in the Southeast. Since his Jan. 1, 2017 swearing-in, Thurmond's primary mission is restoring trust in county government. His other priorities include adopting a balanced budget, ensuring accurate water bills, removing blight, offering summer youth employment, improving employee compensation, and fulfilling the federal/state sewer consent agreement.

Thurmond, a former member of the Georgia General Assembly and the first African-American elected to a statewide office without prior appointment, is widely regarded as a "turnaround expert" after fundamentally transforming the culture and enhancing operations of complex organizations such as the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, the Georgia Department of Labor and the DeKalb County School District.

As superintendent of DeKalb schools, Thurmond is credited with stabilizing the system during a governance crisis, upgrading its threatened accreditation, eliminating a multi-million-dollar deficit and improving student academic performance and graduation rates.

Thurmond was raised as a sharecropper's son in Clarke County, Georgia. He graduated with honors with a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and religion from Paine College and later earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of South Carolina's School of Law. He also completed the Political Executives program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

In 1986, he became the first African-American elected to the Georgia General Assembly from Clarke County since Reconstruction. During his legislative tenure, Thurmond authored major legislation that provided more than \$250 million in tax relief to Georgia's senior citizens and working families.

Thurmond received a gubernatorial appointment to lead the state Division of Family and Children Services and direct Georgia's historic transition from welfare to work. He created the innovative Work First program, which helped more than 90,000 welfare-dependent Georgia families move from dependence into the workforce.

In 1997, Thurmond became a distinguished lecturer at the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. The following year, he was elected Georgia labor commissioner.

During his three terms as labor commissioner, Thurmond's most significant achievement was the construction of a \$20 million school for children with disabilities at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute.

Thurmond's latest book, *Freedom: Georgia's Antislavery Heritage, 1733-1865*, was awarded the Georgia Historical Society's Lilla Hawes Ward. In 2004, The Georgia Center for the Book

listed Freedom as one of The 25 Books All Georgian's Should Read. He serves on the University of Georgia Libraries Board of Visitors. He is married to Zola Fletcher Thurmond, and they have one daughter, Mikaya.



Lorraine Cochran-Johnson

CEO Elect, DeKalb County

Lorraine Cochran-Johnson is originally from Greenville, Alabama and an eighteen-year DeKalb County, GA resident. Lorraine attended Troy University where she received a B.S. Degree in Political Science and Criminal Justice; a M.S. in The Administration of Criminal Justice; and, received the M.P.A. in Public Administration with a concentration in Economic Development and Grant Writing from Auburn University before attending John Marshall Law School.

Lorraine has over a decade of experience in print media, mass communications, and management. A seasoned grant writer, Lorraine has developed state and federal proposals since 1994 that resulted in the procurement of millions in CDBG funding for state and local entities through the Auburn University Economic Development Institute. As a community activist and parent, Lorraine is a past president of Pine Ridge Elementary (2006-2007) and Chapel Hill Middle School (2008-2009) PTA and independently secured over \$200,000 in funding for school revitalization and digital technology in 2017.

As a professional, Lorraine spent over a decade at Creative Loafing Newspaper. An entrepreneur, Lorraine founded Salons Unlimited Magazine, a publication that started with 5,000 print issues in Atlanta and grew to a 56,000 circulation in 31 U.S. cities in three years before being sold in 2010. In 2009, Lorraine became a founding member of United Front Media, a premiere film and visual media company specializing in content development where she produced commercials for the City of Atlanta, MARTA, KIA and Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. In 2015, Lorraine joined Real Times Media as the General Manager of the Atlanta Daily World Newspaper and Associate Publisher of Who's Who In Black Atlanta and VP of Business Development for RTM Properties - AtlantaDailyWorld.com and Atlanta Tribune: The Magazine, before resigning to pursue public service.

Lorraine strongly supports positive initiatives in economic development, education, public safety and home ownership. Moderator of DeKalb's PDS-24 television show EngagementNow, Lorraine works with show producers to develop content crafted around issues relevant to modern education. The wife of Ret. Lt. Col. William H. Johnson, III, niece of Annie Page and the Mother of Martin Luther King Jr. High School International Baccalaureate student Zion Cochran, Lorraine values family and community above all else.

Cochran-Johnson is the first Black woman elected as CEO in the DeKalb County's history.



Michelle Gilliam

Gwinnett Chapel Manager & Director of International Affairs, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory

Michelle Gilliam serves as the Gwinnett Chapel Manager, Director of Career Development, and Director of International Affairs at Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory, where she is dedicated to fostering professional growth and enhancing global partnerships within the industry. A proud native of South Carolina, Michelle graduated as the Valedictorian from Gupton-Jones Funeral Service College in 2018, marking the beginning of her impactful career in funeral service.

Since joining Gregory B. Levett & Sons in 2018, Michelle has made significant contributions to the organization, leveraging her expertise to support both staff and families during their most challenging moments. Outside of her professional commitments, she cherishes quality time with her family, spanning generations from the eldest to the youngest.

Guided by her motto, "It is a privilege and honor to serve," Michelle embodies a deep commitment to compassion and excellence in her work, making a lasting difference in the lives of those she touches.

2024 BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

PANEL SPEAKERS



DR. GREGORY B. LEVETT, SR., CFSP, CCO
Founder & CEO, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory



Rochelle Bard-Holts

Director of Sales, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory



Geoffrey Wilson

Chief Operations Officer, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory



Michelle Gilliam

Gwinnett Chapel Manager & Director of International Affairs, Gregory B. Levett & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory



Dr. Dub Taylor

Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Allen University



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



BEYOND
DREAMING



GREGORY B. LEVETT, SR.
FAMILY FOUNDATION