



## **ABFE ANNOUNCES ITS 2017 – 2018 CONNECTING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM RECIPIENTS**

### **The 12<sup>th</sup> Class of Connecting Leaders Fellowship is Comprised of 10 Extraordinary Leaders Dedicated to Effecting Change in Black Communities**

**NEW YORK – September 6, 2017** – Today **ABFE: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities** named its 2017 – 2018 class of **Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program (CLFP)**. The program, now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, recognizes 10 innovative leaders with proven track records in promoting effective and responsive philanthropy in Black communities.

Fellows receive a yearlong experience designed to offer customized executive leadership coaching, professional development and personalized service learning projects in their respective communities. This year's Fellows have vast experience across a range of issue areas including racial and social justice, community engagement, healthcare advocacy, education reform, equitable grantmaking and management.

“We are thrilled to have this group of talented men and women bring their expertise and passion to continue the urgent work that needs to be done in communities of the African diaspora,” said Susan Taylor Batten, President and CEO of **ABFE**. “Through our expert training, resources and tools in promoting responsive philanthropy, we hope to embolden and empower our new class of Fellows to be effective agents of change in their communities.”

The 12<sup>th</sup> Class of **ABFE's Connecting Leaders Fellowship** work in diverse fields across various nonprofit/foundation institutions. This year's Fellows are:

**Todd Battiste** – Vice President, Education, United Way of Southeast Louisiana, New Orleans, LA

**Landrum Beard** – Director, Communities of Giving Legacy Initiative (CGLI), Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

**C'Ardiss Gardner Gleser** – Program Officer, Satterberg Foundation, Seattle, WA

**Storme Gray** – Director of Programs, Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP), Washington, D.C.

**Orville Jackson** – Senior Policy and Research Officer, College Futures Foundation, San Francisco, CA

**Keisha Leverette** – Interim Director of Development and Donor Services, Baltimore Community Foundation, Baltimore, MD

**Chukwudi Onike** – Program Associate, The Rockefeller Foundation, Bronx, NY

**Rashanda Perryman-Stiff** – Program Officer, The Vanguard Group, Philadelphia, PA

**Christy Slater** – Program Officer, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, New Orleans, LA

**Janelle Williams** – Senior Associate, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Atlanta, GA

“It's always difficult to select 10 people for each cohort, given the amazing wealth of talent in the philanthropic sector,” said Director of Programs Edward Jones. “We hope we continue to have difficult choices to make as we further expand the pool of dynamic Black leaders, which was part of the vision of **ABFE's** founders 46 years ago.”

Members of this class join over 100 other **ABFE** Fellows whom the program has recognized since its launch in 2005. A selection committee comprised of CLFP alumni and **ABFE** members reviewed application submissions and made final recommendations of the current class. Fellows were chosen based upon a set of criteria covering their experience in philanthropy, their future goals, as well as their interest and passion for making systemic change in Black communities.

For more information on **ABFE's 2017 – 2018 Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program**, visit [ABFE.org](http://ABFE.org). For **ABFE** news, events and more, follow us on Twitter at [@ABFE](https://twitter.com/ABFE) (search #ABFECLFP for real time updates on Connecting Leaders Fellowship); on LinkedIn at [@ABFE](https://www.linkedin.com/company/abfe); and like us on Facebook at [@ABFEPhilanthropy](https://www.facebook.com/ABFEPhilanthropy).

**About ABFE:**

ABFE is a membership-based philanthropic organization that advocates for responsive and transformative investments in Black communities. Partnering with foundations, nonprofits and individuals, ABFE provides its members with professional development and technical assistance resources that further the philanthropic sector's connection and responsiveness to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. Established in 1971 as the Association of Black Foundation Executives, the all-volunteer organization was credited with many of philanthropy's early gains in diversity. It since has evolved into a fully staffed, influential network. In 2013, the organization shed its descriptor and adopted the simpler ABFE (ab-fee) to better reflect its broadening membership. For more information, visit [ABFE.org](http://ABFE.org).

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