

The PuLSE Institute to Convene National Civil Rights Leadership Dinner Celebrating the Promise of America

Invite-Only Gathering Will Bring Together Distinguished Leaders to Honor Moral Courage, Civic Leadership, and the Enduring American Experiment

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, July 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At a time when the nation continues to grapple with profound questions about opportunity, economic justice, and the responsibilities of leadership, The PuLSE Institute will convene its 2026 National Civil Rights Leadership Dinner on Wednesday, July 29, 2026, 5:30pm at the historic Detroit Athletic Club.

Held under the theme "The Promise of America: Advancing Justice. Expanding Opportunity. Sustaining Hope," the invite-only gathering has emerged as one of the nation's distinctive forums where leaders from business, government, philanthropy, higher education, labor, faith, and civic life come together to affirm the enduring values that strengthen communities and advance the American experiment.

The evening will be chaired by Gary Torgow, Chairman of Huntington National Bank, whose opening reflection, "The Moral Responsibility of Leadership," will frame a program dedicated to the proposition that leadership is measured not merely by achievement, but by stewardship, integrity, service, and an unwavering commitment to the common good.

The 2026 National Civil Rights Leadership Dinner will recognize six individuals whose lives and work exemplify principled leadership and extraordinary service to society.

The 2026 Honorees are:



The late Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr., a close associate of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., speaking at The PuLSE Institute 2025 Civil Rights Leadership Dinner, where he was honored with The Institute's Global Civil Rights Leadership Award.

Gary Torgow — Founder's Medal of Conscience and Justice

James Vincent, former President of the Providence NAACP (Rhode Island) — Guardian of Democracy and Economic Justice Award

Sarah Noet, entrepreneur and innovation leader from Seattle, Washington — Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Opportunity Award

Robert Weiner, former White House spokesman from Washington, D.C. — Conscience of Democracy Award

Gwen Swanigan, civic leader and longtime community activist from Benton Harbor, Michigan — Community Transformation Award

Samantha Woll (Posthumously), former President of the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue in Detroit — Bridge Builder Award

Reflecting the expanding national stature of both the event and The PuLSE Institute, three of this year's honorees will travel from across the United States to Detroit to receive their awards. James Vincent will travel from Rhode Island, Sarah Noet from Seattle, Washington, and Robert Weiner from Washington, D.C., underscoring the Institute's growing role as a national convener of leaders committed to strengthening democracy, advancing economic opportunity, and fostering civic renewal.

A defining moment of the evening will be a special commemorative tribute to the late Rev. Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr., one of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s closest colleagues, a principal architect of the modern Civil Rights Movement, and the 2025 recipient of The PuLSE Institute's Global Civil Rights Leadership Award. Through a special video presentation drawn from his appearance at last year's dinner, guests will be reminded that the pursuit of justice, reconciliation, nonviolence, and human dignity remains an unfinished calling entrusted to every generation of leaders.

"This gathering is not simply about recognizing distinguished individuals," said nationally acclaimed journalist and standard-bearer for economic justice Bankole Thompson, the Founder and Chairman of The PuLSE Institute. "It is about reaffirming a timeless conviction that leadership is ultimately a moral responsibility. Throughout our nation's history, every period of progress has depended upon women and men who chose courage over comfort, service over self-interest, and hope over fear. The PuLSE Institute exists to convene those leaders and encourage those conversations."

Attorney Tina M. Patterson, a nationally recognized legal authority who is the President and General Counsel of The PuLSE Institute, said the annual gathering reflects the organization's enduring commitment to building bridges across sectors and encouraging collaborative leadership.

"Our mission has always been to create a place where leaders can come together not because they agree on every issue, but because they share a commitment to the common good," Patterson said. "The National Civil Rights Leadership Dinner reflects our belief that enduring

progress is built through principled leadership, civic responsibility, and partnerships that expand opportunity for all."

As The PuLSE Institute continues to broaden its national footprint as a respected civic institution dedicated to advancing economic justice, cultivating courageous leadership and elevating conversations that shape the future of the nation.

The 2026 National Civil Rights Leadership Dinner is expected to bring together influential leaders from across Michigan and throughout the United States for an evening dedicated not merely to honoring achievement, but to renewing the ideals that have long defined America's highest aspirations.

The PuLSE Institute is a nationally recognized, nonpartisan and independent public policy and anti-poverty think tank dedicated to advancing economic justice, expanding opportunity and cultivating principled leadership.

Through nationally recognized leadership forums, public policy discussions, strategic partnerships, civic engagement initiatives, educational programs, and public conversations, The PuLSE Institute convenes leaders from business, government, philanthropy, higher education, labor, faith communities, and nonprofit organizations to address the defining economic, civic, and moral challenges of our time.

Since its founding, the Institute has emerged as one of America's distinctive civic conveners, bringing together influential voices to encourage thoughtful dialogue, inspire collaborative action, and strengthen the ideals of the American experiment. In 2028, The PuLSE Institute will celebrate its 10th Anniversary, marking a decade of advancing courageous leadership, fostering meaningful partnerships, and helping shape a more just, prosperous, and hopeful future.

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