



Winter 2026

SAVE the DATES: September 25-27, 2026

Meet Us in the DMV for the 2026

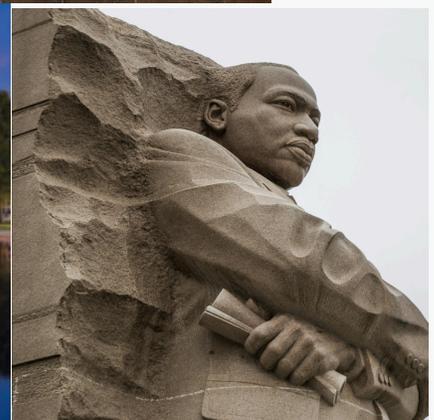
Ebony Bobcat Network Annual Conference

OU Ebony Bobcat Network members and supporters: Make plans to join fellow alumni in the DMV September 25-27, 2026.

"The Ebony Bobcat Network DMV is honored to host the upcoming Ebony Bobcat Network Annual Conference," said George Wilson, EBN DMV (DC/Maryland/Virginia) president.

Alumni will receive conference details in the weeks ahead as EBN DMV finalizes hotel and other arrangements in the local area. The conference plans include activities close to mass transportation hubs, restaurants, and tourist sites. Our national Events Committee is working with the Ohio University Alumni Association, which will provide support for the conference.

So, please check your inboxes and social media platforms for everything you need to know about the 2026 EBN Annual Conference coming soon!



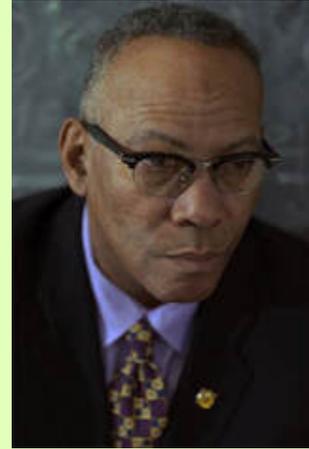
"Congratulations" to the 2025 Ebony Bobcat Network Alumni Awardees

The Ebony Bobcat Network continues to celebrate Ohio University Black alumni achievers. In June 2025 EBN honored eight alumni during its 2025 Alumni Awards Brunch in Solon, Ohio. Congratulations, honorees!

Inaugural John Newton Templeton Trailblazer

Dr. Milbert O. Brown, MA 1982

Dr. Brown is a distinguished photojournalist, educator, and author dedicated to social justice and African American history. A career highlight includes contributing to the Chicago Tribune team that won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize in Journalism for Explanatory Reporting for their profile of the chaotic American air traffic system. He was the paper's first Black visual/picture editor, taught at Howard and Wilberforce Universities, and founded the Chicago Alliance of African American Photographers. He was inducted into the National Association of Black Journalists' Hall of Fame in 2024.



Aaron Thomas, BS 2001

Thomas, also known as "A-roc," is a multifaceted entrepreneur and community leader recognized for his business acumen, technological innovation, and commitment to social justice. His two-decade entrepreneurial career includes founding Class "A" Sounds and A-roc Entertainment LTD. He's a tireless community leader, serving on organizational boards, including the NAACP and the Athens Chamber of Commerce. A-roc was instrumental in supporting minority-owned businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and is a former State of Ohio Small Minority Business of the Year awardee.



The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown, BS 1982

McGee Brown's career is defined by historic judicial "firsts." She was the first African American woman elected to the Franklin County Common Pleas Court and, in 2011, she became the first African American woman to serve as a Justice on the Supreme Court of Ohio. She is currently a Partner-In-Charge of Diversity, Inclusion, and Advancement at the global law firm Jones Day and the founding president of the Center for Child and Family Advocacy. She has been named one of the Most Influential Women in Corporate America.



"Congratulations" to the 2025 Ebony Bobcat Network Alumni Awardees

Inaugural Dr. Francine C. Childs Legend

Kathi Howard Primes, BBA 1986

Howard Primes is an accomplished educator, entrepreneur, and community leader with a deep dedication to service. She founded Momentum, LLC in 2006, a highly-regarded tutoring and educational services company for K-12 students throughout Ohio. Recognized as a top female minority small business owner, Kathi is also a sought-after education expert. Her passion for supporting children with ADHD led her to author the book, *Walking in Ava's Shoes*. In November 2025, Kathi was elected to the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School Board.



Distinguished Service

Tracy L. Carter, BBA 1993

Carter is a highly accomplished healthcare executive and community leader recognized as one of the top minority healthcare executives in the nation. After a career start at Akron City Hospital, she led successful initiatives, including helping 60,000 residents gain Medicaid coverage, and enacting a change in Ohio law to cover dense breast screening. As a dedicated Bobcat, she helped to charter, and served as the inaugural president of, the Ebony Bobcat Network Akron/Canton Affiliate. And congratulations are in order...Tracy was recently named the inaugural CEO of the newly formed Trailhead Community Health Foundation of Greater Akron.



Gregory T. Moore, BA 1983, MPA 2021

Moore is a leading voting rights advocate and CEO of the Promise of Democracy Foundation. His 30-year career includes roles such as Executive Director of the NAACP-National Voter Fund and Chief of Staff for the late Congressman, John Conyers, Jr. Moore was instrumental in the final passage of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 ("Motor Voter" law) and currently chairs the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's National Board of Advisors. He remains active in Ohio voting rights initiatives and is the author of *Beyond the Voting Rights Act*. Greg also provides service to our alma mater as the current Chairman of the Ohio University Alumni Association Board of Directors.



“Congratulations” to the 2025 Ebony Bobcat Network Alumni Awardees

Inspirational Athlete

Lester Carney, BS 1959



Carney is an Ohio-born athlete and Olympic medalist who excelled in both football and track at Ohio University. His greatest athletic achievement was winning a silver medal in the 200-meter dash at the 1960 Rome Olympics. Beyond sports, Carney broke barriers, becoming the first African American executive buyer at O'Neil's Department Store in Akron. His contributions were recognized with induction into the Kermit Blosser OHIO Athletics Hall of Fame.

Young Professional

Siraj Woods, BBA 2021

Woods is a highly accomplished OU alumnus, making significant contributions to his alma mater and community. A graduate with a bachelor's degree in Digital Marketing Design and an Entrepreneurship Certificate, Siraj continues his commitment to his alma mater as an active member of the Ohio University Young Alumni Leaders Program. He has also been a guest speaker for the Ohio Digital Marketing Agency classes, and a mentor within the College of Business' Gen-1 Mentoring Program. In 2020, he founded SWC, a digital marketing firm designed to elevate small and medium-sized businesses. SWC has quickly gained recognition for its innovative approach to brand storytelling and strategic social media engagement. His firm has served clients throughout the US and worldwide, while simultaneously providing employment opportunities for young professionals.



EBN Increases Membership, Attracts New Affiliate Interest, Tests an Innovative Membership Platform in 2025



The year 2025 was a banner year for the Ebony Bobcat Network!

On February 1, EBN launched its first national membership campaign, led by visionary national Co-Chairs Eboni Pringle and Ebony Porter of the Akron/Canton Affiliate, along with LaWanna McKinley White, National Membership Committee Chair.

Pringle and Porter designed and executed a comprehensive campaign, charging each affiliate to host one or more membership activities during February. Ohio University joined in to provide affiliates with financial and incentive support. Affiliates across the country hosted many different kinds of creative experiences---both in-person and virtual, enabling Bobcats to join their affiliate of choice. The good news is that, nationally, EBN membership increased three-fold. Some affiliates more than doubled the number of their members.

New blood! Fresh ideas! Amazing skills and talents!

During the summer, EBN President Damon Scott received inquiries from alumni in Atlanta, Athens, and Los Angeles about how to start an EBN affiliate. The Atlanta group has since joined the EBN REACH Program, the prospective affiliate on-boarding process, supported by a caring coaching team. Bobcats in Athens and Los Angeles continue to discuss their interest in aligning with EBN.

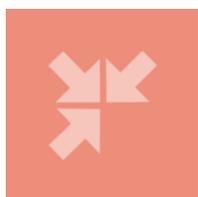
"We are excited to welcome new groups to expand and strengthen our network," said McKinley White.

Finally, in September, Cleveland Membership Committee Co-Chairs Jeff Tyus and Imani Edwards volunteered to create an EBN Membership Directory with demographic information and photos. A prerequisite for the directory is to have the capacity to continually add information and include a resource bank that will identify alumni-owned businesses, as well as skills, talents, and experiences for mentoring and sharing expertise.

The team researched and found **Join It**, a membership management platform that integrates those services, and is piloting the software with our Cleveland Affiliate for three months. The National Board will determine in 2026 whether it will purchase the service for all affiliates.

"Yes, a Banner Year! We can't wait to see what 2026 will bring to the Ebony Bobcat Network!" –

EBN National Membership Chair, Lawanna McKinley White



Join It



Scan and Become an EBN Member

Want to Connect with EBN Affiliates? Here's How

Akron/Canton

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month @7pm via Zoom Conference
Email: EBNAkronCanton@gmail.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EBN330>

Cincinnati/Dayton

Meetings: 1st Thursday of the month @8pm via Zoom Conference
Email: EBNCincinnatiDayton@gmail.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ebncincinnatiadayton>

Cleveland

Meetings: 1st Wednesday of the month @6:30 pm in person and via Zoom Conference
Email: EBNCleve@gmail.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EBNCleveland>

Columbus

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month @6:30 pm via Zoom Conference
Email: EBNCols@gmail.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ebncolumbus>

DMV (District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia)

Meetings: 2nd or 3rd Thursday of the month @7pm via Zoom Conference
Email: EBNWashDC@gmail.com

Florida (Statewide)

Meetings: 3rd Monday of the month @7pm via Zoom Conference
Email: EBNFlorida@gmail.com

ebnnationalbd@gmail.com

Ebony Bobcat Network Members Serve Proudly on the Ohio University Alumni Association Board of Directors (one in a series)



Huey Ball

Huey Ball, BSEd, '67, is a retired senior account representative from the 3M Company, selling automotive Original Equipment Manufacturers and servicing the aftermarket. During his professional career, he also sold securities, life insurance, printing presses, paper cutters and bindery equipment. Over the past two decades, Ball has traveled the world, visiting nearly 60 countries and 45 states. Prior to his two-year service on the OUAA Board, Ball was also a founding member of the Ohio University Ebony Bobcat Network. He acknowledges that his involvement with fellow alumni board members, as well as with OU faculty, administrators, students and presidents, continues to be extremely valuable, providing insights into current university policies and initiatives. Most of all, he appreciates the opportunity to be seen and be heard.



**Dr. Carolyn
Bailey Lewis**

Dr. Carolyn Bailey Lewis, PhD. '07, is Director and General Manager Emerita, WOUB Public Media. Now retired, her 38-year award-winning public broadcasting profession placed her in the company of the late Fred "Mister" Rogers, LaVar Burton, the late Gwen Ifill and, even Big Bird. Dr. Lewis first became involved in alumni activities at West Virginia University by serving on the Alumni Board of Directors, the first Black woman to serve on that board. As a result, she says, it was a natural fit when she was appointed to the Ohio University Alumni Board of Directors. Dr. Lewis adds that serving on the OUAA Board has been one of the most rewarding endeavors in which she has been involved---from being at the table, to providing input on the affairs of the Association, to assisting in the selection of alumni awardees, new Board members, and Legacy Scholarships.



Branden Smith

Branden Smith, BSC '83, is currently a consultant at Red Clay Digital LLC., focusing on business development and partnerships strategy in AI applications: Digital Content Licensing and Distribution. Previously, he held business development, partnerships and consulting roles in content licensing, syndication and distribution in digital media and tech sectors with NPR Distribution, Encyclopedia Britannica, NewsHour Productions (PBS NewsHour), Online News Association, Alcatel-Lucent, The Weather Channel Interactive, and Viacom (MTV & Showtime Networks). Smith started his career in New York at The Wall Street Journal as an Advertising Sales Representative. An engaged and committed member of the Ohio University Ebony Bobcat Network, Smith has held leadership positions as Vice President of the DMV Affiliate and as the National Chair of our Alumni Board Service and Awards Committee.

EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment: Supporting Ohio University Students

"The EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment has always been a major focus for our alumni group," says Stella Antwine, National Endowment Committee Chair. "Our efforts have made it possible for three Ohio University students to receive financial funding for four full years."

EBN's first scholarship recipient has graduated, and we currently have two additional scholars whose education is being funded through EBN. Our endowment now totals more than \$784,000. Once it reaches \$900,000, EBN will be able to fund three concurrent scholarships for young, bright, talented Ohio University students.

"Now, more than ever," explains Antwine, "Bobcats and other supporters are needed to donate to the EBN Endowment." The scholarship supports the Urban Scholars Program, the legacy initiative of Ohio University President Emeritus Dr. Roderick McDavis.

The Ohio University Foundation continues to support EBN's efforts and has extended its match program. Through the OHIO Match®, any gift made to the EBN Urban Scholarship Endowment through June 30, 2026, will be matched 50¢ on the dollar.

"We urge Bobcats and others to take advantage of the match now and enable us to add at least another student as a recipient of a four-year scholarship and a chance to earn a degree from Ohio University," says Antwine.

Click on the "Contribute" button below. Enter the amount, then in the "Designation" box, type in "Ebony Bobcat Network Urban Scholarship Endowment" and complete the transaction. You may also point your phone's camera to the QR code below, which will take you to the same page.

Contribute

or



Scan & Give Here
**Support the EBN Urban
Scholarship Endowment**



EBN AFFILIATE NEWS

Akron/Canton

Dads of Distinction Celebration Honors Father-Like Men, Bobcats Make Generous Food Donations to Harmony House

In June, the Akron/Canton affiliate hosted a Celebrate OUR Dads of Distinction luncheon at LaPlace Events in Akron. The event celebrates fathers, and the men who are father-like, by nurturing, guiding, and uplifting individuals and communities. EBN Akron/Canton member Dr. Lyman Montgomery, BS '90 & '92, delivered an inspirational keynote address. The following men were honored during the event: Devon Collins, BS '97; Joshua Cospser, BS '11; Marlon Primes, BSJ '86; and Scott Washington, BBA '93.



Akron/Canton Ebony Bobcats made a generous donation of non-perishable food items to Harmony House as part of the affiliate's Give Thanks November Hunger Service Project. The food items help Harmony House provide comfort, stability, and nourishment to the young people the agency serves. The non-profit provides emergency and supportive housing for young adults ages 18-24 experiencing homelessness.



[Ebony Bobcat Network Akron/Canton](#)



Cincinnati/Dayton

"Give Thanks" Food Drive Brings in 900 Pounds of Provisions, Alumna to Lead February Discussion on the Future of Health



In November, EBN Cincinnati/Dayton joined the Greater Cincinnati Network once again for the annual Give Thanks November Food Drive at the Madisonville Education & Assistance Center. Linda Thomas organized everything on site, with the help of Reynell Frazier, who provided assistance and ordered the food. Last year, the two alumni networks raised 480 pounds of food. This year's goal was 550 pounds. By the end of the day, the two networks, together, brought in 938 pounds of food for MEAC's food pantry!



On February 5th, the affiliate will host its annual Alumni Discussion event, featuring OU Alumna Renee Mahaffey Harris, president and CEO of Cincinnati's Closing the Health Gap <https://closingthehealthgap.org/>. She will lead a discussion on the "Future of Our Health and Health Care Today." Mahaffey Harris is a committed advocate for marginalized populations in Greater Cincinnati. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Communication from Ohio University and a Master's Degree in Public Health from Morehouse College of Medicine. Not only will this event be a wonderful way to educate people on how to advocate for themselves and their loved ones in healthcare spaces, but it also will be a great occasion to encourage people to join or reengage with the Ebony Bobcat Network. To register for this virtual event, click below.

<https://www.givecampus.com/schools/OhioUniversity/events/ebn-cincinnati-dayton-virtual-health-care-event>

[Ebony Bobcat Network Cincinnati/Dayton](#)



Cleveland

Bobcats Take Part in OUHCOM Trunk-or-Treat Community Outreach, Student Send Off Event Welcomes Fall Incoming OU Freshmen

Ever since the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine's (HCOM) first Trunk-or-Treat community event in 2015, EBN Cleveland has been a proud participant. Cleveland's faithful regulars---Linda Edwards, Stella Antwine and grandson Savion, Tim Hamilton, and Damon Scott---were there to hand out treats and keep the evening lively. They also made a valiant attempt to decorate the car and open trunk of EBN founder Connie Lawson Davis, the organizer of EBN's participation, but the wind had a different plan!

According to Rachel Moore, HCOM Associate Director for Student Affairs and event coordinator, 955 children and their families participated this year. Special thanks to the Bobcats who also made cash donations.



Cleveland hosted nine OU freshmen, their parents and siblings at a Student Send Off in August. The event included a reception with food and beverage and lots of giveaways. The assortment of giveaways included OU logo cups, t-shirts, ink pens, lapel pins, and what every freshmen student needs: stress balls. But perhaps the most impressive item was the \$50 worth of Bobcat Cash loaded onto each student's ID card. The Bobcat Cash brought a rousing applause from students and parents. A panel composed of current OU students, alumni and OU staff provided words of encouragement and wisdom to the incoming freshmen. It was also the opportunity for the students to ask questions and share their concerns about what to expect about new life on campus. At least one student was focused on the most important aspect of college life. His question, "Can I have two fridges in my dorm room?" Food... what else is more important?

The event was planned by the Cleveland Affiliate Student/Parent Liaison Committee, chaired by alumna Scharmaine Holden Alston.



[Ebony Bobcat Network Cleveland](#)



Columbus

Alumni Come Together for a Fellowship Event, Membership Drive, and Community Service at Legacy Pointe Poindexter

In February 2025, EBN Columbus alumni gathered for a meet-up at Soul 2 Go Cafe in the spirit of unity, pride, and celebration—and the atmosphere was nothing short of electric! Special thanks to OU alum and Soul 2 Go partner Jerome H. Ross, II for the invitation and for helping fellow alumni honor the legacy and excellence that define the Columbus community.



As part of the EBN national membership campaign, the affiliate hosted its first annual Social and Membership Drive at the Columbus Main Library. Alumni and friends gathered to reminisce, share stories, and enjoy a delicious spread catered by KT Good Eats. The gathering, with exciting giveaways and vibrant conversation, was a heartwarming reminder of the experiences that unite the Bobcat community. The \$7 entry fee bought more than just great food—it sparked new connections, renewed pride, and set the tone for a powerful year of engagement. What's more, EBN Columbus increased its membership of 22 members as a direct result of the campaign!



In April, EBN Columbus and the Columbus Alumni Network partnered with Urban Strategies, Inc. to host a successful volunteer event at Legacy Pointe at Poindexter. Nearly 20 volunteers came together to clean internal and external areas of the historic 330-unit property, and support the 2nd Annual Bobcat Reading Corner. Alumni and community members donated books and promoted literacy. Urban Strategies also advanced plans to bring tutors to the neighborhood, reinforcing a long-term commitment to educational empowerment. It was a powerful example of Bobcats giving back and building together.



Columbus

The Bobcat Reading Corner, launched by EBN Columbus, is a literacy initiative designed to promote reading, community engagement, and school spirit among Columbus-area families. It combines book donations, volunteer support, and alumni involvement to create a welcoming space for children and families to connect through stories.



The affiliate also hosted a vibrant afternoon of food, fellowship, and friendly competition on June 5th at Topgolf Polaris. Twenty-five alumni and friends enjoyed two hours of golfing and a delicious spread of appetizers and beverages. Teams competed for bragging rights, adding a spirited edge to the fun. Attendees also had the opportunity to support the Ebony Bobcat Network Urban Scholarship Endowment, which provides tuition assistance and professional development to high-achieving students from Ohio's urban school districts. The event was a joyful blend of Bobcat pride and purpose—bringing the community together while uplifting future scholars.



DMV

Holiday Party Brings Alumni Together to Support Local Shelter

The DMV held a mid-December holiday party at the Dog Haus in Silver Spring, Maryland. Affiliate members and guests brought non-perishable food items to donate to a local homeless shelter and families. The after-work event also served as an occasion to recruit new EBN members and reacquaint area Black alumni with the mission of EBN.



EBN Honors the Legacy of Ohio University President Emeritus at McDavis Hall Cornerstone Dedication



On a warm, bright, and sunny Friday afternoon in late September, Ohio University celebrated the enduring legacy of President Emeritus Roderick J. McDavis, a visionary leader whose tenure transformed the student experience and left an indelible mark on the University's history. Dr. McDavis was only the second alumnus to serve as president, embodying the Bobcat spirit from student to steward. And he was its first African American president, leading OHIO from 2004-2017.

The university honored its 20th president by naming its newest housing facility, McDavis Hall. Upon his and First Lady Deborah McDavis' return to campus, there was a cornerstone dedication, highlighting the president's decades of service to our alma mater. The day started with a lecture by the President Emeritus on the history of the University, and the future of higher education, followed by a tour of the construction site for McDavis Hall. When it opens for fall semester 2026, the 591-bed residence hall will be the largest on campus! The celebration concluded with the presentation of the new building's cornerstone, and a reception in honor of the McDavises.



And because Dr. McDavis was the inspiration for the founding of the Ebony Bobcat Network, several EBN founders and leaders traveled to Athens for the auspicious occasion. Among them were National President Damon Scott and Vice President Ty Carr. They presented the President Emeritus with a Tiffany lamp for his study in the McDavis' new home, as a gift on behalf of EBN. Congratulations to Dr. McDavis!



Is YOUR Name on the Ohio University African American Alumni Heritage Wall?

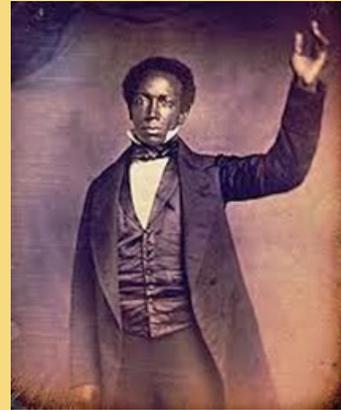
Since its dedication in 1999, the African American Alumni Heritage Wall continues to offer Black graduates an opportunity to be part of the legacy of John Newton Templeton, class of 1828, and Martha Jane Hunley Blackburn, class of 1916, the first African American man and woman to graduate from Ohio University.

The wall, located in the Dr. Patricia A. Ackerman Lobby of what was formerly called Memorial Auditorium, is an opportunity for Black alumni to thank and honor those who made their degrees possible. The historic building was renamed the Templeton Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium in honor of these two trailblazing African American alumni.

Plaques displayed include the names of graduates and those who helped support their matriculation at Ohio University. Gifts to this account will provide support for the preservation of the Wall, including but not limited to, renovations, maintenance, upkeep, and improvements.

Learn how to add your name on the wall by contacting the Office of Annual Giving: giving@ohio.edu.

Or visit the Wall website below:



John Newton Templeton



Martha Jane Hunley Blackburn

[Ohio University African American Alumni Heritage Wall Website](#)



Got Bobcat Photos? Help Us Archive Them!!

As the Ebony Bobcat Network continues to document the events, activities, accomplishments, and more of our Ohio University alumni via our website, newsletter and other communications, we want to archive not only the words but also the images that tell OUR story. You can help by sending photos and a description to April Hart and she will upload onto a Google drive.

**Send via email or text to
April Hart @
hartlaw1@sbcglobal.net or
216.965.1284**

Thank You!

Ebony Bobcat Network Website