

Eminent Journalist Bankole Thompson Launches 'Voices of the Unheard' Tour of Communities Facing Manacles of Injustice

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, July 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A regional initiative, "Listening to the Voices of the Unheard," a tour of organizations that are committed to helping economically challenged communities and those in need in Southeast Michigan will come next month. The initiative, the brainchild of Bankole Thompson, the nationally acclaimed journalist and standard-bearer for economic justice issues, is a product of his long-term commitment to give voice to those who are on the margins of society, and whose needs and challenges are often unheard by the powerful.



A journalistic thought leader and a twice-week opinion columnist at The Detroit News

(<https://www.detroitnews.com/search/?q=bankole+thompson+>) , where he writes about the presidency, public leadership, culture and socioeconomic issues, Thompson is a leading journalist and a member of the National Press Club of Washington D.C. He is the host of the weekly podcast, Bankole's Nation (<https://open.spotify.com/show/3XfFvoHa5BM9uQJBBpzxDm>) His latest book titled Fiery Conscience about his decades of speaking truth to power was released in August of 2023 and received a definitive review in Forbes

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magazine (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/marybethgasman/2024/04/02/who-is-bankole-thompson/>) highlighting his national impact. The book which lays out a blueprint for bold and impactful leadership is also listed in the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York, considered the premier repository on the global Black experience.

Civil right leader Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr., who over the years has admired and followed Thompson's work, in January of 2018, presented him with the Rainbow PUSH Coalition's Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Let Freedom Ring Journalism Award during a ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary death of Dr. King. He lauded the journalist whose work reflects the legacy of Dr. King's push for economic justice.

In endorsing Thompson's book, "Fiery Conscience", Rev Jackson wrote, "In Fiery Conscience, Bankole takes us on a social, journalistic journey that reminds us that one's fragilities and triumphs are shaped by one's past. Thank you, for this vestibule of hope book during our nation's most moralless times. A time where truth is discounted and lies are ignored. We need your pen more than ever."

Sister Simone Campbell, leader of the historic "Nuns on the Bus" campaign, and one of the leading anti-poverty champions in the modern American Catholic Church, and a social justice advocate has followed Thompson's work over the years.

"In the midst of these turbulent times in our nation, we need Fiery Conscience more than ever. We are all called to speak out for the sake of truth and struggle together across divides to realize a justice that includes all. Bankole Thompson does just that and his witness can nourish our spirits," said Campbell, recipient of the 2022 Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Thompson is also the founder and dean of the anti-poverty think tank, The PuLSE Institute.

He was one of the nation's first top Black editors to conduct a series of exclusive sit-down interviews with former President Barack Obama and wrote a pair of books on Obama. A sought after keynote speaker and a nationally acclaimed journalist and public intellectual, Thompson, has appeared on CNN and other national outlets discussing issues affecting urban America.

Through the "Listening to the Voices of the Unheard" tour, Thompson, hopes to bring conscientious and deserving attention to the needs as well as the challenges facing communities and groups that are dealing with issues of economic inequality. The issues discussed during the tour will become subject of his Detroit News column, the Bankole's Nation Podcast well as a highlight in The PuLSE Institute, the economic justice think tank that was founded based on work several years ago.

"This tour will be a highlight of the most pressing and underreported issues that are mostly ignored in the glare of mainstream media conversations about what is perceived as important and not important to warrant attention by those in government and other stakeholders of power," Thompson said. "Too often news coverage is decided and dominated by what is considered prominent. But what may be determined as prominent on many occasions may not be the most important issue when we are dealing with crisis of inequality," Thompson said.

He added, "The goal here is to bring strategic significance to the real stories that are not being told. The ones that fly under the radar of the 24-hour news cycle and are not even considered as news items by reporters, columnists, editors and news anchors."

For years Thompson, has had a front-row seat to the issues of economic justice as they play out in disenfranchised communities. He is known to prick the conscience of the powerful as Detroit's preeminent voice of conscience and courage. For example, last month he wrote a column urging Detroit's largest billionaire investor Dan Gilbert to use his vast wealth to confront the deep structural inequality issues facing one of the nation's largest urban centers.

"For all that Detroit has done for Gilbert, including providing him with tax subsidies, he could do a lot to change the trajectory of the city's economic justice crisis with the resources he possesses. Over the years I have had candid discussions with Gilbert about inequality matters when he'd invite me to sit down with him in his office to talk about Detroit. He is not ignorant about the struggles of everyday people in the city and how issues like child poverty remain a dark stain on the city's overall leadership. The question is: does he want to do for Detroit what men like Bill Gates are doing across continents in a bid to save humanity?" Thompson wrote in the June 16 edition of The Detroit News. "The fundamental question that has always haunted discussions around billionaires and the need for social impact is: why don't the rich give more when they are taking so much from public coffers in subsidies? As a result, most billionaires are publicly scorned when their wealth is only limited to their conceived pet projects, some of which may have no bearing on the real issues of inequality facing urban and rural communities."

But for Thompson, the initiative that he will be leading beginning in August, is also the culmination of decades of commitment and defending the voiceless. In 2006, he wrote, "Ignoring The Underprivileged," a critique of the media's coverage on issues of race and class. In the book, he offered a scathing review of how so many critical issues that are at the center of survival for many communities receive scanty coverage in the media.

"In Ignoring the Underprivileged, author Bankole Thompson issues a clarion call to all who value the First Amendment and a free press. His style is direct, biting and, at times, borderline frenetic. The urgency of his message leaps off the pages and slaps the reader, perhaps belying the compassion and humanity Thompson has brought to his own journalistic work," the late legendary Detroit journalist Cliff Russell wrote in the book's foreword.

Russell, who was the longtime host of "American Black Journal," the public affairs program on Detroit-PBS Station, noted, "Bankole Thompson is a lover of truth, which, by definition, makes him a hater of untruth. He possesses (or has been possessed by) the aforementioned spirit, ensuring that authority will always be questioned and its abuses will never go unchallenged. For a nation that heaps untold praise and honor on founding fathers Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, America is woefully disconnected from the principles espoused by both of these great men pertaining to the role and responsibility of a free press. We must correct this."

Russell added, "Let us all embark upon a quest for the sustenance and protection of true journalism. It is fundamental to our Constitutional freedoms that we embrace the free press, know its history, understand its mechanics and fight for its independence from the selfish interests of politicians and corporations. Ignoring the Underprivileged is a powerful salvo fired in the war to protect true journalism from plunderers."

In recognition of his work as a disruptive thinker and an innovator, the University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library in 2015 officially established the Bankole Thompson Papers, a physical and comprehensive digital collection to preserve his work including his books, articles, interviews and speeches and to make it available for students, scholars and for posterity.

Thompson is a sought-after speaker and public intellectual who has addressed and keynoted leading institutions such as Brown University, Dillard University, American Jewish Committee, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission among other leading institutions. He writes and speaks about public leadership, corporate social responsibility, equity, inclusion and political economy.

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