

The PuLSE Institute, led by Attorney Tina Patterson, Hosts Dr. Bernard LaFayette at Civil Rights Leadership Dinner

Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr., a top lieutenant of Dr. King and SCLC National Chairman honored; Jerry Norcia, Chairman & CEO of DTE Energy awarded.

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, August 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Recently, at the prestigious Detroit Athletic Club in the heart of the central business district in downtown Detroit, MI, The PuLSE Institute, led by [Attorney Tina M. Patterson, Esq.](#), hosted its inaugural Civil Rights Leadership Dinner, where it honored Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr., National Chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and top lieutenant of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Attorney Tina M. Patterson, Esq., President of The PuLSE Institute, delivered welcome remarks at The Institute's Inaugural Civil Rights Leadership Dinner honoring Dr. Bernard LaFayette at the Detroit Athletic Club.

As President of The PuLSE Institute, a nationally renowned anti-poverty think tank, Patterson has hosted leading voices on racial and economic justice, including Keith Ellison, Attorney General of the State of Minnesota and Top Prosecutor in the George Floyd Murder Trial. Patterson has also contributed prolific writings on racial and economic justice for The PuLSE Institute, which are preserved in the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, a first-class depository that houses the papers of every governor of the State of Michigan. She was recently honored with the Institute's Economic Justice Award in recognition of her work.

Attorney Patterson, a nationally recognized legal authority whose [work has been cited in the Georgetown Law Journal on Poverty Law and Policy](#), opened the Inaugural Civil Rights Leadership Dinner, titled, "Celebrating Reverend Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr.: An Unsung American Hero and the Promise of the Civil Rights Movement," with welcome remarks, which [honored Dr. LaFayette as a testament of living history](#) and architect of global policy that significantly shaped society as

we live it today.

At the Dinner, The Institute honored Dr. LaFayette's groundbreaking work, including serving under Dr. King as National Coordinator of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, as well as the National Program Administrator of the SCLC, the signature civil rights group founded by Dr. King, who also led and served the organization as president. The SCLC's historic work brought prominence to the civil rights struggle and laid the foundation for the passage of landmark civil rights legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. LaFayette, a strategist for King and one of his inner circle members, brought several people on board to work for King, including civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr.



Dr. LaFayette, trusted lieutenant of Dr. King, holds his Global Civil Rights Leadership Award presented by PuLSE leaders (L-R) Board Chair Paschal Eze, President Tina Patterson, and Founder & Dean Bankole Thompson, at The Institute's Civil Rights Leadership Dinner.

Days before the inaugural event, Patterson acknowledged, “Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr. is a towering figure and living legend of a very fundamental and transformational period in United States history. His contributions to the historic Civil Rights Movement cannot be overlooked or overstated.”

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The Institute's invitation-only Civil Rights Leadership Dinner was attended by a diverse audience of prominent business, education and nonprofit executives across the region. Jerry Norcia, the Chairman and CEO of DTE Energy, served as the 2025 Dinner Chair and was presented with The Institute's Corporate Leader of Conscience Award for his longstanding work on issues of equity, inclusion and affordability. Norcia, who has been vocal about tackling

poverty and inequality, was also named to The Institute's prestigious and revered National Advisory Board, made up of global luminaries and champions in the fight against economic injustice, including Dr. LaFayette and Sister Simone Campbell, a 2022 Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipient, and a close ally of the late Pope Francis, among others.

Dr. Curtis Ivery, the Chancellor of Wayne County Community College District, was also awarded

at the event with The Institute's Excellence In Educational Leadership Award for his work in being a major stabilizing force in urban education in Detroit and around the nation and for serving as a powerful agent of social transformation and equity.

During her remarks, Attorney Patterson noted that while many had learned about the globally revered and recognized Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and have heard about the significant historical events that occurred during that period, such as the Selma, Alabama voting rights campaign, the Freedom Riders of the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), and the Poor People's Campaign, this evening, "we honor and celebrate someone who didn't study it or learn about it in school, but from the primary source, someone who lived it. Who endured it."



Attorney Patterson, President of The PuLSE Institute, closes the Inaugural Civil Rights Leadership Dinner with Jerry Norcia, the Chairman & CEO of DTE Energy, who served as the 2025 Dinner Chair and was awarded with The Institute's Corporate Leader of Conscience Award.

Patterson closed her remarks and the exceptionally received event, by noting not just the presence of oppression, but the possibility of enduring and overcoming it as Dr. LaFayette did, in and for our nation's continuing quest for justice and freedom. Finally, Patterson personally thanked Dr. LaFayette for still serving as a fresh source of wisdom to our generation, while we build upon the legacy of our past to elevate the quality of life to the next generation, and all generations to come.

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