

MLK's Southern Christian Leadership Conference Names Prominent Journalist Bankole Thompson to National Board

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Atlanta-based historic

Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the signature civil rights organization, which played a massive role during the Civil Rights Movement, and founded in 1957 at Ebenezer Baptist Church by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who served as its first president, has recently tapped

Bankole Thompson, the nationally acclaimed Detroit journalist, public intellectual, and racial justice champion to be a member of its National Board of Directors.

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*Bankole Thompson, Executive
Dean and Editor-in-Chief of
The PuLSE Institute*

The selection of a leading Black journalist whose work on the political and cultural landscape over the years has been lauded for its clarity, consistence, tenacity and boldness in championing issues of poverty and racial inequality, to help guide the flagship organization that embodies Dr. King's enduring legacy, comes amid the current national reckoning on racial justice.

The SCLC's historic work brought prominence to the civil rights struggle and laid the foundation for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Thompson was nominated by SCLC national board chairman Reverend Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr., an elder statesman of the Civil Rights Movement, and one of the last remaining and most trusted lieutenants of King.

A major authority on nonviolence who served as the National Coordinator of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, LaFayette, has long admired Bankole Thompson's work as a courageous voice for racial and economic justice in the world of the media. The two worked together in the past including when LaFayette would visit Detroit to participate in events that were hosted by the journalist.

LaFayette who has described Thompson as a “remarkable person with many talents and

powerful passion,” believes that his background and considerable impact as a journalist and a widely respected voice for fairness, equity and inclusion will bring needed diversity to the board. That Thompson’s addition to the board will tremendously help the organization at a time when many of the nation’s leading institutions including civil and human rights organizations are being challenged to use creative and innovative strategies to fight for racial equality in the modern era.

“I consider it an honor and a privilege to be asked to serve on the SCLC national board by Dr. LaFayette, one of the 20th century’s foremost civil rights leaders,” Thompson said. “SCLC at one point in history was the indomitable captain steering the ship of conscience towards the moral destiny of this nation. A genuine civilization of conscience would not have been born during the height of the Civil Rights Movement without the SCLC and King’s unbending vision and determination to confront the shackles of staggering inequality and racial injustice. It is this history that has long informed my commitment and work in civil and human rights.”

Thompson added, “With the recent U.S. Supreme Court’s dreadful ruling on affirmative action, SCLC faces both a historic opportunity and challenge to perform like a surgeon on the maladies of racial injustice and economic inequality. From where I sit in Detroit, which is ground zero of the urban crisis, there is a fierce urgency to address the inequities that Black people are confronting in the nation. I believe in the redemptive power of institutions to be an effective force for good. That is why I look forward to serving SCLC in this new capacity by working together with the rest of my colleagues on the board to help the organization achieve its stated goals in the modern struggle for human dignity.”

Thompson is executive dean and editor-in-chief of The PuLSE Institute, a prestigious national and independent anti-poverty think tank in Detroit, which was founded several years ago based on his work on race, democracy and poverty.

He is a twice-a-week opinion columnist at The Detroit News, where he writes about presidential politics, public leadership, social and economic justice issues.



Bankole Thompson, the eminent journalist and standard-bearer for economic justice, was just elected to the National Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the signature civil rights group founded by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He is host of REDLINE, a daily two-hour radio program on 910AM Super Station. A political commentator, he has made numerous national media appearances including CNN's Inside Politics discussing issues relating to Black communities and the 2020 presidential election.

"The PuLSE Institute congratulates Bankole Thompson on his elevation to the National Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Safeguarding an immeasurable wealth of legacy and history as the premier civil rights organization co-founded by Dr. King himself, the SCLC is the pinnacle vault of racial justice and social equity in the nation," said Attorney Tina M. Patterson, the President and Director of Research at The PuLSE Institute. "Bankole Thompson, a fearless, profound, and essential voice in the media championing civil rights and racial and economic justice, will add his unmatched talent and uncompromising conviction to the mission of the SCLC to continue the work of Dr. King into the 21st century. It is a well-deserved honor decades in the making, and we at The PuLSE Institute are humbled to work alongside a trailblazing leader such as Bankole Thompson in the fight for a more just and equitable future."

Robert S. Weiner, former White House spokesman, who directed communication for former Congressmen Charles Rangel, John Conyers Jr., and Four-Star General Barry McCaffrey, and served as an aide to then Sen. Edward Kennedy has followed Thompson's work.

"Bankole Thompson's election to the SCLC national board is well deserved. He will continue his life of service against poverty and discrimination in a major way. He is contributing his life's purpose as he did by being one of the first African American newspaper editors to interview President Barack Obama, by his service as editor of the Michigan Chronicle when he helped it excel as a premier African American newspaper, by his timely, poignant, and penetrating articles as an op-ed columnist for The Detroit News, and by his amazing interviews on his radio shows and forums on critical issues. Moreover, the creation of The PuLSE Institute, inspired by his transcending work is a major contribution to the fight needed against poverty in America," Weiner said. "In fact, Thompson will be contributing enormously now that the SCLC is bringing an illustrious journalist on its national board."

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