

# NAREB 77TH Annual Convention Opens in LA with New Leadership Aiming to Overcome Barriers & Increase Black Homeownership

*NAREB is committed to addressing barriers limiting homeownership opportunities and will advocate to allow families and individuals to overcome those challenges*

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, July 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Association of Real Estate Brokers](https://www.nareb.org/) (NAREB) opened its 77th Annual Convention yesterday, celebrating major accomplishments under the outgoing Presidency of Dr. Courtney Johnson Rose and embracing the incoming President Ashley Thomas III's goal to prioritize advocacy as a vehicle to bolster Black homeownership.



Dr. Courtney Johnson Rose, NAREB President

Thomas, the CEO/Owner of LA Top Broker, Inc., a mortgage and real estate brokerage, and Managing Broker of First Security Investment Co., Inc., has outlined a strategic approach for his two-year presidency. His theme, Closing the Gap - Advocacy, Affordability, and Access, demonstrates a clear focus on overcoming the barriers to homeownership.

"We will be strategic on where there are opportunities for Black Americans to purchase homes," Thomas said. "We will focus our advocacy efforts on specific parts of the country and policies and practices that can be changed."

Under Thomas's leadership, the organization is committed to addressing the barriers that limit homeownership gains, a commitment that can instill hope and optimism in families and individuals seeking to buy a home. Thomas said they will also highlight the issue of affordability. "There are opportunities to pilot new lending programs that speak specifically to affordability," he proclaimed, adding they will highlight areas of the country where homes are affordable.

"NAREB and Dr. Rose have done a great job in terms of branding the mission and pinpointing the challenges," said Thomas, adding that now the organization must help families overcome the barriers so they can purchase homes. He acknowledged that the current political climate is impacting public policies and even private practices.

"We are very concerned," Thomas said. "The messaging seems to be that families are just on their own and don't need any assistance climbing to the next level. That is a challenge for Black families when redlining and other discriminatory policies still exist."



Ashley Thomas, NAREB Incoming President

During her tenure, Dr. Rose spearheaded several significant initiatives, including a Community Building Wealth Tour, a NAREB Developers Academy, and comprehensive research reports on appraisal bias, heirs' property, and the role of women in real estate. These initiatives have significantly contributed to the organization's mission to create Democracy in Housing.

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*Ashely Thomas III*

NAREB, with collaborations with new partners, hosted an impressive 215 Wealth Tour events in cities across the country. At these events, more than 50,000 participants attended seminars, workshops, and one-on-one sessions that provide attendees with information about homeownership, property investment, starting a business, and other wealth-building opportunities. Dr. Rose established an annual National Community Building Wealth Day in April, when at least one hundred cities held their events each year.

The most recent Wealth Tour event was held on Saturday at the People's Independent Church of God in Christ in Los Angeles. Hundreds of participants attended and heard speakers that included Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell; Dr. Wendell J. Davis, pastor of New Jericho Baptist Church, and author of "Healing a Wounded Leader;" Ewunike Brady, Wells Fargo Head of Home Lending Customer Growth; Telebah Woods, Bank of America Senior Vice President and Strategic Relationships Manager at Bank of America; Bishop Craig Worsham, of People's Independent Church of God in Christ; Lyric Armstrong – President Consolidated Board of Realtist, Inc. and Lydia Pope former NAREB President.

At the event, Dr. Rose told families, “We realize the importance of your first home. It can help you retire and pay for college. It’s the cornerstone for wealth building. That’s why we are [here](#) today, because it’s so important.”

Dr. Rose also launched the NAREB Developer Academy. It helps real estate professionals transition into home and commercial developers, building homes and community-centered facilities in communities. In 2024, the inaugural year, there were 50 cohorts, which grew to 227 participants who will graduate at a ceremony at the convention today. The growth solidifies the Academy's position as a unique training ground and catalyst for change, equipping aspiring real estate professionals with a comprehensive curriculum, strategic partnerships, and a community-focused approach to make a lasting impact as developers.

At the opening of the convention yesterday, Thomas said, “This is our opportunity to do our best, to share our visions with each other, and not leave here less than fulfilled as we embark on this exciting time and this journey over the next few days. Let us embrace the opportunity to learn from one another, engage in powerful conversations, and celebrate the achievements that you will see throughout this convention. Together, we can spend our voice and advance our mission.”

Additionally, entrepreneur, developer, and award-winning actress, producer, and America's Icon, Issa Rae, and Insecure co-star, Kendrick Sampson, Actor, Activist, and Developer, held a Fireside Chat. They shared their journey and insights on intentional investment, ownership, rebuilding our communities, and economic agency. The formal transition to the Thomas presidency will take place at an installation ceremony on Thursday evening. The complete Agenda is [HERE](#). Key events include:

**WEDNESDAY** - A dynamic series of candid conversations with industry leaders sharing insights, challenges, and bold ideas shaping the future of real estate. Real talk. Real leadership.

- Camilo Escalante, Executive Director of Diverse Segments, Rate
- Sodi Nichols, SVP, Head of National Strategic Markets & Affordable Lending, US Bank
- Sandra Almanzan, Senior Director, Affordable Lending, Fannie Mae
- Cerita Battles, Managing Director, Head of Community & Affordable Lending, Chase Home Lending
- Presiding: Dr. Rose, President, NAREB

**WEDNESDAY** - A breakout session on empowering communities through faith-based and community partnerships. Presented by the NAREB Faith-Based and Community Engagement Pillar, the session will highlight the transformative power of faith-based and community partnerships in advancing Black homeownership. This dynamic discussion will focus on strategies to: Build and strengthen local partnerships with faith institutions and community organizations; Engage effectively with elected officials to advocate for housing initiatives and leverage land banks and other economic development tools to create and sustain affordable

housing. NAREB will launch its Faith-Based Navigation Book, a practical guide designed to help local chapters forge meaningful relationships and activate community-based solutions.

Speakers include:

- The Honorable Tiffany Thomas, City of Houston, City Council Member District F, and Chair of the Housing and Community Development Committee
  - Christa Stoneham, President and CEO, Houston Land Bank
  - LaDonna Parker, NAREB Faith-Based and Community Engagement Committee, Chair
  - Bishop Craig Worsham, NAREB Faith-Based and Community Engagement Committee, Director
  - Courtney Jones, National Association of Real Estate Brokers, 2nd Vice President
- Partner: April Alexander, VP, National Community Development and Outreach, Prosperity Mortgage

THURSDAY - Explore how NAREB local chapters can strengthen relationships with community stakeholders, including Divine Nine organizations, faith-based institutions, industry partners, and regional colleges and universities to expand the impact of wealth-building conversations at the grassroots level. It will discuss the power of collaboration through formal partnerships like MOUs and highlight strategies for engaging young adults and college students in financial literacy, real estate education, and pathways to ownership.

Partners & Panelists:

- Geoffrey Cooper, VP, Product & Marketing Group, MGIC;
- Scott Freudenberger, VP, Head of Community & Homeownership Advancement, BMO;
- Camilo Escalante, Executive Director of Diverse Segments, Rate

Presiding: Danny Felton, 1st VP, NAREB

#### ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REAL ESTATE BROKERS

NAREB was formed in 1947 to secure equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or color. NAREB has advocated for legislation and supported or instigated legal challenges that ensure fair housing, sustainable homeownership, and access to credit for Black Americans. Simultaneously, NAREB advocates for and promotes access to business opportunities for Black real estate professionals in each real estate discipline. From the past to the present, NAREB remains an association that is proud of its history, dedicated to its chosen struggle, and unrelenting in its pursuit of the REALTIST®'s mission/vision embedded goal, "Democracy in Housing."

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