

# FIVE INFLUENTIAL BLACK WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown-Jackson

Sworn in last June, Brown-Jackson became the first Black woman to sit on the Supreme Court. She is the first justice since Thurgood Marshall to have worked as a public defender in her career. She also brings experience from her time as a judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, U.S. Court for the District of Columbia, Vice Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission and her time as a Supreme Court Clerk for Justice Stephen Breyer, the justice whose retirement opened the door for her appointment to the court.

Known for her opinions and expertise regarding sentencing for prison terms, Jackson was approved in a straightforward vote, even in such politically divisive times. Her first session with the court will challenge her to sit on cases involving the federal government's jurisdiction over protected wetlands under the Clean Water Act, provisions of the Voting Rights Act and a case concerning businesses that refuse to serve same-sex couples.

She joined the court at a time when conservatives hold the majority and has a fair bit of turmoil amongst those in its ranks following the leaked opinion that led to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.



## Tiffany Benjamin

As CEO of the Humana Foundation, Benjamin steers an organization focused on addressing social determinants of health as a driver of health equity and finding new ways to co-create healthy communities, sustain advances in health outcomes and eliminate healthcare disparities. (Humana is No. 9 on DiversityInc's Top 50 Companies for Diversity list).

Benjamin joined Humana from Eli Lilly (No. 5 on the Top 50 Companies for Diversity list), where she was the President and Senior Director of Social Impact. There she led Lilly's philanthropic efforts in response to COVID-19 and efforts to improve racial equity. With a law degree from Harvard University and undergraduate degrees in journalism and political science, she has also worked as Senior Investigative Counsel for the U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee.

Currently, Benjamin serves as the Board Vice Chair for the Center of Disaster Philanthropy, an area that is a key focus of the Humana Foundation's work, as well as the Indiana University Lilly School of Philanthropy and the 2024 NBA All Star Game Committee.

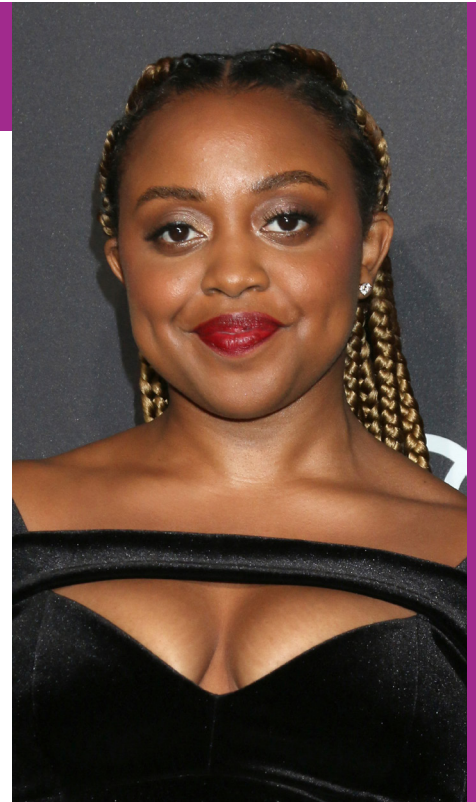
## Quinta Brunson

The creator, executive producer, writer and star of the hit series *Abbott Elementary*, Brunson is the first Black woman to be nominated for three Primetime Emmys in the comedy category. As a result, she earned a place on Time Magazine's Top 100 Most Influential People of 2022.

That's partially because Brunson used her fame in 2022 for good. The Philadelphia native and daughter of a schoolteacher convinced network executives to reallocate part of the marketing budget for *Abbott Elementary* to purchase school supplies for teachers.

Last May, Brunson partnered with Box Tops to crowdsource and share stories of how teachers inspired them during Teacher Appreciation Month. According to a spokesperson for Box Tops, the partnership was a natural fit due to Brunson's passion for "advancing equity in education and helping raise awareness for ways to show up for educators and their schools."

"The show helps shed light on what teachers often go through, especially in under-resourced areas," Brunson said in a statement. "I'm proud to partner with Box Tops on our shared mission of giving back and showing appreciation for teachers."



## Thasunda Brown Duckett

As President and CEO of the Teacher's Insurance and Annuity Association of America or TIAA (No. 8 on the 2022 Top 50 list), Brown Duckett oversees the leading provider of retirement funding and investment services to people working in higher education, healthcare and mission-driven organizations.

She serves on a number of boards, including the National Medal of Honor Museum, The Economic Club of New York, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, the Dean's Advisory Board for the Baylor University Hankamer School of Business and others. She also founded the Rosie and Otis Brown Foundation, in honor of her parents, with a mission to "recognize and reward people who use ordinary means to empower and uplift their community in extraordinary ways."

Throughout her career, her work has been focused on financial inclusion and opportunity, with her passion for helping communities of color close achievement gaps in wealth creation, educational outcomes and career success.

Brown Duckett was named to Savoy Magazine's 2022 Most Influential Black Executives in Corporate America.

"My purpose is to inspire and make an impact. And what anchors me is my faith. What anchors me is my family, my children, my husband, my ecosystem. What anchors me is the art of possibility," Brown Duckett said in an interview with DiversityInc CEOCarolynn Johnson. "That fuels me up. When I know that I have the ability, because we all have it, to be kind, to tell people, 'I see you.' That's recyclable energy. I'm fueling you, and that reaction, that smile, that swag fuels me right back."

## Stacey Abrams

For nearly three decades, Georgia voting red was a foregone conclusion. Voter turnout suffered and there seemed to be little hope for Democrats to gain ground.

In stepped Stacey Abrams with her initial gubernatorial campaign that sought to engage Georgia voters on the grassroots level like no Democrat had managed to do in recent history. By founding the state's two most prominent voting rights organizations, Fair Fight and the New Georgia Project, she set in place an infrastructure that would deliver key victories for Democrats and turn out young voters like never before.

In 2020, the state was one of the deciding factors in Joe Biden being elected President. That result was created by a record turnout among young Black voters, or those between the age of 18-24. It's a demographic that is often hard to mobilize, so with more than 500,000 young Black voters turning out in 2020, suddenly it seemed a paradigm shift had occurred in Georgia's political landscape. In 2022, the largest segment of the state's 7 million registered voters were young people.

Abrams hasn't ruled out running again, but for now has indicated that she will continue her efforts to amplify new voices from traditionally underrepresented communities and expand not only the Democratic base, but the entire electorate.

"The work that I do and the work that I am so committed to is about engaging voters year-round because it's not just about somebody winning an election," Abrams said in her only interview since the midterm elections with Good Morning America. "It's about your life getting better and that should be our mission."



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ? Who is an influential Black female in the world today that you find inspiring?**
- ? Do you feel that representation Black people within your company is insufficient, sufficient or above average?**
- ? What are some of the bigger implications of African Americans not being able to trace their ancestry?**