

# Leading Anti-Poverty Think Tank PuLSE Taps Pioneering Journalist Bankole Thompson as Chairman of its Board of Directors

*The Board of Directors of The PuLSE Institute, Detroit's national anti-poverty think tank, announces future-focused leadership ahead of 10-year anniversary*

DETROIT , MI, UNITED STATES, April 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Board of Directors of The PuLSE Institute, Detroit's national anti-poverty and economic justice think tank, met recently to institute new organizational changes and future-focused leadership direction as The Institute prepares for its landmark 10-year anniversary on July 4, 2028.

The Board voted to elect The Institute's founder and dean Bankole Thompson, the nationally acclaimed journalist and standard-bearer for economic justice issues to serve on the Board. Swiftly following his admission to the Board, Thompson, was also named the new Chairman of the Board of Directors, replacing longtime and founding Chairman Dr. C. Paschal Eze.

During the same proceedings the Board voted to elevate the role of Attorney Tina M. Patterson, the President and Director of Research to become President and General Counsel given her significant legal expertise as a nationally recognized voice on the intersection of public policy and jurisprudence.

Thompson is one of the first Black editors in the nation to conduct a series of historic exclusive sit-down interviews with former President Barack Obama. He is a twice-a-week opinion columnist at The Detroit News and the host of the podcast, Bankole's Nation. A member of the National Press Club of Washington D.C., where he co-hosted a national forum on the balance of power in the U.S. Senate, Thompson is an accomplished author of several books, including his



Bankole Thompson, the founder and chairman of the board of directors of The PuLSE Institute moderating the 2026 Women's Power Breakfast Leadership Forum at the Colony Club in downtown Detroit.

latest *Fiery Conscience*, about his decades of speaking truth to power reviewed by *Forbes* and listed as a reference in the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division of the New Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. He has appeared severally on CNN and other major news outlets.

His next book, *HOPE: On The Mountain Of Fear*, which will be released soon has received significant endorsements from leading figures in academia, Congress, major business and the economic justice movement including Maryland Congressman Steny Hoyer, a Washington institution and the second highest-ranking Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives and former House Majority Leader.

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*Bankole Thompson*

“Everyone in the Congress – and the country – ought to read my friend Bankole Thompson’s book. At a time when division, inequality, and injustice in America often feel inescapable, Thompson reminds us that there is a way out: the path of solidarity, democracy, and hope,” Hoyer wrote in endorsing the book.

Thompson’s work is defined by a rigorous focus on economic justice, racial equality, poverty and bridge building among communities and is often linked to the tradition of Frederick Douglass speaking truth to power.

In January of 2018, the late civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Louis Jackson Sr., personally presented Thompson with the Rainbow PUSH Coalition’s Let Freedom Ring Journalism Award for being a preeminent voice of conscience and courage during a ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In a rare honor, the University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library in 2015 established the Bankole Thompson Papers to preserve his work alongside the papers of Michigan governors. In 2018, he received the U.S. Congressional Record of Testimonial placing his body of work into the official record of the 118th Congress.



Bankole Thompson, the founder and chairman of the board of directors of The PuLSE Institute moderating the 2026 Women's Power Breakfast Leadership Forum at the Colony Club in downtown Detroit.

Attorney Patterson is a nationally recognized legal expert whose work has been cited in the Georgetown Law Journal on Poverty Law and Policy and the North Carolina Banking Institute at the University of North Carolina School of Law in Chapel Hill, NC. A former federal government attorney for the United States Social Security Administration, Patterson advised and wrote the appellate opinions of administrative law judges across the United States and Puerto Rico. In this role, Patterson trained extensively at SSA Hearing and Appeals Division Headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia, just outside the nation's capital in Washington, DC.

In her former capacity as The PuLSE Institute's Director of Research, Patterson published prolific writings on political leadership and racial and economic justice for The 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.

Combining her legal prowess and adept research skills, Patterson also authored and filed an amicus brief on behalf of The PuLSE Institute with the United States Sixth Court of Appeals in support of Detroit schoolchildren's right to literacy in the landmark case

*Gary B. v Whitmer* 957 F.3d 616 (6th Cir. 2020) reh'g en banc granted, opinion vacated, 958 F.3d 1216 (6th Cir. 2020). The amicus brief, prepared by Patterson under The Douglass Project, the Institute's premiere research vessel addressing issues of race, equity, democracy and poverty, made the case that the right to literacy is a fundamental right protected by the United States Constitution, and was instrumental in reaching a settlement in favor of the children.



Bankole Thompson, the founder and chairman of the board of directors of The PuLSE Institute and Attorney Tina M. Patterson, the president and general counsel of The Institute at the 2026 Women's Power Breakfast Leadership Forum at the Colony Club in downtown Detroit.



Bankole Thompson, the founder and chairman of the board of directors of The PuLSE Institute speaking at the beginning of the 2026 Women's Power Breakfast Leadership Forum at the Colony Club in downtown Detroit.

Patterson's work has also been recognized in the United States Congressional Record, and she is the recipient of the City of Detroit's Spirit of Detroit Award, as well as The PuLSE Institute's Economic Justice Award.

"I commend the Board for its decision and wisdom in electing our founder Bankole Thompson to the Board and naming him the new Chairman of the Board of Directors. His irreplaceable voice and unwavering commitment will undoubtedly continue to powerfully serve and carry out our mission, especially as we move forward toward greater expansion, influence, and impact," said Attorney Patterson. "I also applaud Dr. Paschal Eze, who has served this organization dutifully and gracefully as our founding Board Chair for the past eight years. We are thankful for his continued guidance and leadership as he serves the remainder of his term."

Patterson added, "Finally, I thank The PuLSE Institute Board of Directors for its vote of confidence in me through elevation to General Counsel. I appreciate the Board placing its trust in my unique expertise and dedication to the organization, and I look forward to serving in this greater capacity as General Counsel."

Thompson for his part underscored the work of The Institute and Patterson's contributions.

"Attorney Tina Patterson is one of the great legal minds of this era who understands how to use litigation and advocacy to challenge the forces that keep people in endemic poverty and persistent inequality," Thompson said. "We are honored to have her continue to lead the crucial work of The PuLSE Institute but in this time as President and General Counsel. It should matter to the next generation of lawyers to see her work as a model for how future lawyers think about poverty, justice and inequality."

On Dr. Eze, who stepped down as Board Chair, Thompson noted, "He has and continues to be an indispensable force for the growth of The Institute. We are indebted to him for the many things that we have been able to proudly accomplish. He will remain active in the work of The Institute and as a source of inspiration as this organization expands its tentacles."

Thompson added, "The PuLSE Institute is fighting for dignity, fairness and economic justice. That is why it remains one of the most important platforms for democracy and human dignity and ensuring that those who are trapped in the trenches of poverty are not invisible to the systems that have the propensity to overlook their suffering. We cannot reinforce inequality. Our job is to dismantle it. Every major voice in this era from the late Pope Francis to Pope Leo has underscored that noble truth that if we are committed to justice, we must defend the vulnerable."

Since its founding eight years ago, The Institute has become a major economic justice bully pulpit through convening thought leaders, social change advocates and captains of industry to address the issues of poverty and inequality. Its high-profile speaker forums has attracted some

of the most prominent voices and historical figures on of the modern era.

For example, in 2021, then United Nations Under-Secretary General and the executive director of UNFPA Dr. Natalia Kanem, addressed The Institute in a keynote speech on COVID-19, poverty and its impact on women and children around the world. The decision of a very high-level United Nations official to accept the invitation of The Institute demonstrates the growing global reach of the organization and its mission as it relates to tackling economic injustice impacting diverse communities worldwide.

In a rare appearance, The PuLSE Institute also hosted United States Federal Bankruptcy Judge Mark A. Randon, who delivered a major keynote on "Bankruptcy and Poverty." Judge Randon's address underscores the moral platform of The Institute as a recognizable voice on the intractable issues of inequality and economic justice.

The PuLSE Institute's brain trust – The National Advisory Board- is made of luminaries, civil rights heroes and global change markers who collectively bring more than a century of anti-poverty work to The Institute. Among them is former White House spokesman Robert Weiner, Bishop Charles E. Blake Sr., Presiding Bishop Emeritus of the Church of God in Christ, Jerry Norcia, the Executive Chairman of DTE Energy, Sister Simone Campbell, a 2022 Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipient, Janis Kearney, former Presidential Diarist at the White House and the late Dr. Arun Gandhi, the fifth grandson of Mahatma Ghandi as well as civil rights hero Rev. Dr. Bernard Lafayette Jr. who died recently. Lafayette a trusted and top lieutenant of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was honored by The Institute last July during its Annual Civil Rights Leadership Dinner at the Detroit Athletic Club, where a surprise birthday celebration was held for him as he turned 85.

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