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AN AGENDA FOR BLACK WOMEN

A PATH TO EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beautiful and strong maternal grandmother, Mrs. Willie Mae Hathaway; one of the best storytellers ever, my paternal grandmother, Mrs. Laura Batey Pride; my mother, Ms. JoAnn Hathaway; my sissy, Ms. Kayla Annette Poole; my cousin-best friend, Ms. Camillia Jones; my cousins, Mrs. Shelia Pride Green and Ms. Dena Woodmore; my kindhearted aunt, Mrs. Annie Louise Moore, my godmothers, Mrs. Gail Haliburton Smartt and Mrs. Renee Tomlinson; my godparents, Mrs. Mona and Mr. Ed Powell; my aunts, Mrs. Patricia Alderson Hathaway, Mrs. Evonne Hathaway, Ms. Andretta Holt, and Ms. Teresa Holmes; and the amazing women of the Hathaway, Pride, Jones, Brown, Bell, Buchanan-Shannon, Green, Holt, Black, Gaines, Braddock, Merritt, Britton-Young, Rowley-Brooks, Muhammad, and Pulley families.

To a group of young ladies who are the apple of my eye...my mentees, my children. To all the women who have poured into me and lifted my wings, know that I am thinking of you and I am grateful the Universe allowed our lives to intersect.

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Preface

“An Agenda For Black Women: A Path To Empowerment And Transformational Change” is a supplement and, in part, seeks to supplant a discourse around sociopolitical and economic problems that plague women of African ancestry in the United States. This text strives to create a conversation, establish policy positions, and advance meaningful and sustainable change. Its scope and solutions are national with an aim to shrink the historical and present achievement, opportunity, gender, and wealth gaps.

History and our political stakes in the United States of America have pressed me to create this work. Non-whites are under the greatest attack in a generation. We are losing ground on every plane and on the global stage. We must call for a new agenda to be crafted and executed. We are not a monolithic group in philosophy, religiosity, spirituality, status or the like, but we are able to coalesce around a set of principles to move a people forward forever and backwards never. “We must respond in our own way, our own terms, in a manner which fits our temperaments. The definition of ourselves, the roles we pursue, the goals we seek are our responsibility” (Ture and Hamilton, 1967).

Our experiences in this land and globally are not new. We, too, are weaved into the tapestry of America. The problem in the twenty-first century is the color line. Our agenda is both African centered and American. It is global and local. It is far reaching. It is timely. It is prophetic. It is liberating.

We have come to a point where new race consciousness moves us beyond labeling. It introduces a new game board. It is no longer about changing white folk’s minds. It is about changing our collective mindset. It is about a people dedicated to destroying the myth of black inferiority with a powerful new platform (Burrell, 2010).

A transformation is coming. We must set our aims high so that we may be emboldened and become greater, stronger, and more empowered. We must learn that everyone cannot go everywhere with us. Everything and everyone have a limitation. We must use logic and let it reign as we love, lift, and lead our people.

Introduction

We stand on the shoulders of great women, such as our mothers, grandmothers, elders, aunts, ancestors, and heroines both renowned and some unsung.

We must seek to honor the lives and legacies of black women, living and transitioned. We must explore and reflect on the stories of our women whose contributions have enriched and are enshrined into our lives (National Women's History Museum, 2019).

It is time to broaden the conversation and legislation about women's rights and responsibilities, increase public consciousness about black women, and truly acknowledge women's history and contributions to this American experiment with democracy. Every advancement a woman makes, a society makes. Therefore, the role of a woman cannot be pigeonholed into a single set of issues or solutions. Her reach is social, political, economic, and cognitive. She has been in this land four hundred years under the yoke of oppression, yet she persevered.

The woman is a life giver, life breather, life feeder, and holds the world in her womb and through her words. By way of advocacy, blood, sweat, tears, childbearing, litigation, and the like; women have gained access to quality healthcare, educational attainment at all levels, civic participation, and broke economic barriers. In the United States of America, generations of women were treated as the lesser gender. Despite gains in gender equality over the past centuries, women are still disproportionately victims of harassment, assault, and discrimination in the workplace and at home. It is time to heal what is hurting our country. We must make visible our vastness and create victories on our blocks, in our neighborhoods, our cities and states, every region, and our nation (King, 1963).

To black women who are on a path to empowerment and transformational change:

This is our time. Time to either live and thrive or exist and stive.

This is our time to promote the progression of a race amid terror and stand flat on our feet and have accessions.

This is our time to operate as a collective and not compromise on conviction.

This is our time to make the world over again and establish a new order.

This is our time to be fixed and demonstrate fluidity simultaneously.

This is our time to exemplify all things moral, all things ethical, all things successive, and all things foundational.

This is our time to change our condition.

This is our time to transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.

This is our time to reflect on our greatness and investigate the contributions of women of the African Diaspora in the United States of America.

This is our time to light up a path for our family and community that blazes beyond the twenty-second century.

This is our time to push humanity to a higher plane.

This is our time to navigate our lives and not wait for Washington to steer the ship.

This is our time.

This is our time.

This is our time.

This. Is. Our. Time.

AN AGENDA FOR BLACK WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

The family is the first and strongest social institution.
It is a trinity not a duality. It is time to restore normalcy!

We must examine the quality of our parenting and community building. We must examine the direction which we are turning and the forces that have shifted our families. It is time to reclaim our fathers, our men. It is time to put away ego and economics. Put that man back in his rightful place in the Universe; with his family unit. Hold him tight and do not let him go! He has been trained to believe that he does belong there, and his role exit was acceptable. There will be resistance by all parties; man, woman, and child once he returns.

It is time to build and restore the legacy of our families. It must be one that is positive and transformational. The cycle that has continuously perpetuated for the last fifty years has to be broken. Restoration and accountability need to begin with love. It is mandatory that our expectations increase. A sense of urgency must be constructed around reorienting the black family. We must not let the government dictate our household. If we are going to exist in this land for the next two generations or the two hundred years, we have got to be greater than the current condition.

We need mass reentry of an alpha male and father in our homes. The Obama Administration sought initiatives and strategies to promote responsible fathering.

- ✓ Promote and create positive opportunities for fathers to engage in the intellectual, emotional and financial well-being of their children.
- ✓ Support and sustain stable and healthy environments for children and parents, particularly by strengthening the economic stability of low-income fathers and supporting healthy relationships between parents.
- ✓ Strengthen and solidify relationships among fathers, children, and families early in a child's life.
- ✓ Support and encourage disconnected fathers to reconnect with their children and families.
- ✓ Use convening power to coordinate communication and high impact engagement efforts that promote a positive culture shift around fatherhood (The White House, 2012).

A woman's member is among her most powerful, divine, and nature-given faculty.

The next generation must hear a new song. It must sing like:

1. You are and will continue to be more economically sound than previous and current generations.
2. Because of *Brown v. The Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas*, you graduated from any college or university in the United States of America.
3. Your father is in the household, because we decided to stop shacking up and raising children in a single parent household. We chose to marry.
4. Son and daughter, you are a leader in this family. You are to reclaim and amplify the vital role of family, culture and spirituality of the African American community (African American Leadership Forum, 2011).
5. Hard times will come, but it is what you do in the difficult days to change the direction of your course. Demonstrate good and moral character in spite of the challenges and controversies you will face.
6. Love the color of your skin, because it is the color of greatness. You are my child and you are beautiful.
7. Chattel slavery and forced labor no longer exist globally, but you will never have mental slavery, opportunity slavery, drug addiction and distribution slavery, alcoholic slavery, obesity slavery, or any other ill that could reduce the quality of your life.
8. Allow heartache and poor circumstances to be your motivator, not an excuse.
9. From the mother, "Son, I want you to be the same kind of man your father is and better." From the father, "Daughter, I want you to be the same kind of woman your mother is and better."
10. The kinky, tight curled hair on your head is beautiful. Embrace it!
11. No drugs or alcohol came into this household, because they could have destroyed this family. They could have led to your incarceration, your death, an addiction, gambling, and caused you to be a poor example of this family.
12. We exercise and eat healthy, because we are trying to fight off generations of heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic diseases and ailments.

“Poverty Has. Poverty Is. Poverty Leaves.”

Poverty has a macabre face.
There must be a makeover and repair.

Poverty has norms and values.
We must stand on stronger principles.

Poverty is psychological.
There must be a change in behavior and attitude; which should occur from the top down, the bottom up, and everything in between.

Poverty has a long history.
Its narrative must be revised.
Scholars must reinterpret it and new evidence must be gathered.
We must use the past as a road map and predict different outcomes.

Poverty is political.
Legislation alone cannot change it.
One must recognize that everyone has the power to impact the political system.
One must engage and throw off the shackles of cynicism.

Poverty has a language.
We must study its linguistics.
We must become multilingual.
We must speak: “street,” “affluence,” “figuratively,” “literally,” “idioms,” and “espionage.”

Poverty has a social perspective.
One must see herself and himself as a part of the human family.
There must be a change in behavior, a change in the social forces, and a change in how we experience one another.

Poverty has power.
It must become impotent.
We must create enough outrage about it; that it loses its sting.

Poverty is a menace.
It must be meticulously removed and exterminated.

Poverty has crippled communities.
We must create a strong body politic.

Poverty is silent and outspoken simultaneously.
One must become a whistle blower for economic progress and upward social mobility.

Poverty has a stench.
One must find the root cause of it and eradicate it from within.
We must do more than deodorize it.
We must banish it.

Poverty leaves wounds.
It must be healed and leave no scars.

Poverty leaves a taste in mouths.
We must cleanse our palate.
One must savor on “success,” “abundance,” “wealth,” and “luxury.”

Poverty has an architect.
One must build something that has never been built before.
We must make the world over again.

Poverty has an edifice.
It must be deconstructed.
One must change those deep-seated beliefs and challenge the conventional.

Poverty has a backbone.
It must be severed, and a new skeleton must grow.

Poverty seeks to be timeless. It is up to the living to give it a deadline, and the unborn must ensure that it is never seen in their lifetime.

AN AGENDA FOR BLACK WOMEN AND WEALTH AND THE ECONOMY

Slavery did a terrible psychological, political, and socioeconomic injustice to people of African descent throughout the United States of America and worldwide. Blacks were not able to earn an income, because they were property. Many of the monetary effects are still being experienced today. Those injustices were reinforced by housing discrimination practices such as redlining and racial steering. Those practices devalued many black neighborhoods and their most lucrative assets, their homes; compared to white counterparts.

Furthermore, public policies have historically oppressed African Americans while systematically assuring that whites would flourish. Although “separate, but equal” was stamped out by *Brown v. the Board of Education Topeka, Kansas*, we still live in a nation that remains separate and unequal for people of color. It is evermore present in the growth of the income gap between the top one percent and everyone else. Currently, the top one percent holds ninety percent of America’s wealth. That was not the case in the 1960s, 1970s, or the 1980s. Something changed while minority communities were sleeping and locked out of the system. Political rhetoric did not meet reality. Elected officials did not fully implement the promises of the New Deal programs, which were not designed for blacks. In addition, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or other Great Society programs purpose was to calm the uprisings of the Civil Rights Movement not necessarily for economic advancement of minorities. Employment discrimination has been an unending overarching narrative in our struggle for economic opportunity. Whether black Americans want to admit it or not, we lose ground in education and earnings under President Barack Obama.

With all this combined, African Americans can break through the economic glass ceiling. Our history dates back to Mansa Musa returning from his hajj in Mecca with a net worth equivalent to four hundred billion dollars, Folrunsho Alakija, Nigerian oil and fashion tycoon; has a net worth of two billion dollars, Aliko Dangote, Nigerian trader and manufacturing expert; net worth of over twelve billion. Oprah Winfrey, American media proprietor and television show host, has a net worth of over three billion. Robert Smith, investment banker and founder of a private equity firm, has a net worth of over four billion. These individuals are living proof that blacks can shatter the historical and racial barriers to wealth creation.

Our current situation does not determine our final destination. It is going to take a serious and concerted force to pull blacks out of this economic condition. The message of wealth accumulation is going to have to be taught by parents and in the pulpit, in schools and in the streets, and from womb to tomb. This message must convict our conscience.

We must be taught and retaught about the importance of credit and lending. We must reduce the fears and dispel the myths stated about credit. Credit is a good thing. Some economist express credit is more valuable than actual currency. When establishing credit, interest rates will be high, because of the risks associated with extending a loan. Over time and with positive payment history, it will improve.

The working poor and members of the middle class are the chief spenders and lenders in the United States of America but have the least amount of economic power! Our community has the least amount of disposable income and emergency reserves. We must reduce frivolous spending. This is difficult to tackle because we have been bitten by the bug of consumerism. Consumers have the capability to spend money every day! We may need to take drastic measures as a one year no spending challenge. We may purchase only the goods or services that we need (i.e., food, housing, utilities, and transportation). There may be pain and anxiety experienced initially not spending money. We will have difficult wearing the same clothes over and over, expending all food in the house before buying more groceries, and simply not looking for things to purchase (including online). In turn, we ought to deposit the money in a savings account or invested it in other high yield financial products. America does not feel an economy threat posed by members of our community. It is expected for our approximate one and a half trillion dollars to be circulated.

We live in a nation that is so driven by consumption that it overtakes our psyche. We must reel it in and place stronger financial legs underneath us. According to Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney in a report titled, "The Economic State of the Black Community in America," black women earned 61 cents for every dollar earned by white men in 2017, worsening from 63 cents in 2016 (Maloney, 2017). In the areas of economic mobility and wealth, she expressed, "Black children experience far less upward mobility than white children," and "Black families' wealth is significantly lower than that of white families" (Maloney, 2017).

- ✓ For every one hundred black children who grow up in the bottom fifth of the income distribution, less than three will make it to the top fifth as adults. White

children are more than four times as likely to move from the bottom to the top fifth.

- ✓ Black children are more downwardly mobile—less than one in 10 black children growing up at the top will stay there as adults, compared to one in six white children.
- ✓ In 2017, nearly one-third of black children grew up in poverty, compared to slightly more than one in 10 white children.
- ✓ Children growing up in poverty tend to experience worse health, education, and economic outcomes than other children.
- ✓ Only one in five black Americans had a bachelor's degree, compared to over one in three white Americans in 2017.
- ✓ The median net worth for white families is nearly 10 times greater than for black families.
- ✓ Slightly over one-third of black families have retirement accounts, compared to 60 percent of white families. Those with savings hold a median value of \$24,600, a third of that for white families.
- ✓ Less than half of black families own their own homes, compared to almost three-quarters of white families.
- ✓ Home equity makes up a larger proportion of household net worth for black families (Maloney, 2017).

We have to do more for the senior population. We propose a number of solutions to advance the cause of the most vulnerable by (Senior Citizens League, 2019):

- ✓ Our elders need an increase in cost-of-living adjustments.
- ✓ They should be aligned with an inflation index, which include healthcare and housing expenses.
- ✓ Expand Social Security benefits for individuals born between 1917 and 1926; as well as provide a settlement payment

- ✓ Strengthen Medicare to include dental, vision, and hearing coverage (Kavedzija, 2018)
- ✓ Develop a sustainable national late life care plan and social care system that mimics other highly industrialized nations (Kavedzija, 2018)

We must speak truth to power and pressure elected officials to expand access to homeownership, boost profit sharing to employees, grow the social safety net for the poor, seniors, and vulnerable families, and increase local, state, and federal funding for African American businesses.

We shall overcome economic disparities. It can be done by investing in one another, buying black and circulating our dollars in our community several times before they exit. Minorities ought to preach, teach, and reteach one another about proper financial management from the womb to the tomb. We must get in the race by means of ownership. The process begins by saving, entering the money market, owning stocks and bonds, obtaining a mutual fund or certificate of deposit, and monitoring our credit for starters. It is our race to win. So, let us start winning now and forevermore!

AN AGENDA FOR BLACK WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Learn as much as you can, as long as you can, from whomever you can, wherever you can. Therein lies one's access to power and the key to prominence.

Education starts in the womb. Mothers are the first teachers. The quality of women and girls' education is paramount to the furtherance of a society.

According to Dr. Carter G. Woodson in the *Mis-Education of the Negro*, "The most imperative and crucial element in Woodson's concept of mis-education hinged on the education system's failure to present authentic Negro History in schools and the bitter knowledge that there was a scarcity of literature available for such a purpose, because most history books gave little or no space to the black man's presence in America." It has been demonstrated moreover that it was never the intent of the majority community to teach anything other than a Western-based, colonial-conqueror centered education. Most curriculums from coast to coast are built around the maintenance of the status quo and supremacy.

In order to overcome our fundamental educational disparities, local school autonomy must rest with the community. Education must continue to be free. It must start in the mother's womb and be reinforced in households. Education must be considered as the lifeblood of a people. It can light up the darkest most desolate places of our lives. Education is one of the most potent weapons that can be used against an oppressor. Education can pull one out of poverty and lead to economic prominence. Education can shape one's worldview and deconstruct ignorance. Education can create social justice and break down walls of bigotry. Education can fortify a family and cultivate a community. Education will employ political power if a people seek it wholeheartedly.

So, let's send out a mandate.

1. We must require elected official leaders to take a litmus test on their involvement, advancement, and improvement of educating people of color.
2. We must take preventative measures that ensure our children are fully equipped to learn prior to reaching the schoolhouse door.
3. We must supplement the school's curriculum in our households in the area of cultural studies.
4. We must seek out and sustain resources that promote literacy.
5. We must turn off the television, come off the computer, and open a book.
6. We must directly lobby our elected officials to allocate funding to our schools and students.

7. We (parents) must be willing to ask for help understanding the curriculum and our children's homework.
8. We must realize that the status of black education is a 400-year long problem and there are no quick fixes or magic bullets.
9. We must address our attitudes about education within our families and promote educational advancement.
10. We must recognize that grades are not the beginning and ending our destiny. It is simply an indicator of effort.
11. We must know that K-12 and post-secondary educational attainment is one of the best things that we may seek; and that our children cannot simply go to college but must graduate.
12. We must create a comprehensive plan to deal with issues surrounding mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery if a crisis hits our schools (i.e.- fights, bomb, threats, and school shootings).
13. We must take ownership and accountability of our schools and their success.
14. We must recognize that there is emotional pain and trauma attached to the plight of the undereducated.
15. We must get on the committees that write the tests and the curriculum.
16. We must become lifelong learners and students of history.
17. We must know that we are in a global competition.
18. We must recognize that there is a linkage between educational advancement and social mobility.
19. We must learn to be entrepreneurs first and other people's laborers second.
20. We must be better stewards of our finances so we can direct our dollars on maintaining our communities.
21. We must learn to love and lead in our households, our street corners, our blocks, our neighborhoods, our communities, our cities, our states, and our nation.
22. We must seek to be the dream that our foremothers and forefathers wished for and procreate generations that are the definition of excellence.

Educational attainment is mandatory. It is going to take more than a high school diploma to have a decent quality of life in this country. Education is the fastest way to pull oneself up the socioeconomic ladder. College is for everyone that seeks socioeconomic mobility. College is for everyone that wants quality of life and longevity of life. College is for everyone that desires to shatter glass ceilings. College is the intersection of the greatest minds and leaders of any field of expertise. Upon completion of a degree, one will gain access and opportunity which lands in the middle class. We must encourage members of our family and friends to take courses at a local

community college and historically black colleges and universities that resonate with a career path the she or he seeks to pursue.

We are more than able to overcome the crisis in black education. It is a race that must be won. We will have to pace ourselves in order to stay the course. We will get tired. We may even lose some runners. We have to plan our race and train. We will have to outperform sprinters that have lapped us for centuries. We will have to position ourselves with runners that share our goal and are willing to cross the finish line with is.

Despite it all, we will win.

We will win.

We will win.

AN AGENDA FOR BLACK WOMEN AND POLITICS

"If you hear the dogs, keep going. If you see the torches in the woods, keep going. If there's shouting after you, keep going. Don't ever stop. Keep going. If you want a taste of freedom, keep going."

Harriett Tubman, Liberator And Heroine

"Countrymen, the task ahead is great indeed and heavy is the responsibility; and yet it is a noble and glorious challenge – a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve – to achieve the highest excellencies and the fullest greatness of man. Dare we ask for more in life?"

Kwame Nkrumah, Independence Movement Leader And Revolutionary

We must thrust ourselves into the consciousness of the country and dramatize our grievances on a thousand brightly lighted stages (King, 1963). African American women began dramatizing grievances and lighting political stages in 1851 in Akron, Ohio, with Sojourner Truth's stirring "Ain't I A Women" speech and have not shuttered or shrank since.

I call our present time "The Second Civil Rights Movement." We are fighting the same tenets as that of the first. We are beating back racism. We are tangling with tyrants and flirting with fascism. Domestic terrorism is resurging, and constitutional rights are under the greatest attack seen in the twenty-first century.

We are reminded that the most powerful cards a member of a citizenry can hold are for the library and voter registration. Both are keys to liberation and literacy is golden. Marcus Garvey tells us that a reading man and woman is a ready man and woman, but a writing man and woman is exact. Dr. W.E.B. DuBois tells us the power of the ballot box is our sheer defense to save us from a second slavery. In order to save ourselves, must are mandated to do the following:

1. Building a local, state, and national strategy to mobilize black women and dollars in order to harness our collective economic and voting power (Higher Heights, 2018)
2. Identify, educate, and engage black women across the socioeconomic spectrum to elect black women, influence elections and move public policy (Higher Heights, 2018)
3. Fully implement and fund the Congressional Black Caucus' "Marshall Plan For Black America"

4. Ratify a 21st century Equal Rights Amendment
5. State governments, local school boards, and college boards offer and enroll students in gender studies courses at the elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels
6. Increase protections of women in tribal, indigenous, and native government jurisdictions
7. Expand access and increase quality healthcare to incarcerated pregnant women, care for girls in juvenile facilities, and parental rights of incarcerated mothers (Rosenfeld, Mardirossian, Langston, Lawler, and Dunning, (2007).
8. Fully implement universal healthcare in this country which prioritizes preventative care, nutrition, childcare, addictions, and senior citizen services (Black Panther Party, 1970)
9. Methodically and intentionally close the gender, opportunity, wealth, and achievement gaps
10. Promote feminist philanthropy at the state and local levels
11. Fully enforce and fund laws on the books which are related to violence, equal protection, due process, employment protections, and healthcare
12. Craft and execute legislation to end female genital mutilation
13. Protect reproductive and sexual rights and access to contraceptives
14. Restrict abortions to twenty-four (24) weeks, except where it is detrimental to the mother
15. Grant new mothers and fathers a minimum of eight (8) weeks of paid leave from their employers
16. Eradicate trafficking of forced laborers and sexual slaves
17. Grant women of color one-third (1/3) of all local, state, and federal government contracts
18. State and federal legislation to "Bring The Man Back In The House," which is a counter to the Aid To Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) policy, "No Man In The House" Rule
19. Elect and appoint more African American women to public service
20. Amplify African American female voices in all areas of political engagement
21. Investing in a strategy to expand and support the Black women's leadership pipeline at all levels and strengthen their civic participation with ongoing efforts (Higher Heights, 2018)
22. Form a commission and conduct exploratory research on the historical, social, political, and economic role of black women and provide recommendations, facts, and circumstances for forward progress and community advancement.

CONCLUSION

An Agenda For Black Women: A Path To Empowerment And Transformational Change is a full throated, intentional, and expeditious effort to tackle the pressing issues surrounding our community. It is our duty to intervene when matters of family, wealth, the economy, education, and politics are at our doorstep. Our lives and well-being are at stake. The black woman is the bearer of kings and queens and has cultivated multiple generations of masterful writers, readers, and leaders.

Our lives are being transformed by the powers that be which sit in city hall, state capitol buildings, and Capitol Hill. It is our obligation to reform our families. We cannot ride the wave of consumerism to obtain social and political status. We must produce our way to excellence and economic power. We must produce our way out of poverty and peonage. We must engage in a movement that speaks to a moral, legal, and cultural revival of a people. We must raise our consciousness of history and found it on hope. We must blot out dark yesterdays and rejoices in the splendor of bright tomorrows. We must do more to address the crises in our communities and not wait for the calvary on high to save us. We have a serious, holistic, and concerted agenda and public policies to uplift ourselves.

Booker T. Washington says to put our buckets down where we are. Therefore, we must begin within our homes and magnify outward. We cannot continue to allow our voices to be unheard. Our greatest power that is going overlooked is in the South. Let us start there. That is where the groundswell must grow. The black woman has endured much, and more is to come. There are telltale signs that the nation is ready for what she is about to do next. She is going to raise the soul of her people. She is going to lead, love, and lift them as only she knows how. She is going to preserve democracy and take the nation off this slippery slope of injustice. She is going to go beyond rallying and marching to registering and record voter turnout. She is going to be the voice for the voiceless and redeem the rights of the underrepresented.

Because, this is our time for an agenda for black women who are ready to be placed on a path to empowerment and long for transformative change.

QUOTES

“I felt that one had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or rat in a trap. I had already determined to sell my life as dearly as possible if attacked. I felt if I could take one lyncher with me, this would even up the score a little bit.”

Ida B. Wells, Investigative Journalist And Civil Rights Pioneer

“Of course laws will not eliminate prejudice from the hearts of human beings. But that is no reason to allow prejudice to continue to be enshrined in our laws - to perpetuate injustice through inaction.”

Dr. Shirley Chisholm, Politician And Educator

“If women want any rights more than they's got, why don't they just take them, and not be talking about it.”

Sojourner Truth, Abolitionist And Suffragist

“A Negro woman has the same kind of problems as other women, but she can't take the same things for granted.”

Dr. Dorothy I. Height, Godmother Of The Civil Rights Movement

“No man or woman who tries to pursue an ideal in his or her own way is without enemies.”

Daisy L. Gatson Bates, Civil Rights Leader And Lecturer

“What we are working for is an educational program that has become a resource and rallying point for scores of brave southerners who are leading the fight for justice and better race relations in these crucial days”

Septima P. Clark, Educator And Civil Rights Activist

“People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically... No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”

Rosa Parks, First Lady Of The Civil Rights Movement

“In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed... It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system.”

Ella Baker, Founder Of The Southern Christian Leadership Conference And The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee

“Women, if the soul of the nation is to be saved, I believe that you must become its soul.”

Coretta Scott King, Author And Civil Rights Leader

“I believe that each of us comes from the creator trailing wisps of glory.”

Dr. Maya Angelou, Literary Icon And Educator

“Nobody black or white who really believes in democracy can stand aside now; everybody's got to stand up and be counted.”

Lena Horne, Singer And Dancer

“What I really feel is necessary is that the black people in this country will have to upset this apple cart. We can no longer ignore the fact that America is not the... land of the free and the home of the brave.”

Fannie Lou Hamer, Founder Of The Freedom Democratic Party

“The true worth of a race must be measured by the character of its womanhood.”

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, Renowned Educator And Stateswoman

“People are not the enemy; unjust political systems are the enemy.”

Dr. Diane Nash, Student Strategist For The Southern Christian Leadership Conference And The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee

“You cannot take your freedoms for granted. Just like generations who have come before you, you have to do your part to preserve and protect those freedoms... you need to be preparing yourself to add your voice to our national conversation.”

Dr. Michelle Robinson Obama, First Lady Of The United States Of America

“We have to talk about liberating minds as well as liberating society.”

Angela Davis, Black Panther Party Leader And Educator

“I have heard their groans and sighs, and their tears, and I would give every drop of blood in my veins to free them.”

Harriet Tubman, Liberator And Political Activist

“We write because we believe the human spirit cannot be tamed and should not be trained.”

Dr. Nikki Giovanni, Poet And Activist

“We have to teach our girls that they can reach as high as humanly possible.”

Beyoncé, Music Icon

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About The Author

Dr. Quintessa Hathaway has journeyed the road of activism and public servant for over twenty years in the educational and political arenas. She is the founder, chief executive officer, and lead consultant of Q. Hathaway & Associates, LLC, a results-driven education and political consulting and professional development provider. One of her greatest works is her international professional blog, *A Talk With The Community* which captivates the hearts and minds of over 1,700 readers.