



Black Women Excellence: Prominent Black Chicagoland Women to Be Honored at The Black Women’s Expo “First Look” Gala

Hosted by ABC7’s Cheryl Burton, 25 Chicago-area women will be recipients of the Phenomenal Woman Award

CHICAGO, IL (April 5, 2019) – As the preeminent expo for Black women celebrates its 25th year in Chicago, 25 prominent Chicago-area Black women from industries such as education, television, law, and more will be honored for their amazing accomplishments during The Black Women’s Expo “First Look” Gala at the Hyatt Regency Chicago on Thursday, April 11, 6:00 pm which will be hosted by ABC7 news anchor, Cheryl Burton. The gala will serve as the official kick-off of BWe 2019, which will be at McCormick Place in the North Building from April 12 through April 14. Entertainment will include a performance by William Kurk, and Yahdina U-Deen and a video presentation of the Black Women’s Expo.

To date, the list of honorees includes the who’s who of Black professional and philanthropic women in the city and surrounding areas including the Honorable Judge Patricia M. Martin, and co-host of the WCIU’s The Jam, Felicia Lawrence. Each honoree will be the recipient of the Phenomenal Woman award, given to women who have exemplified excellence in their field of expertise and have paved the way for the next generation of up-and-coming phenomenal black women.

Merry Green, creator and founder of The Black Women’s Expo says, “It is only fitting as The Black Women’s Expo enters its 25th year, we celebrate and honor 25 phenomenal women from the Chicagoland area. Each honoree is bold, intelligent, strong, yet beautifully humble, and that in itself embodies the spirit of the expo.”

In addition to Martin and Lawrence, the Phenomenal Women Award Recipients are:

- Honorable Judge Kristal Rivers, Circuit Court of Cook County
- Attorney Candace Jackson-Akiwumi, Federal Defender Program, Inc.
- Essence Smith, SocialWorks
- Felicia Lawrence, WCIU - The Jam
- Natasha Granholm, Price Waterhouse Cooper
- Leah J. Thigpen, GH Private Wealth Management, Inc.
- Attorney Linda Chatman, Chatman Law
- Melinda Kelly, Chatham Business Association
- Attorney Wynter Jackson, Chicago Police Department
- Colby Chapman, Camelot, Excel Southwest High School
- Dr. Janiece Jackson, Lindop School District 92



- Melody Winston, Living Word Christian Center
- Rochelle Crump, U.S. Army Veteran
- Deborah Mercer - Miller, Citibank
- Nicole Hayes, Laborers ' International Union of North America
- Christine Houston, Author & Play-writer
- Candice Payne, Action for a Cause
- Dr. Latanya McDade, Chicago Public Schools
- Diane Walker, Children's Developmental Institute
- Brandi Jackson, UIC Psychiatric College of Medicine
- Brittani Jackson, UIC College of Medicine
- Dr. Lamenta "Sweetie" Conway, I Am Abel Foundation
- Mariah Carrington, Carrington & Carrington LTD
- Congresswoman Lauren Underwood, Illinois 14th Congressional District
- Dr. Mildred C. Harris, God First Ministries

"From judges to philanthropists to spiritual leaders, the honorees' expertise only offer a small peek into the world of how beautifully dynamic and diverse Black women are," adds Green. "The gala will not only serve as a celebration of these women, but to all Black women, who are constantly making history, big or small, every day."

The Gala is open to the public and tickets can be purchased via phone at 312-454-6100 from The Black Women's Expo office. Tickets range from \$250 for a single seat or \$2,500 for a table of 10.

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ABOUT THE BLACK WOMEN'S EXPO

The Black Women's Expo (BWe), originating in Chicago, offers unparalleled opportunities for brands seeking to engage with the African American consumer in multiple markets. BWe is where Black Women can be found, in record numbers, annually for the BWe Experience, where she finds the latest trends, amazing new products and services, where she gets informed, empowered and enlightened! Black women will not only have the BWe Experience in Chicago, but in Atlanta and Dallas in 2019 with our 3-City Tour! Now in our 25th year, The Black Women's Expo presents an array of dynamic speakers and celebrities in seminar



sessions, top musical artists on our main stage...and a lively marketplace for corporations and small business exhibitors to engage with the powerful and growing African American consumer! With our 3-City Tour, The Black Women's Expo engages millions of consumers through our unprecedented media campaigns, (radio, television, print, digital, social media) with media partnerships in each market.