

BLOGGING WHILE BROWN

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR BLOGGERS OF COLOR

JULY 25-27, 2008 ATLANTA, GA

Blogging While Brown Speaker Biographies

Angela Conyers-Benton

Angela Conyers-Benton publishes BlackWeb20.com, a blog that analyzes emerging web trends as it relates to African-Americans and African-American culture. Her experience spans a variety of industries including consultative relationships with companies such as [UPS](http://UPS.com), Bizjournals.com, Realestate.com, and Lendingtree.com among others.

Angela also speaks on topics such as diversity in the web and media industries, web trends, web strategy, and web 2.0's effects on urban entertainment. She has participated on panels at conferences such as South by Southwest and Experience Music Project Pop Conference to name a few. She is presently leading design at RushmoreDrive.com.

Angela graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communications with a specialization in Digital Design. She has also completed postgraduate coursework in Graphic Design from Savannah College of Art and Design.

She is a member of the National Association of Black Female Executives in Music and Entertainment and currently serves on the Management Board of the Charlotte Network as Membership Director. In her spare time she is devoted to bringing awareness to the lack of African-Americans who hold management and executive positions in the Design and Web industries.

Fanshen Cox

Franshen Cox is an actress, producer, podcaster and educator. Fanshen graduated with honors from the University of Michigan and holds an MA from Teachers College, Columbia University. She served 2 years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cape Verde, West Africa and was given the Peace Corps' Franklin H. Williams Award when teaching in a high school in the South Bronx. She honed her production skills as a Film Independent Project: Involve Fellow; and is the co-producer and co-host of Mixed Chicks Chat - the only live, weekly podcast about being racially and culturally Mixed (available on itunes or at www.mixedchickschat.com). She was recently quoted in The Guardian and served as an interviewer on StoryCorps' Griot Initiative. Fanshen is co-producer and co-founder of the Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival. As an actress, her credits include: Gone Baby Gone (directed by Ben Affleck), Ellie Parker (opposite Naomi Watts) and numerous television and theater roles.

The word “fanshen” was created by peasants during China's land reform movement and means start a revolution. Fanshen's parents are Jamaican, Scottish, Danish and Native American and she has dedicated her life to sharing her story as a woman of Mixed racial and cultural heritages.

Carmen Dixon

Carmen Dixon is a three time Emmy award winning former ABC News producer. Carmen is an expert communicator with more than a decade of journalism, public relations and crisis management experience under her belt. After graduating from Yale University with a degree in Economics, Dixon pursued journalism and began working at ABC News. She produced breaking news and investigative pieces for *Primetime Live* and news and feature pieces for *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*. She is now president/owner of media coaching company, Media Savant, Inc.

Heidi W. Durrow

Heidi Durrow is a writer, podcaster and lawyer. A graduate of Stanford University, Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and Yale Law School, Heidi Durrow is a Los Angeles writer who is African-American and Danish. A former litigator at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, Heidi has also worked as a consultant to the National Basketball Association and National Football League teaching conflict management and decision-making workshops.

As a fiction writer, Heidi has won several awards for her writing-which focuses on issues of biracial and bicultural identity-- including the Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition, and the Chapter One Fiction Contest. She has received grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the American Scandinavian Foundation, the Lois Roth Endowment and an Emerging Writers' Award from the Jerome Foundation. The Elizabeth George Foundation and the American Antiquarian Society have awarded her grants for her novel-in-progress about Miss Lala, a mulatta circus performer and strongwoman of the Victorian era. Heidi's writing has been published in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Poem Memoir* Story as well as on the popular blog *Light-skinned-ed Girl* (www.lightskinnededgirl.typepad.com).

Heidi was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her novel manuscript was a finalist for Barbara Kingsolver's 2008 Bellwether Prize for Literature of Social Change. Heidi is the co-host and co-producer of *Mixed Chicks Chat* (www.mixedchickschat.com), the only live weekly show about being racially and culturally mixed. Heidi is co-producer and co-founder of the *Mixed Roots Film & Literary Festival*.

R. Wayne Hicks

R. Wayne Hicks is the executive director for the BDPA Education & Technology Foundation (www.betf.org), the non-profit fundraising arm for a national IT association. He owns a consulting firm based in Cincinnati that focuses on Internet online marketing, leadership consultation and product sales. Wayne served as president of the Cincinnati Business Incubator (CBI) for the past five years. Under his leadership, CBI tripled its corporate clients

while promoting economic development and job creation throughout the community. CBI was named "Non-Profit of the Year" by the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce. Prior to starting his own business Wayne served as the Director of the Cincinnati Submission Processing Center (CSPC) in Covington, Kentucky. Employing more than 3,600 people in Covington and Florence, Kentucky, and Dayton, Ohio, Wayne's center was one of the largest employers in the area.

Wayne received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in political science from the University of California, Riverside. He is currently National BDPA Immediate Past President. He served from 1999-2001 as the President of the Cincinnati Chapter of BDPA (<http://www.bdpa-cincy.org>) Information Technology Thought Leaders. BDPA Cincinnati chapter was recognized as back-to-back BDPA Chapter of the Year for their efforts in 2001 and 2002 under Wayne's leadership. Wayne was the National BDPA President-Elect in 2002-2003 and National BDPA President in 2004-2005.

Wayne is active on a number of community-based initiatives including the Regional Technology Initiative (www.cincytechusa.com) and Cincinnati Creates Companies (www.cincinnaticreatescompanies.org). The Business Courier recognized him as one of the "Forty-Under-40" leaders in Cincinnati and he was a finalist for the Applause Magazine *ImageMaker Award* for his work in the technology arena.

Wayne has been a frequent workshop presenter at regional & national training seminars discussing topics such as, "Vanishing Black Male," "Dealing with Office Politics," "Bridging the Digital Divide," and "Strategies for Success." Wayne is a past winner of the EEO Meritorious Service Award from National AIM-IRS. Wayne is a single parent with three children.

Kristal Lauren High, Esq.

Kristal Lauren High is a licensed attorney with LeClairRyan in Richmond, Virginia. She received her B.A. in Theater with a concentration in Ethnic Studies from Davidson College, and her J.D. from Washington and Lee University School of Law. While a student at Washington and Lee, Ms. High founded and served as President of the Media and Communications Law Association. She currently sits on the Board of Directors for the Elegba Folklore Society, a cultural arts organization focused on educating and empowering members of the African-American community through the use of cultural and performing arts. Ms. High has been actively engaged in researching first amendment, internet and copyright issues as they pertain to blogger's rights and responsibilities, and she is personally interested in the transformative power that access to broadband technology can have on minority communities.

Kevin Myles

Kevin Myles was born on Fort Ord Army base in Monterey California. Raised in Cleveland since early childhood, Kevin left Cleveland after high school to pursue a career in the military. He is a veteran of two conflicts, having served in Operation "Just Cause" (The invasion of Panama and the deposition of Manuel Noriega) and Operation "Provide Comfort" (a companion mission to Desert Storm to rescue the Kurdish Refugees from the mountains of Iraq during the first Persian Gulf War). After being honorably discharged from the Army, Kevin and family settled in Wichita, Kansas.

Kevin went to work for Ryan International Airlines; a privately held airline which specialized in Charter and Military flights. He quickly rose through the ranks becoming an FAA certified ground instructor, teaching classes on the avionics and flight systems of Boeing 727, 737, and 757, Airbus A320, and McDonnell Douglas MD-80 aircraft. He served 10 years as the Manager of Flight Operations before being promoted to serve as the Director of Government Programs where he oversaw the company's \$67,000,000.00 military and agency operations while serving as the airline's principal liaison with Governmental agencies and embassies, foreign and domestic.

Since January of 2003, Kevin Myles has served as the President of the Wichita Branch NAACP. He also serves as the Political Affairs Chairman for the Kansas State Conference of NAACP Branches. In this role, he works to shape and guide the political strategies and activities of the 16 NAACP units in the State of Kansas, and he serves as the State Conference's chief lobbyist.

In addition to his work with the NAACP, Kevin Myles is also both a member and a volunteer with American Mensa; a high IQ society dedicated to three main aims:

1. Identifying and fostering human intelligence for the benefit of humanity.
2. Encouraging research in the nature, characteristics and uses of intelligence.
3. Providing a stimulating intellectual and social environment for members.

Kevin served 4 consecutive terms as President of the Wichita Chapter of Mensa. Following his tenure as President, he was elected to serve as the Mensa Regional Director and member of the National Board of Directors. Kevin continues to serve as a member of the national Mensa marketing committee where they are building an outreach campaign to increase the organizations membership and appeal within minority communities.

Kevin now serves as the Director of Fleet Management for Sedgwick County, Kansas; managing an \$11,000,000.00 budget and 742 County owned vehicles and pieces of equipment. Kevin is also the President and CEO of Myles & Associates, which provides public policy solutions to non-profit and community organizations. He serves on Governor Sebelius's State Wide Racial Profiling Task Force, the Sedgwick County Sustainability Task Force, the Community Corrections Advisory board, the City of Wichita Citizens Advisory Board, and the Wichita Airport advisory board.

“NECOLE BITCHIE”

NecoleBitchie.com has quickly become one of the fastest growing and widely successful entertainment/ celebrity news blogs of new media. The creator, Necole Bitchie, launched the site less than 6 months ago and has achieved record-breaking traffic, recognition and respect since the inception. Described as “A new pioneer in new media” and industry trendsetter, her site has become one of the most noted sites for exclusive news, interviews and insight on popular culture.

Necole's unique blend of entertainment and celebrity news has been featured or referenced on VH1, Essence.com, AOL Black Voices, The Best Week Ever, MTV.com, All Hip Hop, Global Grind.com, SOHH.com, TheYbf.com, Sandra Rose Richmond's Power 92.1, Rolling Out, and both of Atlanta's key urban radio stations, V-103 and Hot 107.9.

In addition to NecoleBitchie.com, Necole has created the online social community, TheUrbanBlogger.com. Founded less than 6 months ago, the social network now has over 1,000 members. These members represent some of the most influential urban entertainment

news sites and blogs in the country. Necole created TheUrbanBlogger.com to:

- Connect savvy new media journalists and bloggers across the globe
- Create a community for sharing trends, tips and support regarding Web 2.0
- Provide an instantaneous news distribution platform

Necole also blogs for Russell Simmons' GlobalGrind.com. She is currently speaking on the Female Success Factor Tour presented by Rolling Out Magazine.

Markus Robinson

Markus Robinson is an Information Technology Specialist with over 8 years of IT experience in fields of application design, support and IT management in academia. Markus currently holds a position as Director of Information Technology for the College of Human Sciences at The Florida State University, where he manages a team of support specialist and applications designers. Markus' knowledge spans beyond academia. As the creator of his own web design and consulting business in 1999 at the age of 19, Markus has consulted small businesses and new media startups in the fields procurement and finance, search engine optimization (SEO), marketing, advertising, application design and development and server administration.

Markus also serves General Manager and Contributing Writer for Black Web 2.0 (blackweb20.com), a blog that analyzes the uses of Web 2.0 technology and trends on websites that target African-Americans and African-American culture. Markus manages all technology endeavors, collaborates on product development, marketing strategies, and manages the site's advertising campaigns. Markus also serves as sound engineer and co host of the Black Web 2.0 Show, a monthly podcast spotlighting the best in black business and web technologies. Markus is also the creator and Co-Founder of Culture Ads (cultureads.com) a culturally focused advertising network whose goal is to connect advertisers with multicultural online content and communities.

Markus holds a Bachelors Degree in Computer Information Systems from Florida A&M University with a minor in Business Administration.

Kevin Ross

Kevin Ross is founder, president and CEO of 3BAAS Media Group, an online strategic marketing and branding firm specializing in original as well as aggregated digital content. He is also the host of The Kevin Ross Show, the #1 Current Events program on Internet radio sensation BlogTalkRadio.

A California Superior Court judge who handled everything from murder and juvenile delinquency cases to mental commitments for diagnosed sexually violent predators, the former elected jurist turned tech-savvy entrepreneur also worked as a hardcore gang prosecutor for the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office.

During his early years, Kevin Ross juggled a string of jobs while holding leadership positions that included student body president at Gardena High School in Gardena, California, and Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. At Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles, Ross was elected president of his 2nd year class and the Black Law Students Association.

Recognized for his passion, expertise and sense of humor, it didn't take long before Ross became a highly sought after commentator on *Fox News Channel*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *Black*

Entertainment Television (BET), and KCAL Channel 9 News. His musings on political and social issues have been featured in periodicals such as the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Daily News*, and the *Los Angeles Sentinel*.

Ross also launched a terrestrial radio career during this period. He co-hosted a weekly public affairs program on *103.9 KACE*, then followed that with own show, "*Keeping It Real with Kevin Ross*" on *Talkradio 790 KABC*. While on the bench, Ross was regularly featured on *KCET's "Life & Times Tonight"* where he tackled and demystified legal issues from a judge's perspective. Presently, Ross is a regular guest on *NPR News & Notes with Farai Chideya*.

As someone who understands the importance of giving back, Ross has served as a commissioner for the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, is a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, and co-founder of The New Leaders, a non-profit organization created to empower the next generation of leaders.

The South L.A. native has become quite proficient at blogging, online social networking, and producing new media content for clients of the company he founded in 2007. His 3BAAS firm has been highlighted in the *Washington Post*, the *Metropolitan News*, and *Our Weekly Newspaper*.

A member of First AME Church currently residing in Southern California, what most defines Ross is not his Republican political affiliation, business acumen or his heightened exposure as a media analyst. Rather, it's his role as a husband and father of two energetic young boys that he most cherishes.

Shwana Ruth-Bridges, Esq.

Shwana Ruth-Bridges is the creator of "Character Corner", a blog where hip hop meets scripture. Shwana earned her B.A. from Delaware State University and her JD from Seton Hall University School of Law. She is admitted to the New Jersey State Bar. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and Corporate Counsel Women of Color. She is married and the mother of three children. Shwana is currently working as Corporate Counsel for a corporation in Atlanta, Georgia.