

# CELEBRATING BLACK PHILANTHROPISTS

**BUILDING A MILWAUKEE FOR ALL TAKES ALL OF MILWAUKEE**



# A MILWAUKEE FOR ALL NEEDS BLACK VOICES AND VISIONS

In Southeast Wisconsin today, we stand at a turning point that calls on all of us to join together, think bigger and act bolder. Milwaukee's Black voices and visions will have a vital role to play.

With the Greater Together campaign, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation is rallying our region around a collective vision of a Milwaukee for all that centers racial equity – a region in which all of us can achieve our fullest potential and contribute to our shared home's shared success.

That means working together to reduce some of our widest racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities; bringing more people to the table in voice and power; and changing how we make change together.

For generations, Milwaukee's Black communities have supported each other in this very spirit, with a legacy of generosity, solidarity and kinship that has stood strong against systemic injustice.

As we celebrate this extraordinary legacy of Black philanthropy and community-building, we know that our region's greater potential calls on all of us to continue the work – together.

It also calls on us to reimagine philanthropy to better engage the gifts of time, talent, ties and treasure that each of us offers.

**We can be greater together. Join us in the transformational work of building a Milwaukee for all.**



This summer, our first ThriveOn block party invited residents of Milwaukee's Halyard Park, Harambee and Brewers Hill neighborhoods to celebrate the power of partnership on display in the ThriveOn Collaboration, which unites residents and the Foundation in the work of building a healthy and thriving community.



“Philanthropy is leadership in action. As next-generation leaders and philanthropists, our role is to assess what we’ve inherited, scale the practices that have led to the most impact, and be curious. **We also need to have an opinion about what change looks like and have the humility to listen and defer to the vision of those on the ground leading the charge.** When we do, we’ll distribute power in ways that will lead to sustainability, independence and access for everyone.”

## LAUREN FEASTER

CEO, Professional Dimensions



The team at Malaika Early Learning Center (led by executive director Tamara Johnson, second from right) is opening a second location on the ground floor of the ThriveOn King building, expanding access to high-quality childcare and education.

“I’m so passionate about the work that I do and making a difference, but philanthropy is my way of supporting the work that I can’t do with my own hands. Our community is filled with skilled, knowledgeable, compassionate people who help build and grow our community – and I’ve learned from the great leaders before me that supporting them is also a part of my work. **I’ve also learned that when you give from your heart, you’re giving enough.**”

## CORRY JOE BIDDLE

Vice President of Community Affairs, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce; Executive Director, FUEL Milwaukee

## FEATURE

# A LASTING LEGACY

As individuals, **Cory and Michelle Nettles** are successful executives and devoted community leaders. Together, they are philanthropists transforming Milwaukee today and for generations to come.

The couple's philanthropy is driven by a belief, born from personal experience and informed by research, that education can do more than help individual students access a brighter future. It can also uplift entire communities, building brighter futures for all.

The Nettles – both of whom have earned law degrees, built family wealth and are

generously pouring their resources back into Milwaukee – are living proof of how access to high-quality education can send ripples of positive change out into the world.

"I understand the role education had for me in pulling me out of poverty and helping me generate wealth," said Cory Nettles. "We give of our time, our talents, our treasure and our ties because we know that education is the way to change the trajectory of African American kids in our community."

The couple found an ideal partner for their comprehensive approach in the Greater

## GREATER TOGETHER: CORY AND MICHELLE NETTLES

*Many Milwaukeeans credit Cory and Michelle Nettles for inspiring them to share their time, talent, treasure or ties. Who inspires them?*

**Michelle Nettles:** "Giving back is something that my grandmothers taught me at a very young age. It's staying true to that which they have insisted and required of me."

**Cory Nettles:** "Philanthropy is a reflection of who you are, your values and your history. As an African American man born to a poor teenage single mother, my past has shaped me and informs my philanthropy."

**Michelle Nettles:** "Cory is my inspiration. I can't think of another person who serves their community in the way that he does and stands strong in the face of criticism. When people say 'no,' he says 'let's go.'"

*What do you want Milwaukeeans and others to know?*

**Cory Nettles:** "Michelle and I are bringing African American philanthropy to this school, but we cannot do this alone. HFCA needs more people who value this work and are committed to making a difference to step up and join us in this work. We hope that our leadership, involvement and philanthropy will inspire others to partner with HFCA. Our African American youth deserve and need this."

**JOIN US:** We invite you to invest alongside the Foundation in HFCA's catalytic Commit to the Future Campaign while also joining the Foundation's Greater Together Campaign. Please contact your philanthropic adviser to learn more.





Milwaukee Foundation, on whose board Cory Nettles serves (and is a past board chair), and in the Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy (HFCA), where Michelle Nettles is a longtime board member and chair.

Named for noted civil rights leader and education reform advocate **Dr. Howard Fuller**, HFCA is a public charter school dedicated to educating college-ready scholars and future community leaders. In the past decade, 100% of HFCA's scholars, many of whom are Black, have been accepted into college.

"Public school created opportunities for me. How do I create opportunities for boys and girls who look like me?" said Michelle Nettles. "I hope the graduates of Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy transform the world in ways that I can't even conceive."

The Nettles are investing alongside the Foundation in HFCA's \$25 million Commit to the Future campaign to build a state-of-the-art school and increase enrollment. The couple is going "all in" on HFCA as their primary philanthropic priority, sharing their time

and talent as attorneys and executives, their treasure, and their ties to Milwaukee and its business and community leaders.

The couple's philanthropic commitment to HFCA is a tangible expression of gratitude for those on whose shoulders they stand. It also is a promise to support youth today and for years to come.

"If we can create thousands of quality educational options for Black children on the north side and central city of Milwaukee, that's a rich legacy for us to leave behind," said Cory Nettles.

"Every day, our students' resiliency and problem-solving skills are being tested by the environments that they live in and the perceptions that people have of them," said Michelle Nettles. "That resiliency is building agency, the agency builds voice, the voice builds power, the power builds choice. If our students leave our school with a stronger voice and more choices on how they achieve economic stability and how they transform the world, then I consider that a success."



**HONORING**

*the generosity of  
the African American  
community*

**WE ARE**

**WE SHARE OUR TIME**



An equitable, successful community investment plan requires more than capital. It also must center and prioritize residents.

**Those who call Milwaukee's Halyard Park, Harambee and Brewers Hill** neighborhoods home have been sharing their time and insight since day one of the ThriveOn Collaboration, a place-based partnership among the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Medical College of Wisconsin and Royal Capital. The goal? To make a collaborative, generational investment in historically Black neighborhoods to achieve a shared vision of a Milwaukee that is equitable, healthy and thriving for all.

"We have listened intently to our community. We're walking alongside our community and providing resources, hoping to be part of a solution and part of building a community that will allow for brighter futures for everybody," said Ken Robertson, the Foundation's executive vice president, CFO and COO.

**WE SHARE OUR TALENT**



**Jackie Herd-Barber** has long served as an advocate and shared her professional expertise as a volunteer, mentor and leader, including as chair of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation Board.

Now, the Foundation's new Jackie Herd-Barber Award will honor members of the Community Adviser and Ambassador Network (CAAN), composed of racially and ethnically diverse leaders interested in how philanthropy can advance a more equitable future.

The award honors Herd-Barber's talent and commitment to the next generation of leaders.

"My parents always said: 'If you can do more, you should do more,'" she said. "We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and we can all contribute – whether it's time, talent, treasure or ties – to meeting the urgent need of achieving racial justice in our community."



# PHILANTHROPISTS

## WE SHARE OUR TREASURE



“We want a community that values and respects everyone.”

This belief has inspired **Ralph and Margaret Hollmon** to commit their lives to advocacy and volunteerism, and they have cemented their legacy by establishing the Ralph and Margaret Hollmon Family Charitable Fund at the Foundation.

The fund supports scholarships and education initiatives in Milwaukee, with a special focus on the Milwaukee Urban League and the Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation. They know education changes lives, and they’re confident the Foundation is the right partner to help maximize their impact.

“There is no better way to do that than to partner with the Foundation,” said Margaret Hollmon, a longtime educator. “It has a long, distinguished and respected track record in supporting so many things that make our community a better place.”

## WE SHARE OUR TIES



As one of Milwaukee Public Schools’ first Black elementary educators, the late **Gertrude Payton** was a powerful role model to students and her community. She also demonstrates the power – and lasting legacy – of a generous spirit.

Two decades ago, Payton (nee Price) established the Payton-Price Family Fund at the Foundation to offer financial assistance to students at historically Black colleges and universities. She shared her time, participating in donor focus groups during the Foundation’s strategic planning efforts. She also shared her ties, inspiring five fellow members of Milwaukee’s St. Mark AME Church, all donors of color, to join her in establishing Foundation funds.

“People at our church looked at the fund mom helped establish and thought, ‘She’s not Oprah and she’s doing it, so maybe I can,’” said daughter Sheila Payton.

# JOIN US

The Greater Together campaign seeks to raise **\$700 million to build a Milwaukee for all.** The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is YOUR foundation, and the Greater Together campaign is YOUR chance to share your unique gifts in this collaborative work. Together, we can build a Milwaukee for all.

## TIME

- **Engage in the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's public convenings,** including visioning sessions and speaker series
- **Consider joining the Foundation's Community Adviser & Ambassador Network (CAAN),** comprised of racially and ethnically diverse leaders and professional advisers with a passion for philanthropy and service

## TALENT

- **Join the board of a nonprofit** working to advance racial equity and inclusion
- **Provide pro bono consulting services** to a nonprofit of interest

## TREASURE

- **Start or grow a fund** at the Foundation
- **Create a legacy gift** through the Foundation to ensure an impact
- **Coinvest in our campaign priorities** of Early Childhood Care and Education, Housing, Impact Investing, the ThriveOn Collaboration and Flexible Funding

## TIES

- **Consider who in your network would be interested** in learning more about the Foundation and provide an introduction
- **Refer a community leader or professional adviser** to join CAAN



GREATER  
TOGETHER

THE CAMPAIGN TO BUILD A MILWAUKEE FOR ALL

[greatermilwaukeefoundation.org/campaign](http://greatermilwaukeefoundation.org/campaign)

 Greater Milwaukee  
FOUNDATION  
*greater together*