



# The **Legendary**

*Where Legends Are Remembered!*

*Items of interest for your informational consumption . . . !*

JULY/AUG./SEPT. 2021

This edition of The Legendary Newsletter is dedicated to women from the Metro-Columbus area and surrounding counties, who have made tremendous accomplishments in the field of Sports, Business, and Social Activism. These women make up the essence of what it means by women of merit not only in their chosen career paths, but as examples of the type of spirit and leadership needed to motivate us all to create communities that work for us all.

## **GCBLA Salutes Women of Influence**

We shine the GCBLA spotlight on these 8 extraordinary women and their success stories:

1. GAYLE SAUNDERS
2. KATIE SMITH
3. REITA SMITH
4. DR. GEORGIA SCHWEITZER
5. S. YOLANDA ROBINSON
6. KAHLI WILSON
7. DEIDRE HAMLAR
8. JESSICA DAVENPORT



### **1 Gayle Saunders**

**GCBLA:** Are you a native of Columbus, Ohio? If not where are you from? **GS:** Originally from North Middletown, Kentucky a small community southeast of Lexington. Moved to Columbus in 1981.

**GCBLA:** What is your professional area of expertise? **GS:** Public Relations.

**GCBLA:** Why did you select this area? **GS:** I started my career in journalism as a radio DJ/news announcer in Paris, KY, moved to news video journalist at the NBC affiliate



## Want to nominate a player, coach or team?

GCBLA is accepting nominations for future HOF induction consideration. Download a nomination form from our website: [www.greatercbla.org](http://www.greatercbla.org) and follow the guidelines and instructions for submission.

in Lexington, KY and landed a position as the first Black female news videographer in Central Ohio at the ABC affiliate in Columbus. After my successful career in that field, I transitioned into public relations. **GCBLA: Was this your original area of interest?** **GS:** I have always been interested in writing and knew in the 8th grade I wanted to be a writer/journalist.

**GCBLA: What do you enjoy most about what you do?** **GS:** I enjoy doing work that has a positive impact on our community, particularly the Black community. I love working with such diverse people from every aspect of our demographic mix, working with the front line to the executive leadership and using my strategic communications, networking and connecting people, my organizational and creative skills help develop communications, and campaigns that change lives, save lives, move people. I love learning from others and in this line of work, I am blessed to be able to interact with the grassroots – to the grass tops and in my work I have an opportunity to help those who don't typically have a voice to be heard and am able to advocate to help drive change in marginalized communities that are often overlooked. I am so proud that in my business I am deliberate about helping other black businesses grow and prosper by supporting them and engaging them in my work.

**GCBLA: What advice/insight would you give the next generation on how to navigate towards a successful and impactful career in Sports, Business, and Social Activism?** **GS:** Believe in you, speak up and stand up for others and for what you believe in. when you fall down (and you will) get back up and learn from it and move forward, seek counsel from others who have skills and knowledge you don't have, be kind to others, protect your intellectual property, build up others and stay positive even when others aren't. Have faith keep the faith and lean in on your faith – stay prayed up.

**GCBLA: Any advice on how GCBLA can be more impactful as an organization moving forward?** **GS:** GCBLA is just an impressive and important organization. I think there are more opportunities to inform the community about the work you do and to share the organization's commitment to preserving and promoting sports history, Central Ohio's rich sports legacy and mentoring the youth.



CONGRATULATIONS GAYLE for being inducted into the YWCA Women of Achievement. The highest business and civic award for women in the State of Ohio was awarded to 7 awesome women, June 23, 2021.



**You too can join the GCBLA team!**

GCBLA is accepting applications for organization membership.  
Check our website: [www.greatercbla.org](http://www.greatercbla.org) for details.



## 2 Katie Smith

**GCBLA:** Are you a native of Columbus, Ohio? If not where are you from? **KS:** I live in Columbus now and began living in Columbus after I attended The Ohio State University. I am originally from Logan, Ohio about a hour southeast of Columbus.

**GCBLA:** What is your professional area of expertise? why did you select this area, and was this your original area of interest? **KS:** I am an assistant basketball coach in the WNBA for the Minnesota Lynx. I played professionally for 17 years and I love being around the game and helping the next generation accomplish their dreams. This was not my first area of interest. I thought I would be a dentist because there were no professional leagues in the states at the time.

**GCBLA:** What do you enjoy most about what you do, and what advice/insight would you give the next generation on how to navigate towards a successful and impactful career in Sports, Business, and Social Activism? **KS:** I love being around the game as well as the amazing people involved in it. The advice I would give is get your foot in the door in whatever way possible and after you do that build relationships with peo-

ple in your career.

**GCBLA:** Any advice on how GCBLA can be more impactful as an organization moving forward? **KS:** Continue communicating on a regular basis so that people know who you are and sharing opportunities that are out there in certain professions.

**GCBLA:** What new endeavors are you currently involved in that our readers might find interesting? **KS:** I am always looking for ways in Columbus to stay involved with the community whether it is doing speaking engagements, tournaments or camps. I also like staying connected with my alma mater Ohio State in anyway possible.



## 3 Reita Smith

As a native of Columbus so many years ago, I was blessed to have been born on So. 22nd Street, which produced strong black families and their strength has served me well over my life time. That small block which included the: Towers, Watkins, Huckleby's and Sharp families. Those young men like their fathers were my big brothers and role models. My family moved to the West side however, my 22nd Street family relationships remains today just



**The COVID pandemic is NOT over yet!**

GCBLA is still urging EVERYONE to remain safe and follow the updated guidelines set by the CDC, your local, state, and federal health officials. Help keep yourself and those around you safe.

as strong.

The three areas of questions relating to my career, my area of expertise, why was it selected and was it my original choice? I have found life's experiences are not that precise or that predictable. However, I have been blessed with many opportunities and challenges in my life's journey. The major opportunity began some sixty years ago as a result of the leaders and activist of the Columbus Urban League and the NAACP's work to address the segregation policies in the businesses and many institutions in our community. Because of their work, I was one of the first black's or females to be hired in a number of positions. My position in banking led to many other opportunities to break down barriers. As I look back each step was a process of preparing me for new challenges or opportunities. My choice was in the field of public service. One, of my most gratifying experiences was being apart of the first Collective Bargaining process in 1989, for the State of Ohio. It introduced me to the Labor Movement and the first labor contract for state employees. My years in public service was primarily in the field of employment and youth programs.

Your third and fifth questions regarding what I enjoy about what I do and what new endeavors that I am currently

involved? They are closely intertwined with one another. A little back ground. Again, I was blessed with ancestors and family that has had a major influence on my life and my life's work and activities. Some 40 years ago I was the president of my family, Adams Reunion and my Aunt Millie bestowed upon me the family documents and artifacts. I became one of the family's historians. Note; this year will be our 101 years of Adams Reunions. The unfolding of my families extraordinary history has redirected my life's work. My current activities has been for the last 13 years, working to save the historic Poindexter Village buildings and the subsequent development of a Museum and Culture Learning Center, to preserve the history of the African American story, which has been over looked and under valued. The museum will help to insure our future generations will come to know their roots and the successes and strength of those came who before them. As in the book of Joshua the Israelites were instructed to collect the 12 stones that were used to cross the River Jordan so their future generations would ask, "What Happened Here?" Rev. Poindexter taught his young ministers that they should learn the U.S. Constitution and governing principles as well as they learned the messages of the Bible. Our story is the life line for those who will



## Support local high school basketball!

Make it a point to attend a (or several) boys or girls high school basketball game(s).  
Support the student-athletes of your community or alma mater.  
The players today could be the ones you'll be watching on television tomorrow!

come after us.

Your impact for the future has been felt by many. I recall a meeting with members of GCBLA and in that meeting there was a strong sense of team values and mutual respect. It was most inspiring and reaffirming that groups can work together harmoniously as models of strength, just as that young child experienced so many years ago on S. 22nd Street.

What would I share for the upcoming generations? What has served me well and as I have learned along the way is not that complicated. First, develop

your personal sense of character by having personal integrity, listening to learn from others and never stop learning and growing. Don't let your mistakes govern your life but learn from them. No matter your life chooses always have an attitude of gratitude for those who's shoulders you stand, and have helped you along the way. If nothing more say "Thank You." Know your history because it is your story, and your story will be tomorrows history.

<https://www.10tv.com/article/news/local/2019-jefferson-award-winner-reita-smith-2019-apr/530-2af0ab92-08bc-48a2-9b40-43e696a33dcc>



## 4 Dr. Georgia Schweitzer

Georgia Schweitzer was born in Columbus, Ohio at Grant Hospital. She graduated from Bishop Hartley HS, 1997 and married Jonathan Beasley in 2006 and is now Dr. Georgia Beasley.

Dr. Schweitzer is a surgical oncologist, a surgeon who treats cancer. Training includes 4 years of medical school, 7 years of general surgery residency, and 2 years of fellowship in surgical oncology at the Ohio State James Cancer Institute.

Official titles now are:

- Associate Professor of Surgery at Duke University.
- Board certified in general surgery and surgical oncology.
- Assistant Director of the Duke Melanoma Program.

She enjoys treating early stage patients, curing patients of cancer with surgery and this has very meaningful impact. She also spends a lot of time doing research to improve the treatment for patients with more advanced cancers.



## Do you know your basketball heritage?

GCBLA is striving to keep the spotlight on the historic exploits and traditions of Central Ohio basketball in the forefront of the archives to witness the contributions of the sport to the development of the thriving general community.

**GCBLA:** Any advice on how GCBLA can be more impactful as an organization moving forward? **GS:** GCBLA is just an impressive and important organization.

work not only as a surgeon but also a researcher, my research focuses on using the body's own immune system to fight cancer or using things we know to stimulate the body's immune system to fight cancer.

**GCBLA:** What new endeavors are you currently involved in that our readers might find interesting? **GS:** I currently



## 5 S. Yolanda Robinson

**GCBLA:** Are you a native of Columbus, Ohio? If not where are you from? **SYR:** I was born in Gilliam, West Virginia. My family moved to Columbus, Ohio when I was 4 years old. I grew up on the near eastside of Columbus, Ohio. I attended East High School and Second Baptist Church.

**GCBLA:** What is your professional area of expertise? Why did you select this area, and was this your original area of interest? **SYR:** My professional area of expertise is event planning and marketing? I learned these skills from my mentors in the Ohio Black Political Assembly. As a member I volunteered and worked behind the scenes putting programs together on very little resources. This experience opened the door for me in many areas and has helped me my entire life. I am formally trained to be a counselor. Graduating from high school I did not have any plans. As I began to meet many successful people doing programs I learned that they had plans. I started writing down my goals on New Years Eve and praying over them. Each year I would go in my prayer box and review what I wrote the previous year. A lot of the things I prayed over were being answered. Doing this has made me realize how important prayer is in our life.

**GCBLA:** What do you enjoy most about what you do, and what advice/insight would you give the next generation on how to navigate towards a successful and impactful career in Sports, Business and Social Activism?



**SYR:** I enjoy meeting people from all walks of life. It makes me happy when I can connect them with organizations and individuals who can help them achieve their goals. Someone helped me. It is my turn to help someone else. My advice to the next generation is to keep your prayer life strong. I do not know what I would have done if it were not for the communication I had with the Almighty God. People will disappoint you. God never will. Nothing can separate you from the Love of God. When man closes a door, God will always have a window for you to go through. I have learned to include in my prayer, Lord, where is the window. Always keep your word. My grandparents told me your word is your bond. Do what you say you are going to do. If you can't do it, let the people that you promise know. Do not forget to give back. We are all here for a brief period. We all need to pay rent. Our rent is giving back and making this world better for the next generation. PAY YOUR RENT.

**GCBLA:** Any advice on how GCBLA can be more impactful as an organization moving forward? **SYR:** I love the work GCBLA is doing in our community. Members of the organization are excellent role models for our youth. It is always a joy to work with them. I pledge to do whatever I can to help GCBLA achieve its goals. Keep on doing what you are doing.

**GCBLA:** What new endeavors are you currently involved that our readers might find interesting? **SYR:** I am currently working to expand my radio program into a larger market and writing a book.



**6 Kahli Wilson**

**GCBLA:** Are you a native of Columbus, Ohio? If not where are you from? **KW:** Yes, I was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. I lived in the same house since I was 6 months old until I graduated high school.

**GCBLA:** What is your professional area of expertise? why did you select this area, and was this your original area of interest? **KW:** My professional area of expertise are business, education, and coaching. Up until my junior year of college I was undecided on a major. I eventually opted to study sales in college



## Have you read a book lately?

GCBLA will issue a challenge to feed your mind when the "Recommended Reading" column returns to The Legendary. It will be promoting books with sports topics or books that are authored by people with a sports background or connection.

because the director of the program at the time told me that in sales, the harder you work, the more money you get paid. I knew my work ethic was top notch, so I figured I would be rich! However, after being successful in sales and management I felt like I could do more to give back and to help people. So, I began teaching middle school math at my children's school and have taught for the past 8 years. I've coached basketball during that same time, the past 5 have been assisting my husband at the high school varsity level.

**GCBLA:** What do you enjoy most about what you do, and what advice/insight would you give the next generation on how to navigate towards a successful and impactful career in Sports, Business, and Social Activism? **KW:** What I enjoy most about both teaching and coaching is the joy in a person when they finally "get it". Whether it is a tough math concept that took repetition to understand or perfecting one's jump shot. I love helping young people persevere through adversity and overcome obstacles to achieve their goals. I would advise the next generation to pursue their dreams no matter what people might say. Often times it can be the people closest to you and the ones you love the most that hold you back. If you do what you truly love doing, you will never really "work" a day in your life. Colossians 3:23 tells us to work as if we are working for the Lord, not for man. I would also tell the next generation to stand up for what they believe in. We are experiencing various things in life right now because those before us took a stand at some point. Proverbs 31:8-9 tells us to speak up and to defend the rights of the poor and needy.

**GCBLA:** Any advice on how GCBLA can be more impactful as an organization moving forward? **KW:** I would suggest increasing your presence on social media and to the population in general so that the public is more aware of the great things that you do.

**GCBLA:** What new endeavors are you currently involved in that our readers might find interesting? **KW:** I have found my niche in coaching basketball through the gift of encouragement. I have been coaching at the high school level for the past 5 years and won the Girls 2A North Carolina State Championship in 2020. I have coached multiple players who have played at Power 5 schools, an ESPN Top 100 player, and a NCAA National Champion.





## GCBLA: Where Legends Are Remembered!

GCBLA's original focus was to recognize the accomplishments of the legends who set the stage for the stars of today and has evolved into an educational resource for the public and current ballers to know and appreciate their basketball lineage.



### 7 Deidre Hamlar

**GCBLA:** Are you a native of Columbus, Ohio? If not where are you from? **DH:** I am a native of Columbus and spent my first 10 years living on Franklin Park South then the next eight years until college at Emory and UCLA in Berwick, on the east side of Columbus.

**GCBLA:** What is your professional area of expertise? why did you select this area, and was this your original area of interest? **DH:** I am an artist's representative, an independent curator and Director of The Aminah Robinson Legacy Project at the Columbus Museum of Art.

I graduated from Howard University Law School in 1986 and practiced law with the Federal Government on and off until 2018, all the while working with artists and arts institutions. Seeing the value of the arts to uplift our people, challenge stereotypes and bridge cultures, I opened Peaceworks Gallery in 1990 downstairs from my father's dental office on Bryden Road. The first artist I represented, Queen Brooks, is a powerful figure in our community today. I engaged a process to understand arts administration and impact museum culture in 1992 and took positions at The Columbus Museum of Art and The Walker Art Center. 30

years from my start in the arts, I am back where I began, and proudly in a capacity to share one of the most magnanimous spirits in the art world that comes from my hometown, Aminah Robinson. I still assist family and friends with legal matters when asked.

**GCBLA:** What do you enjoy most about what you do, and what advice/insight would you give the next generation on how to navigate towards a successful and impactful career in Sports, Business, and Social Activism? **DH:** I enjoy the power of arts to open communications, impact hearts and change mindsets. I entered the field because I didn't see the same effectiveness in the law. I wanted to work closer to emotions, and the arts provide that immediacy, both for the artists and the audiences. I love to see young people express themselves freely, and experience the power of releasing their innermost desires through art. I love that what I do does not feel like work, but comes naturally. I liken myself to an artist, my palette is made up of people of many colors and my painting is the relationships they create.

I understand that art transforms and is also big business. There are many aspects young people don't grasp that are accessible if they knew. I enjoy sharing those aspects, opening them to new possibilities.



## Spread The Word!

GCBLA invites you to share this Legendary Newsletter with your friends, relatives and colleagues whether they are basketball enthusiasts or not. There is always lots of pertinent information within these pages!

Finally, art is all about truth-telling, history making and social activism. I am the tool to assist others to do this work through their talents of expression.

I would advise young people to trust and follow their hearts. Look for opportunities that support their desires. Let God lead them towards their purposes.

**GCBLA:** Any advice on how GCBLA can be more impactful as an organization moving forward? **DH:** Perhaps, send your members and awardees out as ambassadors to local and national events. Participate in TedX and other

conferences.

**GCBLA:** What new endeavors are you currently involved in that our readers might find interesting? **DH:** I am working on a major exhibition with the Columbus Museum of Art for 2024-25, I am an executive producer of a documentary about a newly transitioning 50 year old transmasculine Black person in Minneapolis, I am the newly elected president of a national women's organization (following in my mother's footsteps) and I am learning to play golf (following in my father's). Life holds many gifts and wonders!



## 8 Jessica Davenport

**GCBLA:** Are you a native of Columbus, Ohio? If not where are you from? **JD:** Yes I was born and raised in Columbus Ohio

**GCBLA:** What is your professional area of expertise? **JD:** Retired Professional Athlete. Now working in e-commerce at Nike.

**GCBLA:** Why did you select this area? **JD:** I've always had an interest in e-commerce and sport and an opportunity came for me to combine those two.

**GCBLA:** What do you enjoy most about what you do? **JD:** First I love that I get a chance to be back in a team environment especially with a company that is rooted in sport. Secondly I love that my job is to help improve the customer experience across our online platforms for our kid consumer because I get to flex a number of muscles by working cross functionally to achieve one goal. It really is fun to see a project from creation from completion.



## Be safe during the COVID-19 pandemic!

GCBLA is urging EVERYONE to remain safe and follow the guidelines set by the CDC, your local, state, and federal health officials to keep yourself safe and those around you. Get vaccinated, wear a mask and maintain safe social distancing!

**GCBLA:** What advice/insight would you give the next generation on how to navigate towards a successful and impactful career in Sports, Business, and Social Activism?

**JD:** My advice would be from the perspective of someone who is coming into corporate america from professional sports and that is to seek out and take advantage of professional development opportunities early and often along the journey not just at the end of you career. Find a passion or interest, actually do some work in that space to get experience and see where you can add value and make waves. Don't be afraid to fail either. Its how you learn.

**GCBLA:** Any advice on how GCBLA can be more impactful as an organization moving forward? **JD:** I think increasing the opportunities to let the public know the great work that the team is doing which including more social network platforms.

**GCBLA:** What new endeavors are you currently involved in that our readers might find interesting? **JD:** Recently joined the board for BAAC which is the black athlete alumni committee for Ohio State which is a sub committee for Varsity O. I'm excited to get started and see where we can make an impact for our student athlete alumni.

### In Memoriam



**GRANVILLE WAITERS**, age 60,  
transitioned on March 22, 2021.

Waiters was a vital cog in leading Columbus East High School to the 1979 State Championship as a 6'11" Senior Center. Granville played center for Ohio State University's men's basketball team and was drafted by the Portland Trail Blazers in the second round of the 1983 NBA Draft. The Blazers sold his draft rights to the Indiana Pacers, and Waiters spent his first two seasons in Indiana. He then played for the Houston Rockets and Chicago Bulls until leaving the NBA for Europe in 1988. At the time of his passing, Waiters had been assisting the basketball coaching staff at East High.

Greater Columbus Basketball Legends Association has registered to participate in the **AMAZON SMILE** program, which allows customers to support their favorite non-profit charitable organizations. With every eligible purchase made from Amazon, a portion will be given to GCBLA. To participate search [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and insert, The Greater Columbus Basketball Legends Association. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated. For further information contact us via email at [legendscbla@gmail.com](mailto:legendscbla@gmail.com).



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