



“Digital Black Power, Social Media, and Justice”

Speaker Bios

Alvin Louis Starks is the current Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York where he creates and directs opportunities for philanthropic engagement, partnerships with organizations, and the creative expansion of public and private ventures to leverage strategic opportunities. He is a social justice executive that works in the fields of philanthropy, arts and culture, and racial justice advocacy to address issues of systemic inequality. Alvin has written numerous reports and strategy papers for donors and foundations exploring progressive activities to strengthen social change. For over 8 years, Alvin worked at the Open Society Foundation and in 2004 created and directed the foundation’s Racial Justice Initiative. Building upon the legacy of traditional civil rights movement, the program focused on dismantling the structural and systemic barriers that perpetuate racial and class exclusion in our nation. In 2007, he led the creation of the foundation’s black males initiative that addressed issues of de facto discrimination and growing social exclusion. Alvin formerly held the position of Senior Program Officer for Racial Justice and Gender Identity at the Arcus Foundation and served as Program Officer at the WK Kellogg Foundation focused on racial equity strategies in the United States. He has worked in the field of international advocacy in Global South and Brazil. He is recipient of numerous philanthropic and civil rights awards.

Malkia A. Cyril is co-founder and Executive Director of the Center for Media Justice (CMJ). For more than 20 years, Malkia has organized social justice coalitions, resources, and advocacy for media rights, access, and representation across the United States. As a racial justice organizer and communications advocate, Malkia’s work to ensure the most vulnerable communities can navigate the complex media conditions of the 21st century is driven by the belief that arts, media and technology should advance equity. Malkia is a public speaker, trainer, and a writer with a regular blog at the Huffington Post, appearances in dozens of news outlets and documentaries, and creative work published in *In the Tradition: An Anthology of Young Black Writers*, *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poet’s Café*, and *Afrekete: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Writing*.

Cedric Brown is Managing Partner of the Kapor Center for Social Innovation, co-leading the organization as he oversees programs and partnerships. He brings over 20 years of experience as an educator and funder, working with the Kapor Foundation, SF Foundation, SF Education Fund, Switzer Foundation, SF Cultural Equity Grants, and Level Playing Field Institute among others. He has served as a board/committee member of Northern California Grant makers, Funders Committee for Civic Participation, and Council on Foundation’s Family Philanthropy Committee, and Bay Area Blacks in Philanthropy. Cedric received the 2010 ABFE Emerging Leader in Philanthropy Award and was profiled as a 2011 Changemaker in the San Francisco Chronicle. Cedric holds degrees from the University of North Carolina and Stanford University and executive certificates from Georgetown and Rutgers universities. A native North Carolinian, Cedric practices diplomatic arts of a Southern gentleman and is physically only able to do progressive social impact work. He lives as an artistic director, racking up creative pursuits as life unfolds.

Rashad Robinson serves as Executive Director of ColorOfChange, the nation’s largest online civil rights organization. Under Robinson’s leadership, ColorOfChange has been at the forefront of issues ranging from fighting for justice for Trayvon Martin, to battling attempts to suppress the Black vote, to ending Pat Buchanan’s tenure as an MSNBC analyst. Robinson spearheaded ColorOfChange’s American Legislative Council (ALEC) national campaign. After ColorOfChange exposed ALEC’s involvement in passing discriminatory voter ID and harmful Shoot First laws, over 50 corporate funders ended their financial support of ALEC. Robinson has appeared in hundreds of news stories, interviews, and political discussions through outlets including ABC, BET, CNN, MSNBC, OWN, the New York Times, Fast Company and NPR. His op-eds have appeared in the New York Times, LA Times, Newsday and Huffington Post, among others. For the past four years, Washington Post’s “The Root” named Robinson to “The Root 100,” a list of influential African Americans under 45-years old. Robinson is also the proud recipient of the “Transforming America” award from Demos and the “Bayard Rustin Citizen Change” award from Americans for Democratic Action. He previously held leadership roles at the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Right to Vote Campaign and FairVote. Robinson currently serves on the Board of Directors for ALLOUT, the Global Campaign for LGBT Equality, Applied Research Center and State Voices.

Dr. Brittney Cooper is Assistant Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies and Africana Studies at Rutgers University. A scholar of Black women’s intellectual history, Black feminist thought, and race and gender in popular culture, Dr. Cooper writes extensively about both historic and contemporary iterations of Black feminist theorizing. Dr. Cooper’s first book *Race Women: Gender and the Making of a Black Public Intellectual Tradition* is under review with a major university press. Dr. Cooper is co-founder along with Dr. Susana Morris of the Crunk Feminist Collective, a feminist of color scholar-activist group that runs a highly successful blog. Three members of the CFC were recently profiled in Essence Magazine’s list of Young, Black, and Amazing women under age 35 (August 2012 issue). Recently named to The Root 100-2013, an annual list of top Black influencers, Dr. Cooper is committed to doing accessible public scholarship that respects people inside and outside of the academy as knowledge producers. She is a regular contributor at Salon.com and her cultural commentary has appeared at Ebony.com, TheRoot.com, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, TV Guide, Huffington Post Live, Colorlines.com, NPR, and Al Jazeera America.

Darnell L. Moore is an educator and writer who lives in Brooklyn, NY. He has also worked in administrative capacities at large community-based organizations including Director of Education Initiatives at Hetrick-Martin Institute, the nation’s largest and oldest LGBTQ youth serving organization. He is currently on the board of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City University of New York and was appointed by then-Mayor Cory A. Booker as Inaugural Chair of his LGBTQ Advisory Concerns Commission. Along with former NFL player Wade Davis II, he recently co-founded YOU Belong, a social good company that launched the first ever LGBTQ youth summer camp in the U.S. pairing professional athletes (i.e. NFL and NBA) with LGBTQ youth. It is equally important to Darnell that his work extends beyond the institutional and geographical spaces where he has served. His writing has allowed him to engage in media advocacy around the world. He is a Managing Editor/Partner of The Feminist Wire, which is a popular multi-media site dedicated to publishing progressive news and analyses. He has written for various media outlets including *Lambda Literary*, *Huffington Post (Black Voices and Gay Voices)*, *The Advocate*, *OUT Magazine*, *Vice UK*, *Ebony*, *Guernica*, *Gawker*, *Mondoweiss*, *Thought Catalog*, *Good Men Project*, and various other outlets.