



SoulVision

M A G A Z I N E



July 2019



EDITORS NOTE

BK Fulton



“God does not bless us because we are good: God blesses us because she is good.”

In this issue of SoulVision Magazine, we focus on entrepreneurs. The creators and makers featured here use their art to build communities and to turn the wheels of commerce. Our ancestors knew that self-sufficiency was a prerequisite for long-term survival in a world where green and gold were the most important colors. Historically, our dollars circulated hundreds of times in our own community ecosystem. Today, a dollar spent in urban communities barely circulates one time before it goes out to enrich other neighborhoods. According to the Opportunity HUB (OHUB), in 2013 the median wealth of White families was \$134,000, Black families’ median wealth was \$11,000 and all U.S. families had a median wealth of \$81,000. The same report went on to share that only 1% of Blacks were worth more than \$1 million dollars (compared to 12% of Whites) and 30% of Blacks were worth \$50,000 to \$1 million dollars (compared to 55% of Whites). There is a clear wealth gap between ethnicities. What’s more, that gap is becoming a chasm when you consider that 27% of African Americans have a *negative* net worth (compared to 9% of Whites).

These differences impact more than finances. Wealth gaps also impact opportunities, education, and perceptions. “Lack” can become a pernicious cycle. In an age where we ostensibly and in fact have more freedom, more resources, and more education than any generation of African Americans in the U.S., we are doing less building than we have in generations. Why? One hypothesis is that urban communities are not doing all they can to support each other and work collectively to make our U.S. and global standing better. It is time to do more than survive. It is time to develop and prosper. SoulVision Magazine salutes the entrepreneurs who are working hard to achieve each and every one of their dreams. Remember to lift as you climb . . . , together.

“There is a clear wealth gap between ethnicities. What’s more, that gap is becoming a chasm. . . .”

Victoria Rowell: Leader, Advocate, and Power Player



“Be the bridge between the young and old, the rich and the poor.”
and old, the rich and the poor.”

Victoria Rowell is poised and elegant in her speech. Over the years, Victoria has become an important voice for those in foster care. While her career has reached far beyond the 60-acre farm she grew up on in Lebanon, Maine, Victoria has not forgotten the woman who made her the person she is today. She knows she owes a debt to her late foster mother, Agatha Armstead. Agatha helped Victoria develop discipline and a love for the performing arts. “She had a love for music. She had studied at the New England Conservatory of Music. Through my exposure, I developed a love for classical ballet. Occasionally, she would let me stay up to watch the Ed Sullivan Show to see the June Taylor Dancers,” she says. Agatha was a “Rosie the Riveter” during the war (WWII). For \$2,000, Agatha used her hard-earned resources to purchase the farm Victoria would call home. Agatha was a scrupulous businesswoman. “She was a woman of faith and principle,” she says. From Agatha, Victoria learned the power of prayer and service. After all, Agatha was in her 60s when she took in a two and a half-year-old Victoria. “To quote the great John Lewis, ‘find a way out of no way,’” Victoria says. “There isn’t a day that goes by without me thinking about her. Because I feel she is with me,” she says. “She was my long term mentor. I am the beneficiary of Agatha Armstead’s wisdom.”

Victoria Rowell: Leader, Advocate, and Power Player (continued)



Our conversation steers towards Oscar winner Hattie McDaniel and her activism in Los Angeles. Even though she later grew critical of her role as a “Mammy” in *Gone With the Wind*, Hattie used the money she earned to help her community and fight housing discrimination in Los Angeles. Her strategic advocacy laid the groundwork for the creation of the Fair Housing Act. The women who helped raise Victoria came from the same cloth as Hattie. “Agatha had three sisters who I called my aunts. Aunt Ruthie was the first black executive assistant to a United States governor, Governor Paul A. Dever of Massachusetts. Josephine Baker sent her a telegram telling her that she was a pride to her people,” she explains. “I now own this telegram from Josephine.” Her Aunt Marian was a church organist. Her Aunt Theodora often referred to as “Aunt T” was a school teacher for 35 years. “Their father was a self-taught violinist. He never went past the fourth grade but taught himself the violin. Not

only was he a talented violinist, but the neighborhood math tutor as well,” she says.

Her book, *The Women Who Raised Me: A Memoir*, is a love letter to these women and her foster mother. “I wrote the book as a homage to these extraordinary women,” she says. Victoria emphasizes the importance of being grateful for those who have helped you in your journey to becoming the person you are today. This is the lesson she wanted people to learn after reading her book. “Recognize and value those people. Practice reciprocity. Go back to your first-grade teacher or college professor and thank them. It matters that they know we’ve utilized the knowledge and wisdom they have shared with us and passed it forward to the next generation,” she says.

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The impact of the novel has been real and humbling to Victoria. “Because of my work, I have become a support line. Social workers have told me that the book has made a difference. It’s in libraries across America. The youth want to read it. I am very proud that it has affected people in a positive way,” she says. “It has been translated in braille and it is in our National Library in Washington, D.C.” Victoria gave a speech at the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association’s national convention in Atlanta last month to an audience that included former FBI Director James Comey and his wife, Patrice,

who introduced her. “I was very honored. Politics aside, the Comeys have been foster parents for years, and I appreciate and respect what they have been able to do with children in social services,” she says.

“I know I am in a window of my life that is going to be spectacular.”

At age 60, Victoria Rowell feels like she has reached a new chapter in her life. “I know I am in a window of my life that is going to be spectacular. All of the knowledge and all of the work is going to culminate into expansion these next 10 years. Even though I’ve achieved a lot, my greatest achievement has yet to come,” she says. When she thinks of success, she believes those who are successful never quite say “they’ve made it” because they continue to have more and more “success” to experience and share. “We who are successful don’t rest on our laurels,” she emphasizes. “We have a sensational appetite to

Victoria Rowell: Leader, Advocate, and Power Player (continued)



create, to be successful, to share, and to teach, so it's ongoing. The 'making it' is the continuation of manifesting it," she says.

"I was blessed with Agatha and other women from different disciplines who banded together and raised me."

Her reality show, *The Rich and the Ruthless*, is a play on daytime soap operas. It's a "dramedy" with influences from meta-styled productions like *30 Rock* and *Anchorman*. In other words, it's self-aware, making humor out of its absurdness. She thinks there is more room for this kind of humor in the digital age. The fans and critics love it. "I think people today want levity. They want drama but they also want levity too. I've provided this Emmy nominated show. We just won 'Best Assemble Cast' (two years in a row) and 'Best Lead Actress' for the Independent Series Awards," she says. "There is an audience that wanted to watch programming that offered soap opera, that offered behind the scenes, that offered

comedy, calamity and cause. I was able to deliver that with a nice dose of drama. And by virtue of just launching our third season on May 23, I know there is an audience out there that appreciates this kind of content," she says.

Victoria is staying with one of her foster sisters in her Plum Beach house in Newburyport, Massachusetts. The night before, she was sitting by the fireplace with one of her younger guests. He asked her about the entertainment industry and the purpose of having an agent. She explains the agent has to believe in your potential and ability enough to work hard for you. "That's rare," she says. "You can have an agent for agent's sake. You can have a manager for manager's sake and they will take the 10, 15 or 20 percent, whatever the negotiation is. But you better be ready to do 90% of the work."

She explains you have to stay relevant and have a diverse portfolio. "You have to be open to lecturing, writing books and scripts, and directing," she says. "You have to study all of this. This way you are able to teach what you have learned. You are going to have to be willing to work on your communication skills so that you can talk to people in the room and they know that this is a person who I want to do business with," she explains. If there were a group of young people around the fireplace, she would tell them that discipline is a must for success in this business. "Whether they are ballet dancers, or jazz musicians, or going to the UK to study Shakespeare or actors, writers, camera people, you name it . . . discipline is non-negotiable. You have to have the discipline—the ability to do the required work and craft practice—and it has to come from somewhere," she says. "Unfortunately, there are many young people who were never taught discipline. I was given a gift. It fell out of the sky for me. I was blessed with Agatha and other women from different disciplines who banded together and raised me," she explains. "For example, consider the discipline of gardening. You have to be disciplined to be a great farmer.

"You have to be prepared to do the lion's share of the work."

Victoria Rowell: Leader, Advocate, and Power Player (continued)

The discipline of classical ballet requires uber discipline, professionally. The discipline of being an actor is important to me because when I talk to young people I want them to get what I have learned through work and paying attention to the details.”

“The entertainment industry is about selling choice in fantasy, inspiration, and education. The contradiction of the whole thing is that entertainment is often smoke and mirrors,” Victoria explains. “We create this atmosphere of allusion and aspiration but behind the Oz’s curtain is a real business. Unfortunately, what aspiring artists often see is a lot of show and no business. I really like to have a frank conversation with young people. I did that with our house guest. The young man’s eyes looked like they were going to pop out after I was finished,” she says with a chuckle. “You have to be prepared to do the lion’s share of the work.”

Victoria’s free time is spent on maintaining good health and strengthening the bonds of friendship and family. “To relax I take Bikram yoga. I took Bikram Yoga this morning. I walk, I listen to music I love, I write and I spend time with good friends and family. I try to honor myself. I eat good food and I laugh,” she says. Her calendar is full with projects in the pipeline. “I have a Christmas movie coming out opposite Sherri Shepherd. It is titled, *’Twas the Chaos Before Christmas*. It will be on the small screen so check your listings,” she says. “I am working on editing the *Woman Who Raised Me* script. I have a new lifestyle show, *Trash vs. Treasure*. I’m getting ready for 2020 and the opportunities and blessings to come.”

To keep up with Victoria Rowell and her various projects, you can follow her on Twitter [@VictoriaRowell](#), and Instagram [@victoriarowell](#).

MOVIES

Ashish Manchanda: Ambassador of Mumbai's Creative Arts



Ujjla and Ashish Manchanda

| “Music Will Unite Us All.”

Ashish Manchanda believes that India's music scene has the power and merit to go global. As an esteemed mixing/recording engineer, producer and entrepreneur, Ashish has worked on over 150 Bollywood films and has been involved in the Indian music scene where he works with fresh, young talent. His work is coming full circle, having started from the U.S. where he worked on live and studio projects with American music veterans like Garth Brooks and James Taylor. Ashish graduated from Full Sail University, FL, in 1997 with flying colors. He was hand-picked by Michael Jackson's multi-Grammy-winning engineer/producer, Bruce Swedien, while still on campus and there began his “real world journey.” While in the U.S, he established Flying Carpet Productions, a 360-degree production company that serves as a one-stop shop for artists to create and distribute their work. The production house extended into a training academy for young people in sound engineering and music production and Ashish's ambitions kept growing bigger. This gave birth to Boon Castle Media & Entertainment which not only encompasses Flying Carpet but includes allied services such as designing live music experiences, video productions, and music education. Extending roots back in the US with Boon Castle offering these services there while the India story continues to grow, Ashish spoke with SoulVision Magazine to talk about Boon Castle, his career, and the future of India's music scene.

Ashish Manchanda: Ambassador of Mumbai's Creative Arts (continued)

Where are you from and what was it like growing up there?

I was born in New Delhi, India, where I spent the early years of my life. I was about 8 when my family moved to the City of Pune which is known as the “Oxford of the East.” My parents wanted to get away from the big, busy Delhi and start a new in Pune which was developing into an educational and industrial town. I have always considered them to be progressive and very supportive. My wonder years were in Pune and it's a lovely city. It is a city that offers a good work-life balance. It was very nice growing up in Pune.



Who or what was your biggest inspiration growing up?

I think my biggest inspiration has always been Star Trek. I think somewhere deep inside me, it resonated. I am an explorer. Through the show, I could go on a journey and discover strange and unexplored worlds. Imagine Christopher Columbus on steroids; get on a spaceship and explore the universe. What I learned from it, and it still stands today, is that you have to always be prepared to go through the unexpected hurdles or obstacles to get to your journey's purpose.

What was the most important lesson you learned in the early phases of your career?

I don't think it was very clear to me then, but I could feel what was coming. People at that time were seeking out a master of their craft or a role model/”mentor”. I think even the word mentor was a fancy word back then and it was more about seeking a person who was an expert in a discipline that you're a fan of. It could be tennis or music or filmmaking. I think I was slowly gravitating towards that and that has become a very important factor in my life and also something I extend to others.

At what point in your career did you begin to feel you had made it?

I think “making it” is very relative. As a high school student, I was very interested in physics and math, so I was always exploring things like chaos theory and quantum mechanics and how you apply it to everyday life. I have had several milestones in my life. One of my “aha” moments was when I was a teenager. There was this young band at Loyola High School in Pune. This was the first time there was a band at the school. The youngest member was in the third grade and he was playing drums. He was making a hell of a noise, but he was the person who seemed to be having the most fun.

I thought it looked like fun and I thought that I should give it a shot. So, in the 11th grade, I started to learn music and began to play the drums. I had never picked up an instrument before. I was a late bloomer. I thought I had made it.

To cut a long story short, when I got my first gig, I thought I had made it yet again. I had met my mentor, a very fine gentleman and a superb musician by the name of Ranjit Barot who was someone I respected immensely. He believed in me when I didn't even know what “believe” meant and where it could take you. So, I got a gig with him and was getting paid for it. We stayed in touch over the years and subsequently have done a whole lot of super projects together. I am still closely associated with him and I am eternally indebted to him.

Ashish Manchanda: Ambassador of Mumbai's Creative Arts (continued)

When I first met my future mentor Bruce Swedien, I thought I had made it. It was another major turning point in my life. So, I'm sitting here like, "how many times have I made it in my life? I'm still making it." So, I think it's relative.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement?

When the people I have believed in have achieved their respective successes, that has been most gratifying! And it never ceases to amaze me, what the power of belief in one another can do!



Do you feel Indian artists can have similar global success like those in the K-pop scene?

The Indian movie industry is super popular in India, and in its own way is all-encompassing. It is a self-sustained and successful ecosystem. The independent music industry in India has always acquired lesser priority simply by virtue of the tremendous success of the movie industry and lack of sustained effort for and by the independent music ecosystem—management, mentorship in all aspects, and creators. Having said that, the talent in India is world class whether it belongs to the movie industry or independent sector. It has the potential to cross over. You will see both elements like what has happened with K-pop—a foreign language genre in an English territory that has a “Beatle-mania” like reaction.

There are super talented youngsters and creators in India who are innovative, care about the arts, and are ready to showcase their talent to the world. It is only a matter of time when that crossover happens.

Additionally, in India's music scene, there are English singing artists. And India is one of the largest English-speaking democracies. On YouTube, India is the largest consumer of English content, globally. I predict that very soon we will see Indian artists picking up Grammys amongst other international accolades alongside global stars like Beyoncé, Adele, and Bruno Mars.

You created the Totem Pole music festival in 2016 to create a safe festival environment for youth in Mumbai. Why was this so important and how have the youth responded to the festival since its inception?

I think once you become a parent, you start to look at life a little differently. We have two teenage daughters now. The idea came from my lovely wife, Ujjla, who is also my business partner and a very talented and accomplished woman. We started brainstorming and thought about having a festival for youngsters, particularly those between the ages of 12-20 years old. Most music festivals are usually alcohol and tobacco driven and hence outside the purview of young people below 21. Besides, such an environment is not the most favorable place to take young and impressionable kids. And then there are other festivals which are more “kid friendly” with activities for under 12 years of age. We understand that this demographic, 12-20-year-olds, are amongst the highest consumers of music. So, we created the Totem Pole music festival to promote a festival for young people and offer a safe environment for them to groove to music. Kids can also come in by themselves without their parents worrying about their safety. There are a lot of opportunities for youngsters of all disciplines to present themselves – through their music, art, etc. These new and unseasoned artists are what we call “state talent.”

Ashish Manchanda: Ambassador of Mumbai's Creative Arts (continued)



How do you relax when you are not working?

If I'm writing a song, working on a story, or strategizing the company's next move, I actually find that relaxing. When I would come home from "work," at a time when I used to mix a lot myself, I had a day full of satisfaction. At the end of the day, I would read some good stories or sit with loved ones and enjoy movies or TV series. I enjoy swimming, going for a walk, and most importantly spending quality time with my daughters.

I love to research and read about how I can be a better creator, innovator, and leader. Specifically, I have gotten into the various aspects of how to improve the business of our company. I'm very good at being a "vegetable" too. I can be in one place for hours, like a rock, and do nothing. At such times, I don't feel the "need" to run around and go up to the mountains or to the ocean. I can feel satisfied when I'm just sitting still.

What advice would you give to young music producers and/or entertainment business entrepreneurs trying to make it in the music/entertainment industry?

Just do it. I think we overthink and overcorrect way more than we should. We spend valuable time getting lost in unimportant things. Artists and creators have to just get out there and do it. They must put their art into the universe. It is very important to associate oneself with a team and people who believe in what you do. One has to have the ability to take in criticism and stick

to your craft without fear of being rejected or criticized. I think making decisions and acting on them with timelines is a critical part of becoming an entrepreneur. Whether you're a CEO or a small business owner, you have to be prepared, have purpose, and be present. You have to have good people working with you. It's not something one can or I would recommend doing by themselves. The magic is in working together.

There are very few companies across the world today who have the courage and will invest in "state talent." We consider ourselves perhaps the only "state talent" investors in the creative arts.

Totem Pole extends itself to a music conference too, where we have hosted Grammy-winning professionals amongst other stalwarts who share their valuable experience with young people. It is indeed fortunate for the youth to get this level of exposure at such a young age.

Tell us about Boon Castle and its purpose?

Boon Castle at its core is a platform for the creative arts, globally. The idea is to identify talent across the world; singers, songwriters, actors, writers, directors, etc. To offer the institutional support that young talent requires to carve out its true path is a gateway and backing that Boon Castle offers. We have been very fortunate to gain talent from Norway, Croatia, the U.S., and of course, India. We look at talent like it is sunshine. There is sunshine all over the planet. There is not a place on Earth that does not get sunshine. Everybody gets their share of sunshine. But what do you do with the sunshine? There are some people that have invented and designed solar panels. They harness the energy of the sun and make something useful for people, like electricity. So that is what talent is for us. Talent can be appreciated everywhere. But not everyone knows what to do with talent — for example, develop writers, dancers, and performers — and present the same to audiences. There are some countries and cities that have pioneered the creative arts better than others.

Ashish Manchanda: Ambassador of Mumbai's Creative Arts (continued)

Our efforts are to create and present cutting-edge talent and content of tomorrow, today! Boon Castle provides all the services that help creative artists reach audiences globally.

It was critically important for us to create a platform where we were responsible for end-to-end integration; from curation to distribution. It is a platform to break in fresh talent and tell new and old stories, from various cultures. The music and the visual medium are a great vessel to spread positivity and meaningful content.

We cover the entire gamut from live entertainment to musicals, pop festivals, concerts, developing movies for movie theaters and new age media and of course music, where we started our journey.

Boon Castle's main purpose is to truly make a difference by enriching people's lives. We have an opportunity to serve people. We really love this, so it doesn't feel like we're going to work. We are inspired and have decided to create something special.

View Video at:

<http://soulvisionmagazine.com/ashish-manchanda-ambassador-of-mumbais-creative-arts/>

BUSINESS

Jamellah Ellis: Going Natural



“There are plenty of people in your niche who need your product and creativity. Your unique gifts have the power to help others embrace themselves exactly as they are.”

Jamellah Ellis: Going Natural (continued)

Jamellah Ellis wants women to rock their natural hair with pride. As owner of Curl Theory, a textured hair salon in Prince George's County, Maryland, Jamellah has created a safe haven for "curl theorists" in the textured hair community. Today, women of all ethnicities are rocking their natural curls and documenting it all on Instagram. Some do it for self-acceptance, others do it in protest of the harmful chemicals that have been damaging their hair for years. Regardless of the reason, Jamellah is making the transition easier and less time consuming for these women.



For Jamellah, it doesn't matter where you are in your journey. Historically, there is a lot of ignorance towards textured hair and Jamellah is looking to change the conversation. She understands the importance of controlling the narrative of the story that affects you. Curl Theory was created to "guide and educate the textured hair community, and to pamper our curls," she says.

Big retail chains are paying attention. Jamellah created the Curl Theory Moisture Collection, a textured hair

"There are plenty of people in your niche who need your product and creativity. Your unique gifts have the power to help others embrace themselves exactly as they are."

care product line that helps consumers maintain healthy hair at home. Target now sells the line in its stores and on its website. Jamellah is excited about the Target opportunity because it allows her to reach the textured hair community in mass. "It's critical that we are able to maintain our hair at home between salon visits and achieve polished styling results. The Curl Theory products provide moisture and curl definition, which are the two key ingredients we all need in our home care regimen."



Loving one's natural hair is no fad or trend. It is a way of accepting one's beauty – and in doing so, women of myriad backgrounds are redefining traditional standards of beauty. Jamellah also encourages future entrepreneurs. "There are plenty of people in your niche who need your product and creativity. Your unique gifts have the power to help others embrace themselves exactly as they are."

To learn more about Jamellah Ellis and Curl Theory, you can visit <https://curltheorysalon.com/> and follow Curl Theory on Instagram [@curltheoryproducts](#) and [@curltheorysalon](#) and on Facebook [@curltheoryproducts](#) and [@curltheorysalon](#).

BUSINESS

Gregory Bruce: The Man Behind the Hashtag #nomoboringbows



| “Be bold with your style.”

Gregory Bruce is known as the man with the colorful bow ties. In recent years, the bow tie has regained popularity among men and women who want to add a little bit of sophistication and uniqueness to their wardrobe. What was once seen as “nerdy” or “Carlton-like” is now considered “cool” and “trendy.” To Gregory Bruce, bow ties are no trendy accessory, they

Gregory Bruce: The Man Behind the Hashtag #nomoboringbows (continued)

are a staple of his wardrobe. They are essential. Since 2017, Gregory has been tapping into this trend with his unique and off-kilter designs.

He admits where he grew up is difficult to explain. He was born in Pittsburgh but lived all over Europe (Austria, Germany, Belgium, France) for the majority of his childhood. It wasn't until his teenage years that he and his family returned to the United States. They settled down in New York City. Gregory went on to graduate from the High School of Music & Art.

“Every tie is singular unto itself and embodies a part of my heart and soul.”

He hasn't been working on his craft for long, but Gregory has been steadily experimenting and putting his own spin on the traditional neckwear piece. “I'm a novice. I have only been creating bow ties since developing my first model (the “Butter Knife” bow) in June 2017,” says Gregory. “My ties then consisted of run-of-the-mill fabrics that—aside from the design shapes of the Butter Knife and subsequent Silver Spoon—had no personality.”

when I realized there was a reason bow ties were not appealing—especially to black men and women. They were boring and that's when I came up with the #nomoboringbows hashtag.” With his bow ties, he wants to challenge stereotypes pertaining to black Americans and other young people of color. He pictures a more “respectable” look for the youth. “What does it mean to be cool?” Gregory questions.



With his artful and unique designs, Gregory wants to change the bow tie game. “My epiphany came last fall

“I developed the asymmetric designs that are uniquely mine. Every tie is singular unto itself and embodies a part of my heart and soul. I think that these days it takes a great deal of soul to stand out, stand up straight and not follow the herd,” he says. “I know many men who are my age and have given up on whatever dream they might have had. What is soul? Mine is still young and aspiring.”

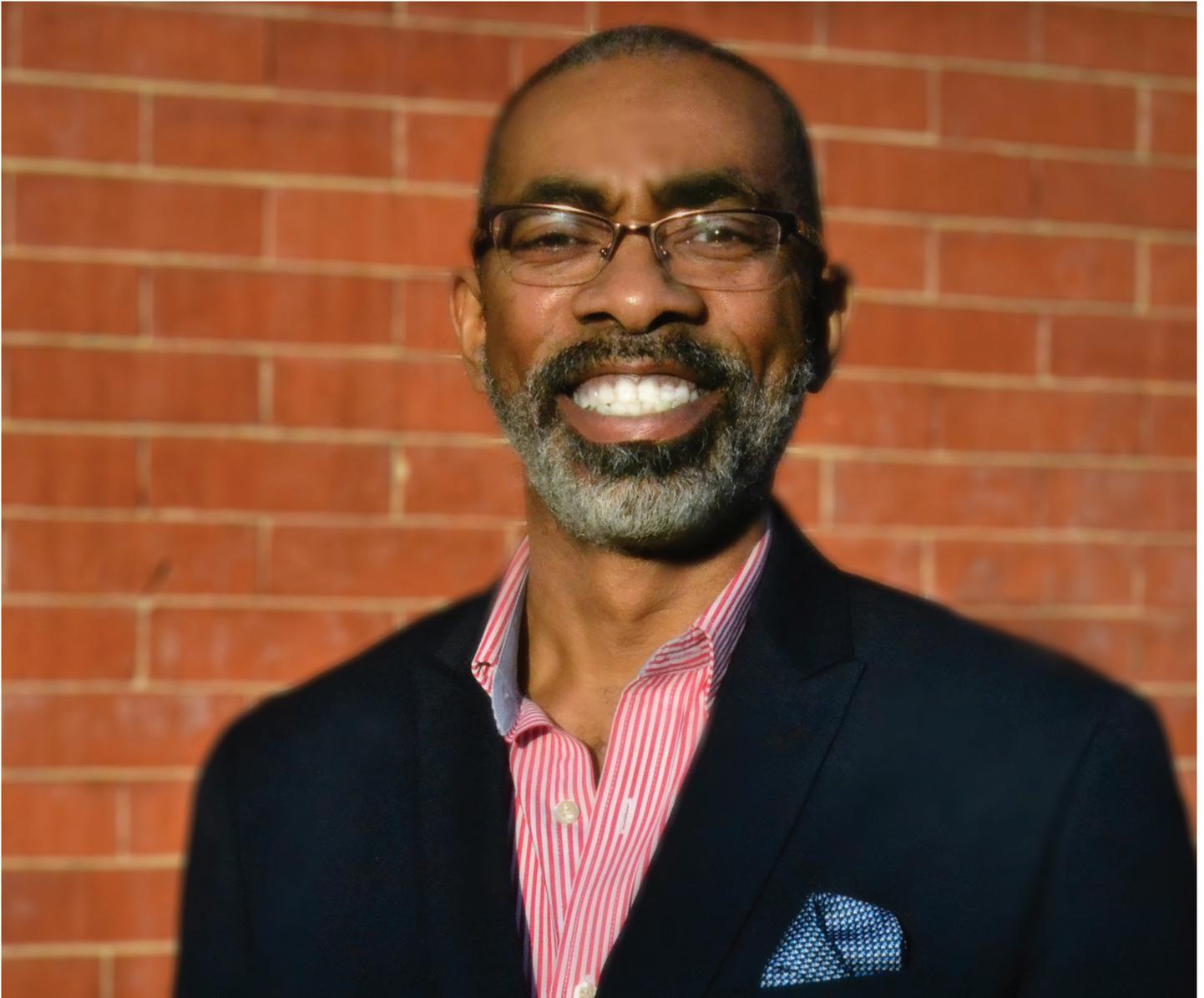
This summer Gregory plans to introduce a line of ascots and cravats and continue to employ fabric from around the world, including various African countries. “I will patiently grow my brand clear in the knowledge that it only takes about ten years to become an ‘overnight success’.” He's aware it takes patience and grit to become successful in the entrepreneur game, but his passion won't let him give up.

Gregory Bruce: The Man Behind the Hashtag #nomoboringbows (continued)

“I know many men who are my age and have given up on whatever dream they might have had. What is soul? Mine is still young and aspiring.”

To learn more about Gregory Bruce and his colorful bow ties, you can visit bowsnouveau.com and follow Gregory on Facebook [@bowsnouveau](https://www.facebook.com/bowsnouveau) and Instagram [@Bows.Nouveau](https://www.instagram.com/Bows.Nouveau).

Art Espey: Innovating the Way We Relax



| “Change people’s lives through innovation.”

Art Espey wants you to have an oasis right in your backyard. His business, Choza, specializes in “luxurious personal relaxation spaces.” They are similar to the trend, She Sheds (“man caves for women”), but are made with the whole family in mind. “Many of our customers asked us for bathrooms and kitchens in their personal relaxation spaces. This moved us into the tiny home market,” Art explains. “Unlike lots of tiny homes, Chozas are not trailers, they are permanent structures built on a solid foundation.” They build modules in their factory. Art compares the process of building these modules to Legos. “We snap them together right on your property. You get a great space without the inconvenience of long on-site disruptions that are standard in traditional construction,” he says. “Our brands - Deeva Dens, Cigar Caves - and Zen Caves are modular and are providing us an opportunity to build a national network for distribution and installation”

Art Espey: Innovating the Way We Relax (continued)



Espey has seen the demand for spaces that imitate the comfort of people's homes and for more environmentally friendly tiny homes. "We felt that our initial experiments with solar options were too expensive, but recently we have been approached by both developers seeking to build environmentally friendly tiny home communities and those who have rural properties and seek to develop camping sites for Airbnb," he says.



To learn more about Art Espey and Choza, you can visit <http://choza.us/> and follow Choza on Instagram [@choza_backyard_oasis](#) and on Facebook [@chozaus](#).



Arts' leadership in business and education has made him an expert in startup culture. He grew up in Detroit and holds a BS from the US Merchant Marine Academy, a MS from Eastern Michigan University, and a MA from the University of Virginia. As a ship navigator and an officer in the USMC, he had the privilege to visit over 50 countries. He uses his experience to guide emerging startups on their journey to being profitable and sustainable. "I am developing an eight-book series focused on helping startup founders and their teams build sustainable business

CHEF'S CORNER

Chef James Boukhalfa



“This French recipe is a perfect appetizer for your next dinner party.”

Ingredients

- 3 cups of sliced mushrooms (assorted – shiitake, cremini, portabella, etc.,)
- 3 cups homemade chicken stock (or beef stock)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tbsp. chopped shallots
- ½ tbsp. chopped garlic
- chopped celery
- ½ tbsp. canola oil
- thyme
- ½ tsp. dried tarragon
- 1 tsp. rosemary
- 1 tsp. chopped parsley
- butter
- ¼ cup sherry wine
- all-purpose flour
- squares sheet of puff pastry (size 4.5×4.5 inches)
- 1 egg wash

Mushroom Soup Croûte

Course: Appetizer

Cuisine: French

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Servings: 3

Preparation

1. In a heated saucepan place the oil and butter. When the butter is melted, add the shallots, garlic, and celery. Sauté and stir for 2 minutes.
2. Add mushrooms, sauté for 3-4 minutes. Add the sherry wine; continue cooking for another 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Sprinkle with flour; cook stirring for another 2 minutes. Add the herbs and the chicken stock. Bring to a boil, turn down the heat and simmer for 10 minutes
4. Season with salt and pepper. Add the heavy cream; bring to a boil, turn down the heat and simmer for another 5 minutes.
5. Taste the soup. Add salt and pepper as needed.
6. Fill up 3 soup cups with the mushroom soup.
7. Brush the outside of the cup with water to help the puff pastry adhere. Place 1 square of puff pastry on top of each bowl and press the edges to adhere.
8. Brush the puff pastry with egg wash. Bake until the pastry is puffed and golden (approximately 15 minutes in a 350-degree oven). Serve.



Restaurant Information: Chef James Boukhalfa is Executive Chef at the [Via Mizner Golf and Country Club](#) in Boca Raton, Florida, which includes the popular Grill Room & Bar.

Clever Communities In Action: Literary Warriors



| “Give the youth the building blocks of life.”

Each month we highlight a community program that aligns with the values of SoulVision Magazine. We believe engaging with one’s community is critical to fostering positive change in the world.

For our July issue, we highlight Clever Communities In Action (CCIA), a nonprofit organization based in Norfolk, VA that focuses on educating and empowering youth and communities of color. Starr Armstrong, the founder and executive director of CCIA, has civil advocacy in her DNA. She is the granddaughter of Freedom Fighters. “Many of CCIA’s programs center around promoting literacy and closing the achievement gap. I am an author, motivational speaker, and youth program development consultant,” she says. With two locations in Norfolk, VA, her Razor Sharp Readers program is an incentivized literacy program that focuses primarily on African-American boys reading in barber shops for credit and eventually a free cut. “The program helps close the literacy gap and inspire lifelong readers,” she explains.

Clever Communities In Action: Literary Warriors (continued)



Starr Armstrong and CIAA highlight “culturally affirming literature” which are books with African-American characters and stories that are relatable to African-American children and written by African-American authors. Barbershops are a place for young and old generations to connect. At one of their locations, Kinetic Kutz and Stylez, CIAA kicked off the summer with a community cookout that emphasizes the importance of literacy. In addition, throughout the summer, guest readers will read to children and engage in a dialogue about books. “We take pride in providing an atmosphere in which children can learn outside of school and receive positive reinforcement for reading. Soon, it will be time for our back-to-school ice cream social and book giveaway. Cool treats and cool reads. We can’t wait!” Starr Armstrong says.

Starr has her eyes on reaching a larger audience with a planned literacy expo. “Clever Communities In Action’s first annual African-American Children’s Literature Expo is an opportunity to expose the community to culturally affirming literature and its value. There will be black authors showcasing and selling their books. We will have multiple panel discussions around the literacy gap that exists among African-American children and how we can use these books to help close gaps. The Expo will also feature a conversation with a nationally renowned author,” she says. The Expo will have interactive book readings, arts and crafts projects for children, face painting, free haircuts, a food truck and a variety of books for sale. “We are elated to put on this event and to work with Norfolk Public Schools, various community partners and all of the talented authors. It is a tremendous win for the community,” she says. Starr Armstrong is working on a children’s book and is available for speaking engagements.

To find out how you can give your support to Clever Communities In Action, visit their website <http://clevercommunities.org/team/starr-armstrong/>, and follow their Instagram [ccia_org](https://www.instagram.com/ccia_org) or follow Starr Armstrong on Facebook [Starr Armstrong](https://www.facebook.com/Starr-Armstrong) and Instagram [@starr_armstrong](https://www.instagram.com/starr_armstrong).

Tim Reid

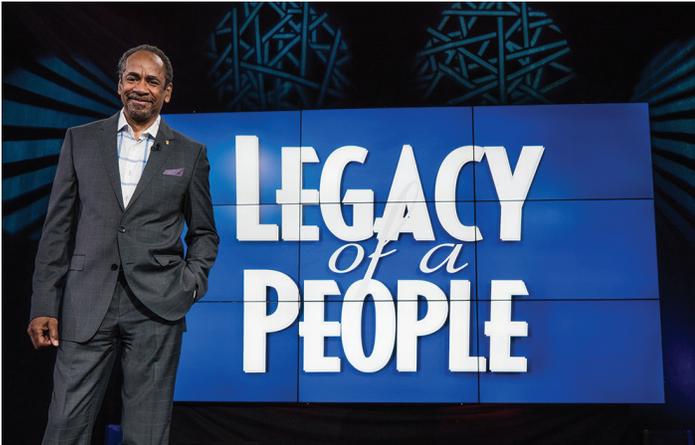


Photography by Trevon Facey

Tim Reid has been a well-known figure on the television sets of American families for generations. From the influential TV sitcom *WKRP in Cincinnati* to OWN's *Greenleaf*, Tim Reid continues to make his presence felt. Tim is one of the most influential voices in the push for less stereotypical portrayals of African Americans on screen. Unhappy with the narrative being pushed, Tim decided to produce his own film, *Once Upon a Time...When We Were Colored*. The film centers around an African-American community in the middle of the segregated Deep South. The film emphasized the social bonds in communities—family, friends, and religion. Because of these themes, the film received universal appeal from audiences of all backgrounds. Film critic, the late Roger Ebert, rated the film a perfect 4/4 stars.

Tim continues to be a positive force in the community. His non-profit, Legacy Media Institute, works with an international group of students and rising filmmakers in creating “media that reflects a diverse and global society.” Tim isn't stopping there. Tim Reid Productions launched a new Media Center and Creative Incubator in the booming Manchester neighborhood in Richmond, VA. After his numerous Honorary Degrees and induction into the National Black College Hall of Fame, Tim Reid has higher ambitions of connecting the African Diaspora. In his quote, Tim highlights the need for representing the African Diaspora in all its diversity and beauty.

Tim Reid (continued)



Photography by Trevon Facey



Photography by Trevon Facey

“Media worldwide is undergoing a dramatic change as it defines social, economic and cultural perceptions for billions of people on a daily basis. I believe that in this atmosphere of media consumption, fragmented audiences, and consolidation of media ownership, lies a critical need to identify new strategies and models for those who passionately seek to tell culturally significant stories. In this legacy period of my life, I’m dedicated to using my 50 years of media experience to create projects that will have a positive impact on society, history, and culture of the African Diaspora.” –**Tim Reid**