

## Roundtable on Values and Justice

*Examining racial disparities in the criminal legal system and reimagining justice in Oklahoma*

Co-hosted by The Education and Employment Ministry, Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform, Langston University, the Greenwood Cultural Center, and the Justice Lab at Columbia University

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### Keynote Panelists and Performers

**Amanda Swope** | Representative, District 71, Oklahoma House of Representatives



Amanda Swope is a descendant of the Osage Nation and a citizen of the Muscogee Nation where she is employed as the Director of Tribal Juvenile Justice Director. After receiving her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Northeastern State University, Amanda began her career in nonprofit management as a Development Director fundraising and grant writing for social services organizations. In 2018, after receiving her Masters of Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma she started working at the Muscogee Nation as a Self-Governance Analyst negotiating federal compacts and identifying areas of sovereignty expansion.

Amanda has worked locally in her community on political campaigns since 2011 and brings with her research experience and policy and data analysis. She has served on multiple diversity, equity and inclusion committees, and police advisory councils as well as volunteered with organizations like the Community Service Council, Junior League of Tulsa, Tulsa Young Professionals, Junior Achievement, Little Blue House, and the Terence Crutcher Foundation. Her passion for civic engagement led her to serve as the youngest and first indigenous Chair of the Tulsa County Democratic Party and in November 2022, she was elected to the 59th Legislature of the Oklahoma House of Representatives. She remains employed with her Tribe today and committed to reimagining the future of justice in Oklahoma and Indian Country.

**aurelius miles francisco** | Co-Executive Director for the Foundation for Liberating Minds



aurelius miles francisco is a community organizer, radical dreamer, and writer with a passion for transformative social change and coalition building.

aurelius co-founded and currently serves as the Co-Executive Director for the Foundation for Liberating Minds (FLM), a community organization working to disrupt the root causes of oppression through transformative education. He leads FLM's Free Our People Initiative, Deconstructing Masculinity Program, and hosts its DreamRadically Podcast. As the Co-Executive Director, aurelius strategically drives the vision of the organization forward through program and member development, partner outreach, and shared leadership. His work with FLM's Free Our People Initiative extends to coordinating a working group, Against Carceral Feminism OK working to build true safety for survivors of gender-based violence.



REIMAGINE JUSTICE

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aurelius' work in Oklahoma has extended to Tulsa with the Terence Crutcher Foundation where he previously supported research and organizing efforts around community safety, power building, and narrative change. He also serves as a trainer, facilitator, and consultant with the Restorative Justice Institute of Oklahoma.

In 2022, aurelius graduated with a Master of Arts degree in the Social Sciences from the University of Chicago where he was honored with the John J. MacAloon Research fellowship, granting him a fully-funded scholarship.

aurelius is a visionary leader who graduated from the University of Oklahoma in the Spring of 2020 with Bachelor's of Arts degrees in African and African American Studies and Political Science as well as minors in International Studies and Women's and Gender Studies. While attending the University of Oklahoma, aurelius received the Carl Albert Award from the College of Arts and Sciences and was named Outstanding Senior for the University. He was active in several student organizations across campus, serving as Co-Director for the Black Emergency Response Team, was active in multiple roles for the Gender + Equality Center, Vice President of OU's NAACP chapter, and editor of FORUM Magazine.

aurelius is an avid reader, hip-hop connoisseur, and staunch believer in the goatness of one Lebron James.

**Bruce Western** | Bryce Professor of Sociology and Social Justice | Director of Columbia Justice Lab



Bruce Western is the Bryce Professor of Sociology and Social Justice and Director of the Justice Lab at Columbia University. He studies poverty and socioeconomic inequality with a focus on the U.S. criminal justice system. Current projects include a randomized experiment assessing the effects of criminal justice fines and fees on misdemeanor defendants in Oklahoma City, and a field study of solitary confinement in Pennsylvania state prisons.

Western is also the Principal Investigator of the Square One Project that aims to re-imagine the public policy response to violence under conditions of poverty and racial inequality. He is the Co-Chair of a National Academy of Sciences panel on reducing racial inequality in the U.S. criminal justice system. He is the author of *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2018), and *Punishment and Inequality in America* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2006). He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences. Western received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles, and was born in Canberra, Australia.

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**George Young** | Senator, Oklahoma State Senate District 48; Pastor, Greater Mount Carmel Church



Reverend Doctor George E. Young, Sr. was born in Memphis, Tenn. He retired from 30 years of Pastoral service in 2013. Dr. Young was elected to the Oklahoma State House of Representatives in 2014, while serving in this role he was elected as the Democratic Caucus Vice Chair and served as the Oklahoma Legislative Black Caucus Chair. As of November 6, 2018, he was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate. He continued serving as the Chair of the Oklahoma Legislative Black Caucus until his term ended April 30, 2019. Dr. Young is the author of “Christology: A Look At Practical Christianity.”

He is a Certified Mediation Specialist in Family and Divorce issues. He earned his undergraduate degree from Lambuth University in Jackson, Tennessee. Continuing his educational journey, he earned a Master of Arts in Ministry from Oklahoma Christian University, graduating Magna Cum Laude, a Master of Divinity Degree from Phillips Theological Seminary, Tulsa, Oklahoma, graduating Cum Laude, and a Master of Business Administration from Oklahoma Christian University in December of 2006 and completed his Doctor of Ministry from Phillips Theological Seminary in 2010. As Pastor of Holy Temple Baptist Church, he initiated a partnership that sponsored the largest Back to School Block Party and School Supply Give-Away in the Northeast Quadrant of OKC. He led the church in completing a multi-million-dollar senior Housing Project (Temple Gardens). Dr. Young and his late wife Dr. Thelma Chambers Young have two children and three wonderful grandsons.

Young continues to build a compelling legacy, as his year 2020-21 memberships include the following: National Black Caucus of State Legislators – committees he serves on are: Business and Economic Development Committee, Redistricting Policy Committee, and Health and Human Services 2020- present; Oklahoma City Law Enforcement Task Force, 2020-present; Governor’s Legislative CARES Advisory Group, 2020-present; Oklahoma Christian University Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Community Task Force, 2020-present; District Chair, New Horizons District, 2020-present; Council of State Governments Healthy Task Force, 2020-present; Oklahoma Democratic State Convention Delegate to Democratic National Convention – 4th National Convention as a delegate; Senate Committee Membership: Public Safety, and Judiciary; Business, Commerce, and Tourism; General Government; and Health and Human Services. Notable Lifetime Memberships: National Association of Colored People (NAACP); Oklahoma Academy; Urban League of Greater OKC; Kappa Alpha Psi Province; Kappa Alpha Psi National; Leadership Oklahoma. The work of service is ongoing, and Young is vigilant and persistent as he assists in furtherance of community. He secured additional funds for substance abuse/mental health directly benefiting Senate District 48 agencies, 2020. As of April 2021, Senator Young accepted the request to become Interim Pastor at the Greater Mount Carmel Baptist Church.

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### Gregory II | Founder, PoetryAndChillOKC and PoetryAndChill Kids



Gregory II is a Music Artist/Poet. He's coming on the scene with vibrant rhymes, unique voice and his style is very appealing to people's ear. He catches attention by his blunt truth and storytelling in his music. He's born and raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This is just the beginning of Gregory II.

He created the nonprofit, PoetryAndChillOKC and corresponding youth organization, PoetryAndChill Kids, in 2017 on the east side of Oklahoma City. PoetryAndChillOKC is a home for ALL talent across the world with Open Mic events. They offer a platform for artists to showcase their talent, promote new music, projects, books, etc. They also started a college tour that now offers open mic nights on the college campuses.

PoetryAndChill Kids also hosts after school workshops at various locations in Oklahoma City and multiple schools in Oklahoma City School District, Putnam City District, Mid Del District, Casady School etc. They teach workshops in the youth homeless centers in the OKC metro area and the Juvenile Detention Center. These workshops are open to the community or depending on the school open to students for free to come learn and have fun! A variety of people from the community come and teach at the workshop from poetry, music, marketing, and more. The PoetryAndChill Kids Workshop is an opportunity for individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, and gifts of writing. It is also a chance for individuals to think critically, gain knowledge and information, and grow within themselves. In October 2022 Gregory II was inducted into the Wall Of Fame for Oklahoma City Public Schools. PoetryAndChill has been featured on OK Gazette, News9, News 5, News 4 and FOX25.

### Mashilah Powell | Justice Advocate



Mashilah Powell self-identifies as an Advocate for justice reform. Mashilah was raised in both Oklahoma City and Kokomo, Indiana by her grandparents, George and Mary Powell. Her parents both had drug addictions that led Mashilah and her two sisters to move in with her paternal grandparents. Mashilah attended college at Indiana University in Bloomington, but was unable to graduate due to unforeseen circumstances; Mashilah was sexually assaulted while at college, leading her to withdraw from University and return to Oklahoma.

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Mashilah later found herself involved in a mentally, physically, and emotionally abusive relationship that caused her to turn to substance use. During that time, Mashilah was arrested for three DUIs in a year and a half time span. Mashilah endured this relationship for the benefit of her son. After leaving that relationship, Mashilah was in another mentally, physically, and emotionally abusive relationship and pregnant. She chose to self-medicate with substances and was pressured into an abortion procedure. After deciding not to undergo the procedure, Mashilah was arrested for her fourth DUI and was sentenced to three years in Mabel Bassett Correctional Prison, where she gave birth to her daughter. After being allowed two days to spend with her newborn, Mashilah had to continue serving her sentence. Mashilah was released on March 2, 2022 on administrative parole. Since then, Mashilah has gotten her license back, and returned to school for a CNA certification. She has custody of her daughter and is in the process of fighting for custody of her son. Mashilah has a full-time job working at a Clinic that helps people who suffer from opiate addiction. Additionally, Mashilah carries out public speaking engagements and recites her own poetry, spreading the word for justice reform.

**Tamara Lebak** | Founder and Chief Unlearning Officer of the Restorative Justice Institute of Oklahoma; Doctoral Student at Phillips Theological Seminary



Rev. Tamara Lebak is an IFS-informed Restorative Practitioner, an ordained Unitarian Universalist community minister and chaplain, Equity Consultant, ICF Certified coach, mother, wife, author, singer-songwriter and backyard chicken farmer. Tamara is currently working on her Doctorate at Phillips Theological Seminary where she is exploring the impact of Multiplicity of Mind on connection to Self and Other. She has served as an intern chaplain at Stateville Maximum Security Men's Prison, Dick Conner Correctional Facility, and the University of Chicago Hospitals and is the Current Resident Chaplain of the Terence Crutcher Foundation.

Tamara is the founder and Chief Unlearning Officer of the Restorative Justice Institute of Oklahoma where she teaches leaders to lift up the voices of the marginalized at every level of system and creates a healing space for people to know they are not the worst thing they have ever done nor the worst thing that has ever happened to them.