

Valeria Howard Cunningham Named to U.S. Black Chambers 2026 Power 50 'Women of Influence'

Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo President & CEO Honored for Visionary Leadership, Cultural Preservation, and Advancing the Legacy of Black Western Heritage

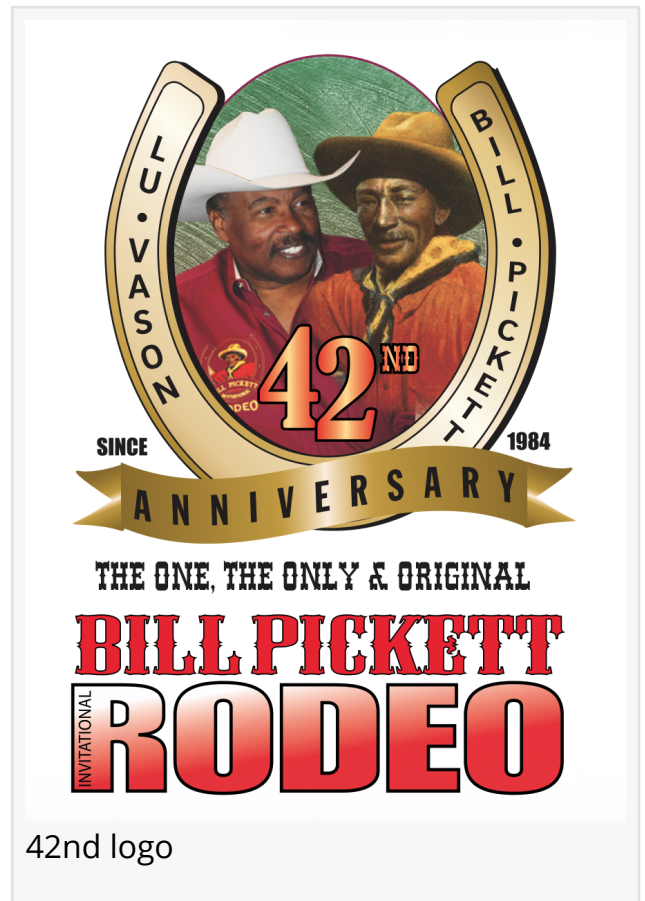
ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, July 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Valeria Howard Cunningham, President and CEO of the [Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo](#) (BPIR), has been named a 2026 Power 50 Woman of Influence by the U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. (USBC), a prestigious national recognition honoring exceptional women who are shaping industries, advancing communities, and driving meaningful economic and cultural impact.

Selected from a distinguished group of leaders across business, media, public service, and entrepreneurship, the Power 50 Women of Influence represent a dynamic network of visionaries whose work continues to redefine leadership and expand opportunity on a national and global scale. This year's theme, "Women Who Lead the Movement," highlights women who are not only achieving excellence in their respective fields but who are also actively creating pathways, shifting narratives, and building lasting legacies.

"I am deeply honored to be recognized among such an extraordinary group of women who are leading with purpose and impact. This recognition reflects not only my journey, but the legacy of the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo and the communities, collaborators, and generations of Black cowboys and cowgirls whose stories continue to inspire the work we do every day."

— Valeria Howard Cunningham

In her role as President and CEO, Cunningham has guided the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo into a new era of national growth and international recognition while preserving and elevating the legacy of Black cowboys and cowgirls. Since assuming ownership in 2015, she has expanded



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BPIR's cultural reach through global exhibitions, major entertainment collaborations, and historic milestones including the first nationally televised African American rodeo broadcast. Her work has strengthened BPIR's position as a leading cultural institution and a global ambassador for Black Western heritage.

"The Power 50 Women of Influence represent excellence in every sense of the word," said Ron Busby Sr., President and CEO of U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. "These women are visionary leaders, barrier breakers, and change agents who continue to redefine what is possible. We are honored to celebrate their extraordinary contributions and the lasting impact they are making across industries and communities."

About USBC Power 50

The U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. Power 50 Women of Influence initiative honors dynamic women leaders who are driving economic growth, advancing social progress, and creating lasting, generational impact across industries including business, media, finance, technology, public service, and philanthropy.

The 2026 honorees will be celebrated at the annual U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. Power 50 Women of Influence Luncheon on Monday, July 13, 2026, at The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, D.C., located at 1150 22nd Street NW. The signature event will bring together executives, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and influential leaders from across the country to celebrate women whose leadership is shaping the future of business, culture, and community.

For more information, tickets, and table purchases, visit:

<https://www.usbcwomenofpower.com/>

About the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo

The Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo (BPIR) is the nation's premier African American touring rodeo association. Founded in 1984 by Lu Vason to celebrate and preserve the legacy of Black cowboys and cowgirls and their contributions to the American West, BPIR is proudly led today by President and CEO Valeria Howard Cunningham, making it the only African American touring rodeo association in the world owned and operated by a Black woman. Touring major cities across the United States annually, BPIR presents world-class rodeo competition while serving as a powerful cultural platform advancing national and global awareness of Black Western



Valeria Howard Cunningham, President & CEO of the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo

heritage.

About U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.

U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. is the leading national organization dedicated to supporting and advocating for Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs. Through advocacy, programming, and strategic partnerships, USBC advances economic empowerment and sustainable growth within Black communities nationwide.

Michelle R Johnson - BPIR Media Relations Director

Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo

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BPIR 2025 Finals Wefus Tyus, BPIR Rodeo General Manager, All Round Cowboy, Montrel Gilder, Valeria Howard Cunningham, BPIR President & CEO



BPIR Foundation 2025 Rodeo for Kidz Sake, Prince George's County, Baltimore, and Washington, DC School Students



BPIR Bull Riding

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