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Golden  
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*Purpose  
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Legacy*

The Waffle Queen :

# Mrs Glynnis Aubright

with LOVE, LEADERSHIP  
& LEGACY



W.I.B (Where It Begins) is an Independent agency with the aim to always be innovated in each approach taken to projects and making sure excellence is given in a projects execution when it comes to media marketing, branding, networking and management.

Founded by the well experienced and ever growing force; D.C native - Cece Hymes, the most important and integral aspect of W.I.B is that branding for both Creatives and Businesses is taken to the next level with each and every project undertaken.

We've continued to represent a very diverse and well acclaimed roster of emerging talents in the entertainment, and businesses!

With a determined persistence for continued excellence, our Founder – Cece Hymes, with a college Degree in Business Management, has also worked within radio and with many companies such as: RDE Entertainment, H.I.G.H Entertainment and Caribbean Gospel Records Ltd.,

**Cece Hymes**  
Founder

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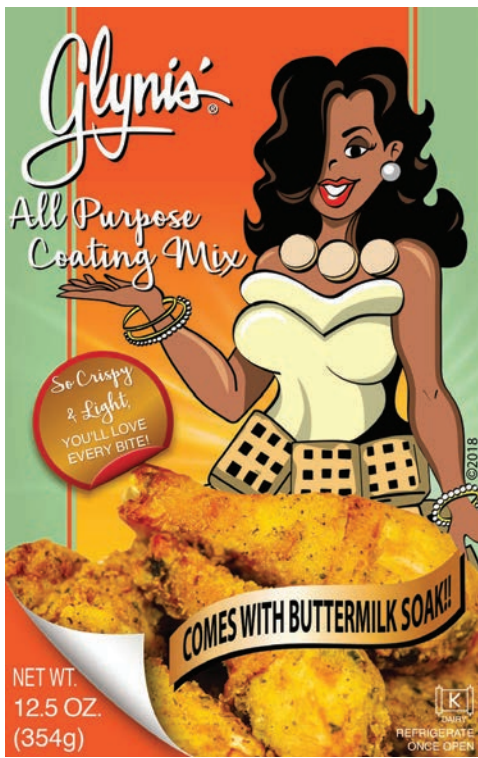


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# GLYNIS' CHICKEN AND WAFFLES

**The Recipe to Sweet Success**



**I** imagine the sound of chicken frying in a cast iron skillet or a metal whisk whipping eggs in a bowl until they are fluffy and light.

For this foodie, these sounds are music in the kitchen. For Glynis Albright, these are the sounds of sweet success.

Her husband, Gerald Albright, is one of the most renowned contemporary and straight-ahead jazz saxophonists of all time. He's been making sweet and savory music for over 35 years; she's been honing her culinary chops and creating sweet and savory recipes for over 35 years as well.

While her famed husband performs a series of contemporary jazz concert dates that will take him around the world, Glynis' line of culinary creations does the same!



Photo by: Jimmy's Photography

Her West Los Angeles kitchen during her sophomore year at UCLA was where it all began.

## The Early Years

When the Albrights were a young and aspiring married couple, they were on a tight budget. As necessity is the mother of invention, Glynis quickly learned how to make meager ingredients into mouth-watering masterpieces.

"I had to be very creative during those years and make that budget stretch. I mastered three kinds of sauces: red, brown, and white. Those sauces would be served over rice or pasta with meat or protein," recalls Glynis. "I even developed recipe mixes to make ordinary fried chicken and waffles into something my family said was very special."

It was her recipe mixes for her succulent fried chicken and tasty waffles that got friends and family members clamoring for a seat at her dinner table.

After their move to Colorado some years later, family members, and friends would often visit - including such notables like Dave Koz, Sheila E, DL Hughley, Alonzo Bodden, Tommy Davidson, Jonathan

Butler, and John Legend (to name a few). What was their number one request during their stay? Her fried chicken and waffles. They simply couldn't imagine leaving town without having them.

"Everyone kept encouraging me to make my coating and waffle mixes available to the public. I really had to pray about it because my focus at that juncture in my life was on my other businesses," said Glynis, which she founded after being diagnosed with and later recovered from leukemia.

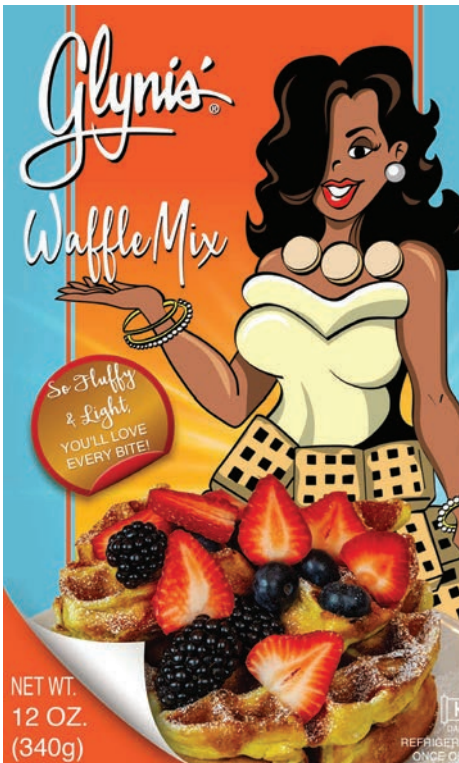
## Just Sweet Enough and Cookie Dots Get Sweeter

Glynis, who was a Biology major at UCLA and now holds a PhD in Natural Health/Food Science, used her background in chemistry and biology to develop Just Sweet Enough® Gourmet Desserts and Cookie Dots®, two companies that use the nutrients from fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices to create a line of desserts infused with more real flavors, juices, oils, zests, and extracts. She says the desserts not only taste good, but they could also be beneficial in the healing process of those combating chronic illnesses and other health challenges.

As President and CEO of Just Sweet Enough® and Cookie Dots®, she led the research and product development that resulted in her unique menu offerings including five different mini pies, 13 cookies varieties, and over 31 different pound cake flavors including her wildly popular Sweet Potato Pound Cake. Her businesses were going well, and she had no shortage of customers, including many celebs (including a couple Presidents of the United States).

But the clamor to take her coating and waffle mixes to market was simply too resounding. After about two years of product and packaging development, she turned her kitchen recipe into a market ready formula.

By 2008, Glynis owned 5 gourmet food lines which all geared towards using REAL ingredients and were known for aiding in healing various cancers and cardiovascular diseases. After being pushed and pushed, Glynis debuted her chicken and waffles to over 4,000 guests (each week) on the Dave Koz Mediterranean cruise in May of 2017. Four months later Glynis' Products, Inc. was born, and it produces all of Glynis' Kitchen® products. Glynis' Waffle Mix and Glynis' All Purpose Coating Mix were featured during a star-studded product launch at the famed Spaghetini Grill and Jazz



Club in Southern California. Glynis says the feedback she received was amazing. “What people like about my waffles is that they are incredibly light and crispy,” said Glynis. “The waffle mix can also be used to make pancakes and crêpes. I am blown away with the success of the products and by the love and support I’ve received.” The coating mix is unlike any other. The box contains two bags: one is the buttermilk brine (you just add water to it), and the other is the seasonings. “In this one package, I give you everything you need to make the most delicious and flavorful fried chicken”, said Glynis. The coating mix can also be used on any meats, including plant-based meats and veggies. Even vegans enjoy her coating mix. They just omit using the buttermilk brine that is included.

## What's Next?

Glynis has taken a hiatus from Just Sweet Enough® Gourmet Desserts, Cookie Dots®, Mrs. Albright's TeaCakes®, Doggie Cookie Dots®, and Lina's Nutty Treats® to travel the world as The Waffle Queen. For the past 7 years she has been touring, sharing her testimony as a leukemia survivor, and promoting her All Purpose Coating Mix and Waffle Mix. Food shows, speaking engagements, global appearances, cruises, music festivals – you name it – you never know when and where The Waffle Queen will show Up!!

Just check the menu or specialty grocery shelves as you travel the United States because Glynis' Chicken and Waffles just might be served at your favorite restaurant and/or you might see her mixes displayed in your favorite store. Currently, she is working on getting her Waffles to

be served at major hotels and cruise lines. Currently, Glynis' Chicken and Waffles are served at Trestles Coastal Bistro in Castle Rock, Colorado. Trestle's is a 5-Star restaurant and have had Glynis' Chicken and Waffles have been on their menu for the past couple years, every day from 9am-2pm. The Country Club of Castle Pines is a private club, perched nearly 7,000 feet, located inside The Village of Castle Pines gated community. Glynis' light and airy waffles are served during their weekend brunches and special luncheons.

The first quarter of 2026, look for Glynis' podcast entitled “The Stone Collector”. “The Stone Collector”, a metaphor for resilience when life throws you stones in the form of illness, judgment, and/or adversity. Instead of throwing them back, Glynis has collected them, learned from them, and have crafted them into beautiful



Photo by: Jimmy's Photography



Photo by: Jimmy's Photography



Photo by: Brandon Albright / Snow Desert Productions

Brandon Albright, son, is an award-winning digital cinematographer and is one of the top film editors/ videographers in Colorado. He's the founder and owner of Snow Desert Productions, a full service video production company. Brandon is also a PROgolfer.

### Chicken and Waffles

Glynis' Waffle Mix and Glynis' All Purpose Coating Mix are available at [GlynisKitchen.com](http://GlynisKitchen.com). There you will find instructions to make her light and crispy crowd-pleasing waffles, crisp and juicy chicken, and other treats.

stories, wisdom, and nourishment. The podcast will blend soulful storytelling, survivor strength, and healing through food and conversation. The Stone Collector's mission is to inspire, uplift, and equip both women and men to transform the toughest challenges into powerful stories and meaningful action, all while nourishing their bodies and souls through natural, healing foods. The podcast will be a safe place to congregate, and you wouldn't want to miss out!

## More about Glynis Albright

Gerald and Glynis met in junior high school at the age of 13. They met after her family relocated to Los Angeles from New Orleans, Louisiana. The two of them became an item the following year in junior high school and they have been together ever since. The Albright's have been married for almost 44 years, and have been together as a couple since June, 1972.

Gerald is now considered as a music legend with his current single, "Living My Best Life" being #1 on FOUR different jazz charts for the past 4 weeks. He owns Bright Music Records and is a Grammy-Award winning artist with about 24 CDs to date. Selina Albright, daughter, is also in the music industry and lives in London. Selina has her own band and tours with other major artists.



Photo by: Elle's Photos



# DR. JAMES & DR. SYLVIA BOBLAK

## **Tell everyone who you are and what you do?**

**Dr. Sylvia:** Hi, I'm Sylvia Boblak. I'm a Doctor of Pharmacy, co-owner of A Teaspoon of Wisdom, and a mother to our son, Huckleberry. In addition to my Western pharmaceutical training,

I completed Ayurvedic studies at the Kerala Ayurveda Academy, which deeply expanded my understanding of what true preventative care looks like.

I specialize in helping people create health through mindful nutrition, daily routines, and lifestyle practices that support the

body's natural rhythms. After years in community pharmacy, I felt called to move beyond symptom management and focus on education, prevention, and whole-body healing. A large part of my work is centered on fertility, pregnancy, and family wellness, supporting parents so their babies can enter the world in

the most peaceful and supported way possible.

**Dr. James:** For nearly two decades, I've served my community as a Doctor of Pharmacy, and during that time I've watched health care shift more and more toward prescription drug dependency. As this shift occurred, first-line approaches like lifestyle changes, nutrition, and natural supplementation was slowly pushed aside. I began to see a pattern of overprescribing, where medications are used to manage the side effects of other medications, creating a cycle that often moves people further away from true health.

That realization is what led us to develop Health Made in America and our educational platform, A Teaspoon of Wisdom. My goal is to help people take back ownership of their health by reintroducing safe, effective, and well-researched natural options. Many health care providers feel uncomfortable recommending supplements or herbs simply because they don't take the time to study the available research. As a pharmacist, I've done that work, and I feel confident guiding individuals toward natural solutions that support balance and may help avoid prescription medications whenever possible.



### What experiences in community pharmacy opened your eyes to gaps in modern health care?

**Dr. James:** Working in community pharmacy exposed me to several gaps in modern health care that fundamentally changed how I view the system. One of the most troubling experiences was the pressure placed on pharmacists to meet corporate vaccine quotas. Patient care often took a back seat to metrics, and there were real consequences for not hitting targets, regardless of whether vaccination was appropriate for the individual in front of us. That environment made it clear that business interests were frequently prioritized over personalized, thoughtful care.

I also witnessed repeated disconnects between prescribed medications and their side effects. One experience that stood out involved a patient with elevated liver enzymes whose physician dismissed the possibility that their statin could be the cause, despite well-documented evidence that statins can impact liver function. After the patient stopped the medication, their liver enzymes returned to normal. Seeing outcomes like that reinforced how often medication-related issues are overlooked or minimized.

**Dr. Sylvia:** During my years in community pharmacy, I came to believe that true health is best achieved with the least possible medication burden, both for quality of life and financial well-being. In theory, we are taught that medications should be discontinued once health is restored, but in real-world practice, I rarely saw that goal pursued. In fact, throughout my entire career, I witnessed only one case where a physician actively worked to get a patient off medications.

That patient was a type 2 diabetic who successfully discontinued her insulin injections, and the transformation was unforgettable. She radiated joy, confidence, and renewed physical and mental health. That was one of my main experiences as a pharmacist that revealed a brutal reality: modern health care prioritizes long-term disease management over genuine reversal and healing.

**Was there a moment when you realized prescriptions alone weren't solving the deeper issues you were seeing?**



**Dr. James:** Yes, that realization came from watching the same patients return month after month with longer medication lists but no real improvement in their overall health. Conditions were being managed, but nothing was truly resolving. Instead, new prescriptions were often added to address either worsening symptoms or side effects from existing medications. Over time, it became clear that prescriptions alone weren't addressing the root causes of disease. I wasn't seeing people get healthier. I was seeing them become more dependent on medications.

### How did your personal journey with Ayurveda, nutrition, and nervous-system support change the way you view health?

**Dr. Sylvia:** In 2010, I was introduced to Ayurvedic principles, and they resonated with me immediately and intuitively. Ayurveda taught me foundational truths that still guide my work today: food is powerful medicine, healing is never one-size-fits-all, pharmaceuticals often act as temporary support rather than true



solutions, and mindset plays a critical role in health. I began listening to my body, nourishing myself with foods that truly supported me, and moving in ways that felt restorative. Within six months, years of heartburn, sinus issues, and skin conditions resolved, and I realized that true health is about supporting the body as a whole, not just masking symptoms. This experience shaped my philosophy and the way I now help others reclaim their vitality.

**As a husband-and-wife team, how did your shared experiences shape the vision for A Teaspoon of Wisdom?**

**Dr. James & Dr. Sylvia:** We had long planned to create an educational arm for our company, Health Made in America, but it wasn't until our own pregnancy that we realized exactly where we needed to start. So much critical information wasn't being shared or offered to parents-to-be, and we wanted to fill that gap. We knew that if we were planning on providing high-quality health education for our society, it was critical to start at the very beginning.

**Why was it important for you to create an educational platform rather than another treatment-based service?**

**Dr. Sylvia:** Education is the foundation for true, lasting health. I've seen firsthand that people who understand how their bodies

work, and how nutrition, lifestyle, and mindset impact well-being, are empowered to make choices that actually support healing. Treatments alone can manage symptoms, but without knowledge and guidance, individuals remain dependent on interventions rather than becoming active participants in their own health. Education gives people the tools to prevent issues, restore balance, and take ownership of their wellness. I believe this is far more powerful than any single Treatment.

**Dr. James:** For me, creating an educational platform was important because ultimately, only the patient can make decisions about their own health. As health professionals, we provide guidance, share knowledge, and make recommendations, but in the end, it's the patient who receives the care and has the right to choose their path. That decision belongs to no one else—not family, not friends, not even well-meaning practitioners. Education empowers people to make informed choices for themselves, giving them confidence and control over their health rather than leaving them dependent on someone else's decisions.

**How do you balance Western pharmacy training with Eastern Ayurvedic principles?**

**Dr. Sylvia:** I fully embrace the power of pharmaceutical interventions in acute situations, such as surgery or traumatic accidents, where they can be lifesaving and essential. But I also know that medications can only take a patient so far. Without proper foundational tools like nutrition, lifestyle practices, stress management, and support for long-term vitality, people remain susceptible to future health challenges. This combined perspective allows me in helping patients not just survive, but thrive.

**How do you help clients feel confident navigating both medical advice and lifestyle-based care?**

**Dr. James:** In my experience, medical recommendations are most effective when they have a foundation in lifestyle-based strategies like nutrition, movement, stress management, and daily habits. I guide patients to understand why a treatment is recommended and what lifestyle changes can support or even reduce the need for certain interventions.

**How do you define success for the families you serve?**

**Dr. Sylvia:** When families feel connected, calm, happy, and confident in the choices they make for themselves and their children, I know they are truly thriving. Success is seeing them empowered to trust their instincts, make informed decisions, and build a home environment that supports happiness, health, and well rounded wellness for everyone.

**What do you hope people gain (not just physically, but emotionally and mentally) from A Teaspoon of Wisdom?**

**Dr. James:** I want people to see the possibilities beyond simply managing dis-ease toward actually healing it. When people begin to understand what's possible, feel confident in their choices, and experience real improvement in their vitality and wellbeing, that's the outcome I hope for.

**Dr. Sylvia:** My hope is that we can help people gain more than physical health. I want them to feel emotionally supported, confident, and empowered in their choices going forward. I want families to feel peace, clarity, and trust in their own intuition as they learn to care for themselves and their loved ones. When someone feels stronger, calmer, and more hopeful in their health journey, that's true success to me!



**Tell the readers how we can follow your journey.**

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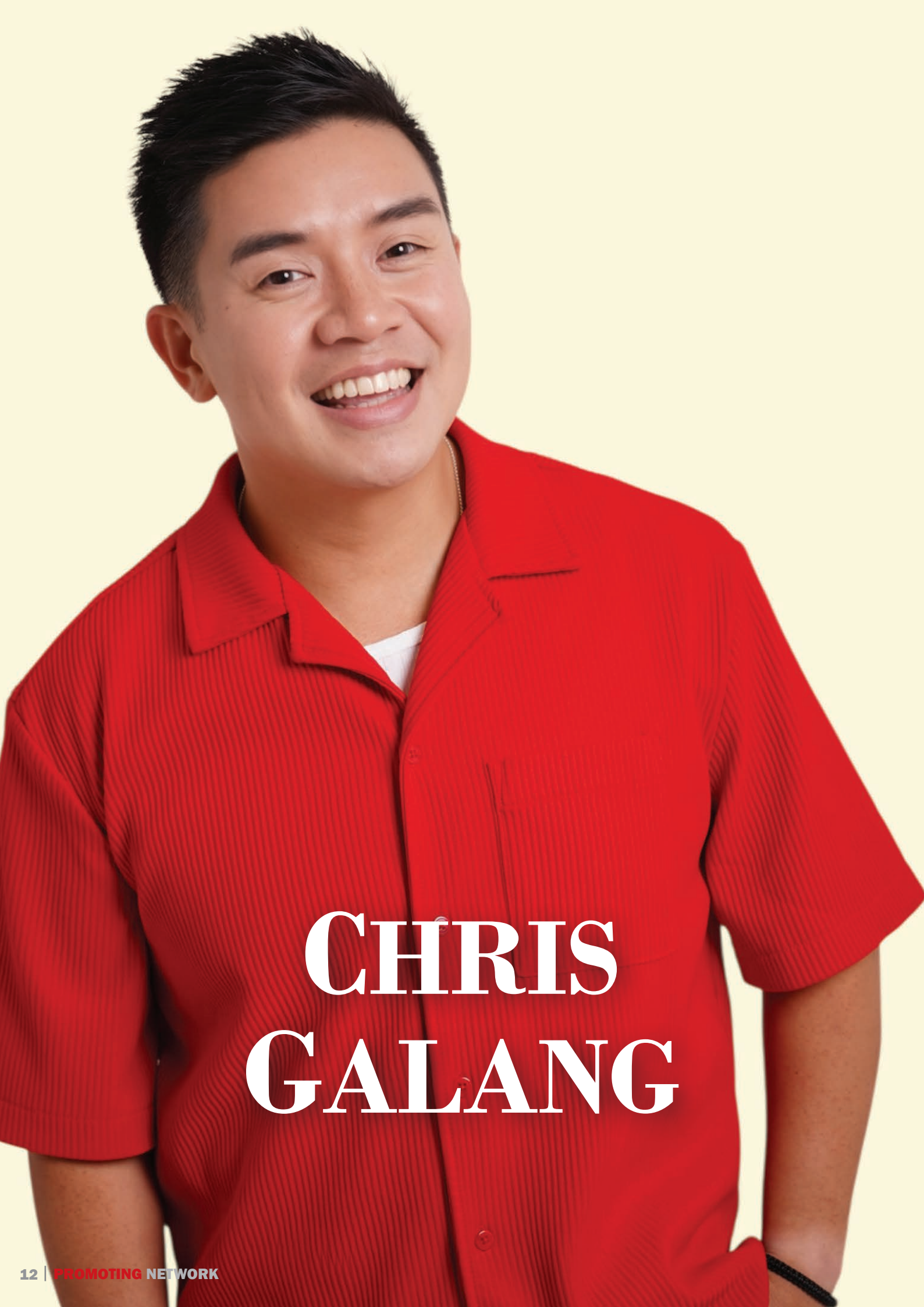
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# CHRIS GALANG



**Tell everyone who you are and what you do.**

My name is Chris Galang, I'm the founder of Kampeon Water. We are a premium, vitamin-enhanced sparkling water in Filipino flavors, like Calamansi, Melon and Lychee. With added B-vitamins, Vitamin C and magnesium, Kampeon is more than a sparkling water, it's a celebration of culture, connection and everyday wellness.

**You've shared that you didn't fully reconnect with your Filipino heritage until adulthood— what sparked that desire to return to your roots?**

It wasn't one specific moment, it was more of a slow realization over time. As I've gotten older, I've learned to trust my inner voice more, and it kept nudging me back toward my roots. The desire to reconnect with my Filipino heritage was always there, but after turning 40,

I decided to really make it a priority. I wanted the next chapter of my life to be about feeling more grounded and complete, so that by the time I hit 50, I'd feel like a fuller version of myself.

**Growing up in Southern California as the son of Filipino immigrants, how did you navigate the balance between assimilation and cultural identity?**

Growing up, I don't think I consciously thought of it as a balance between assimilation and cultural identity. I do remember a moment in school when I told friends my middle name was "Paul" instead of "Paolo," because at the time I felt my real name sounded too ethnic. That said, I grew up in very diverse environments and schools, so I never felt lesser or excluded because of who I was. Looking back, my desire to reconnect with my Filipino roots feels less like a correction and more like a positive signal, that I was raised with enough self-awareness to want to understand and embrace all the parts that make me who I am.

**What memories or moments from your childhood most influenced the creation of Kampeon Water?**

Like many Filipino families, some of my strongest childhood memories are rooted in food. To this day, when I'm with family, the day still revolves around what we're eating next and when. I think back to family parties, time spent in the kitchen with my grandmother, and looking forward to a cold glass of my dad's melon sa malamig. Those moments directly shaped what Kampeon is and what I want it to represent. At its core, the brand is meant to be a celebration, a way to create and honor shared moments with friends and family.

**Why was it important for you to build a brand that doesn't just reference culture — but center it?**

For me, it was important that the brand didn't just reference culture, which can easily become surface-level. I also didn't want it to feel like choosing one identity over another: Filipino or American. Both are central to who I am, and Kampeon is about honoring the space where those identities meet, a story I know many others share. By centering culture and staying open about what I know and what I'm still learning, the brand becomes a platform for exploration and sharing, not just my story, but a broader conversation about identity, heritage, and belonging.





**You spent nearly 20 years in small business banking — how did that experience prepare you for launching your own brand?**

The best part of that job was being able to get an inside look at what entrepreneurship looks like, the highs and lows, and everything in between. From that experience, I knew how to start a business on paper, but I also saw firsthand the emotional reality of building something from nothing and how conviction, persistence, and adaptability often matter more than the perfect plan.

**As Filipino culture becomes increasingly visible in mainstream spaces, where do you see Kampeon fitting**

**into that movement?**

I get genuinely excited whenever I see Filipino culture gaining more visibility, whether it's a Filipino restaurant earning a Michelin star or a new Filipino-inspired product showing up at a place like Trader Joe's. It feels like momentum, and we hope

Kampeon can contribute to that story in a meaningful way. At the same time, we want to help move the conversation beyond the idea that Asian cultures are a monolith. There's so much depth and diversity within each country, and we believe people are ready to go past "Asian-inspired" and really engage with the unique stories, flavors, and histories each culture has to offer.

**If your younger self could see Kampeon today, what do you think he'd feel most proud of?**

I think he'd be most proud that I finally gave myself permission to bring all parts of who I am into one place. Seeing Kampeon today, I think my younger self would feel proud that I took the risk to build something honest and a challenge that honors where I come from, what I've learned, and the person I'm still becoming.

**When people drink Kampeon, what do you ultimately hope they experience — beyond the flavor?**

First, I hope they feel the fun and sense of celebration that's at the heart of the brand. Kampeon is meant to feel uplifting, something that adds a little brightness to your day. Beyond that, I hope each can becomes a small reminder to slow down and appreciate life, even in the middle of busy or ordinary moments. It's about recognizing the small wins, getting through a tough day, taking a moment for yourself, or showing up in ways that matter. If Kampeon can help people pause, reflect, and feel a bit more present or encouraged, then it's doing more than just delivering great flavor.

**Where can the readers follow your journey?**

We'd love for the readers to follow us on Instagram, @kampeonwater, and sign up for our mailing list at kampeonwater.com. We're so excited for the community we're building in our small corner of the internet.

**"Kampeon" means champion in Tagalog — what does that word represent to you personally?**

I love the word Kampeon because it holds so many layers. To me, it represents resilience, showing up for yourself, your health, and your community even when no one's watching. It's about everyday wins, progress over perfection, and honoring the quiet strength it takes to keep going. That idea of championing yourself and others felt deeply aligned with both my personal journey and what I wanted the brand to stand for.

**What story do you hope people feel when they pick up a can of Kampeon?**

I hope they feel a sense of encouragement and connection. Like someone is rooting for them in the middle of their everyday life. Kampeon is about the small moments of care for yourself and a reminder that you're allowed to show up as you are. If picking up a can makes someone feel seen, grounded, or a little more proud of where they come from and where they're going, then the brand is doing its job.



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# CHER OLIVOS

## **Tell everyone who you are and what you do.**

I'm Cher Olivos, a wellness coach and the owner of BeBalanced Natural Hormone Weight Loss in Los Angeles. I help women who feel stuck—dealing with stubborn weight, fatigue, bloating, mood swings, and hormone-related symptoms—find real, sustainable results through a natural, hormone-supportive approach. My work focuses on helping women restore balance from the inside out so they can lose abnormal weight, regain energy, and feel like themselves again—without injections, extreme exercise, or quick-fix diets.



**Your wellness journey began after experiencing fatigue, mood changes, weight gain, and burnout following motherhood. When did you first realize that what you were feeling wasn't "just normal"?**

I realized it wasn't "just normal" when I noticed I was doing everything I was told to do—eating cleaner, moving more, trying to rest—but I still felt exhausted, emotionally drained, and disconnected from myself. The weight wasn't responding, my mood was unpredictable, and my energy felt nonexistent. It hit me that this wasn't simply "mom life" or aging—it was my body trying to tell me something deeper was off.

**What led you to start searching for deeper answers about your health?**

The breaking point was feeling like I had to accept a version of myself that didn't feel like me. I knew I couldn't pour into my family, my purpose, or my future if I felt depleted every day. I started searching for answers because I wanted to understand what my body needed—not just mask symptoms. I didn't want temporary fixes. I wanted real healing and real change.

**How did completing the BeBalanced program transform not just your body — but your confidence, outlook, and identity?**

The physical transformation was powerful—my body finally responded and the inflammation, weight, and fatigue started lifting—but the deeper change was emotional. I regained confidence because I wasn't fighting my body anymore. I started trusting myself again. I felt proud, clear-minded, and capable. My identity shifted from "barely surviving" to someone who was strong, intentional, and in control of her health.

**You've said that after the program you finally felt like yourself again. What did "returning to yourself" look like emotionally?**

Returning to myself meant feeling steady again—emotionally and mentally. I wasn't snapping, crying randomly, or waking up already overwhelmed. I felt calmer. I had patience again. I didn't feel like I was living in survival mode. It felt

like coming back home to who I truly was before the burnout—only stronger because I understood myself and my body in a deeper way.

**Many women are told that symptoms like fatigue, brain fog, anxiety, and weight gain are simply "part of aging." When did you first begin to question that narrative?**

I questioned it when I saw too many women suffering silently and being told to "eat less and move more" or "it's normal after kids." Normal doesn't mean healthy. Just because it's common doesn't mean it should be accepted. When I experienced it personally and then saw how quickly things improved once hormones and gut health were supported, I knew that narrative wasn't truth—it was simply what women were being conditioned to tolerate.

**Why do you think hormonal imbalance in women is so often overlooked or dismissed in traditional healthcare conversations?**

Women's symptoms are often complex and layered, and traditional care can be more reactive than preventive. Hormonal imbalance doesn't always show up clearly in basic tests, and many women are told they're fine because they fall into "normal ranges." But those ranges don't always reflect what's optimal. Also, women are often expected to push through, so suffering becomes normalized. The gap is that many women need real support beyond quick prescriptions—and they deserve providers who listen deeply.

**You work with women across perimenopause, menopause, and post-menopause.**

**What unique challenges do women face in each stage?**

- Perimenopause: Women often feel confused because symptoms come and go—weight gain, mood swings, anxiety, insomnia, and irregular

cycles. They're still juggling family and career while their hormones start shifting.

- Menopause: This is where symptoms can feel more intense and persistent—hot flashes, fatigue, belly weight, low libido, and sleep issues. Many women feel like their body changed overnight.
- Post-menopause: Women often struggle with ongoing weight resistance, slower metabolism, inflammation, and long-term hormonal depletion that impacts bone density, mood, and energy. Many feel discouraged because they've tried everything and nothing sticks.

The common thread is that women want to feel vibrant again—not just “get through it.”

### How do you see natural hormone wellness evolving in the years ahead?

I believe natural hormone wellness is becoming the future—not because it's trendy, but because women are demanding better. We're moving into an era where gut health, inflammation, blood sugar balance, and lifestyle-based hormone support will be foundational. Women are realizing they don't need to choose between suffering or extreme solutions. They want safe, sustainable options that help them feel good now and protect their health long-term.

### What is your long-term vision for expanding BeBalanced LA across Southern California and beyond?

My vision is to build a trusted wellness movement across Southern California where women can access real support, education, and community. I want BeBalanced LA to become known for results, integrity, and transformation—not just weight loss, but whole-body confidence and healing. Long-term, I see multiple locations, a strong coaching team, and a larger platform where we educate women nationwide and normalize hormone conversations in a powerful way.

If you could leave women with one message about their bodies, energy, and worth—what would it be?



-34

Erica K.

LOST 34 LBS. AND  
IMPROVED HER NIGHT  
SWEATS, ANXIETY,  
AND INSOMNIA

You are not broken—and you are not meant to live exhausted, anxious, and unhappy in your own body. Your symptoms are not your identity; they're signals. You deserve to feel strong, clear, energized, and confident. And no matter your age, it is never too late to heal, reclaim your health, and become the version of yourself you've been missing.

### Where can the readers follow your journey?

You can follow me on Instagram and TikTok at @BeBalanced\_with\_Cher, where I share hormone wellness education, client transformations, and tips for natural weight loss and energy support. You can also learn more and connect with us on [BeBalancedLA.com](http://BeBalancedLA.com) and book a free consultation.



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All our products and accessories have been produced without the use of animal slaughter by-products. No matter the reason for choosing vegetarian products, people looking for cruelty-free beauty can be confident that our products will not compromise their ethics.

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[Thebodyshopathome-usa.com/DrLisaSmith](http://Thebodyshopathome-usa.com/DrLisaSmith)

A professional portrait of Travis L. Williams, a Black man with a shaved head and a well-groomed beard. He is wearing a dark navy blue pinstriped suit jacket over a white dress shirt and a black necktie. A patterned pocket square is visible in his jacket. He has his hands clasped in front of him and is wearing a silver watch on his left wrist, a silver bracelet on his right wrist, and a large diamond-encrusted ring on his right hand. The background is a light-colored, geometric pattern.

# TRAVIS L. WILLIAMS

## **Tell everyone who you are and what you do.**

My name is Travis L. Williams, I am the CEO and founder of HBCU All-Stars LLC, an Atlanta-based, Black-owned sports marketing, events, media, and television production company committed to elevating HBCU basketball on national and global stages.

I am a loving, caring, protective, compassionate, and giving husband, father, friend, colleague, and philanthropist [www.TravisLWilliamsFoundation.com](http://www.TravisLWilliamsFoundation.com) and [www.HBCUAllStarsLLC.com](http://www.HBCUAllStarsLLC.com)

I live a life of faith, family, service, and purpose with my wife, **Kya Williams**, our company's **CFO and Co-Founder**, and my two adorable and musically talented children, **Teagan and TJ**, both 8th and 7th grade students at the Ron Clark Academy, and HBCU All-Stars Ambassadors.

## **Our family show the WORLD HBCUs MATTER and helps so many goals, dreams, and aspirations come true.**

As a former NCAA Division I & II head men's basketball coach at two esteemed HBCUs, Tennessee State and Fort Valley State Universities, I spent over 27 years developing championship programs, mentoring athletes, and shaping future leaders. My coaching and athletics legacy includes more than 300 players who have advanced to their professional careers in the NBA, G-League, and international leagues, as well as life after basketball.

My wife Kya and I founded HBCU All-Stars LLC, a GOD-driven vision in 2019 to change the trajectory of our prestigious and tradition rich HBCUs, and provide Exposure, Access, Recognition, Opportunities, Resources, and Results (E.A.R. & O.R.R.) for our hardworking, talented, ambitious students, student-athletes and brilliant coaches.

## **2026 HBCU All-Star Game Experience in Indianapolis during Final Four Weekend**

This GOD-driven vision led to the launch of the first ever HBCU All-Star Game during the 40+ history of the Men's NCAA Final Four Tournament Championship, a nationally televised event on CBS Sports, CW Sports, and streamed on Paramount+, NBC Universal, and Peacock. This national event during College Basketball's Biggest Weekend debuted during the 2022 Final Four weekend in New Orleans, with back to back sell-outs in 2023 Houston and 2024 Phoenix. In 2025, we hosted the first ever women's HBCU All-Star Game in an epic doubleheader match-up. Now in two months we will be celebrating the 5th Year Anniversary at Corteva Coliseum located at Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis on Sunday, April 5, 2026 during Final Four Weekend.

As the centerpiece of the five-day **HBCU All-Star Game & Experience**, the game showcases the nation's top HBCU talent. However, our work with HBCU All-Stars addresses a notable gap while creating a national platform around the HBCU brand and culture, amplifying Black college excellence in athletics, bands, cheerleaders, dance team, College admissions Fair, Legacy court dedication, welcome reception, awards ceremony, cap & gowns donation to graduating high school seniors, and community engagement to the host city. The event has become a direct pipeline for HBCU athletes, who receive less national media and market exposure and with over 70% of its alums advancing to professional basketball.

Beyond the All-Star Game, we have expanded the platform with key initiatives such as the HBCU All-Stars National NBA Scouting Combine & Pro Day, Legacy Court Dedication, College Admissions and Scholarship Fair, HBCU All-Stars Foundation awarding scholarships to prospective high school students interested in attending HBCUs, and current HBCU students in need of financial assistance, Social Justice and Civil Rights Panel Discussion, Players, Coaches, and Community Awards, HBCU All-Stars Coaches Clinic, and NABC/HBCU Assistant Coaches professional

development to create direct career pathways for HBCU players and coaches.

In November 2025, we hosted the fourth annual ATL Has Something to Say HBCU All-Stars Challenge, a premier Black college basketball sports event. It was launched in November 2022 to focus on the best HBCUs and metro ATL high school teams, students, student-athletes, and coaches across the country and in the great city of Atlanta and Fulton County. Our HBCU All-Stars vision continues to highlight, showcase, and expose HBCUs, metro high school teams, students, student-athletes, coaches, administrators, parents, and alums and bring visibility to our prestigious and tradition rich HBCUs, brilliant coaches, and respective academics and athletics programs. We bring big-time recruiting, youth development, prestige, credibility, leadership, business, and entrepreneurship to these historic sporting events for some of the best HBCU and high school basketball coaches and students, and student-athletes representing MEAC, SWAC, CIAA, SIAC, Independent schools Tennessee State, Hampton, North Carolina A&T State Universities, and NAIA.

## **ATL Has Something to Say HBCU All-Stars Challenge is a premier Black college basketball sports event**

The ATL Has Something to Say HBCU All-Stars Challenge continues to magnifying community outreach and initiatives, financial commitment, resources, and love for HBCUs, prospective Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County Schools students interested in attending HBCUs, current HBCU students, student-athletes, and academic scholarships, and celebrate Black History, Black Excellence, and Black Cultural Experiences. It is not just about basketball, and has the many HBCU cultural experiences surrounding the game for fans and supporters. There is HBCU All-Stars High School Battle of Bands Competition, Power of HBCU Sports Symposium, Welcome Reception,

College Admissions Fair, and Student-Athlete Empowerment Seminar for middle and high school students, and student-athletes, Community Outreach, Initiatives, Civil Rights Panel Discussion, Legacy Court Dedication, and much more. The ATL Has Something to Say HBCU All-Stars High School Challenge Game Day Experience Festival is big-time game atmosphere and includes live music, DJ's, College Admissions & Scholarship Fair, Black Business vendors, battle of the bands, dance and cheer competition, Divine 9, Greeks competition and stroll-offs, activities, games, and much more.

## **Expanding HBCU Basketball on a Global Stage**

In June 2024, **HBCU All-Stars** pushed the boundaries and created new opportunities for HBCU athletes. We made history by launching the **HBCU All-Stars International Tour**, and sending top HBCU All-Star Game alums to **Quai 54 in Paris**, the world's largest streetball tournament, in partnership with **Jordan Brand**. This landmark initiative introduced HBCU talent to global audiences, reinforcing my commitment to expanding professional opportunities beyond the U.S.

## **Growing up in Tifton, Georgia, what values or lessons from your childhood still guide you today?**

I had a very challenging childhood as a young boy growing up Tifton, Georgia, especially after the passing of my loving, caring, beautiful, and God-fearing mother Patricia Ann Williams due to lupus complications. She was a single mother and passed away at the untimely age of 30 years. I was a momma's boy and had no father-figure in my life. My brother Bernard, sister Jennifer, and I moved a number of times with different family members during those childhood days.

As I look back at my childhood, I am truly blessed to know that GOD did not give up on me because I had a praying mother and grandmother that instilled

a strong spiritual foundation in me as a young man that guides me today!

## **When you reflect on your journey from student-athlete to entrepreneur and philanthropist, what defining moment stands out the most?**

One of the most important moments in my journey in life was having my high school basketball coaches Tommy Blackshear and Erick Willis pouring into me while I was in high school. They truly believed in me as a person, not just a student-athlete, and put me on the right track for college, and then developed me into a pretty good basketball player, which helped me in signing a full basketball scholarship to attend Georgia State University. During this time, I was the first person to attend college and graduate college with two degrees.

## **You finished your Georgia State basketball career with more than 1,000 points and earned All-Academic honors — how did academics influence your athletic discipline?**

I am truly grateful for my basketball career, my college, and high school coaches and teammates that helped me along.

I feel like I overachieved athletically on the court when I look back on my college career, especially scoring over 1,000 points. At that time, I was one of the top 25 scorers in GSU history.

I was not the flashiest, most athletic, or most talented player during my playing days but developed throughout my career on and off the court. I always believed in working extremely hard and getting better and better each day.

On top of that, I had an outstanding work ethic instilled in me during my high schools days that transitioned well to college on and off the court, especially in the classroom. I red-shirted my freshman year and got a chance to get acquainted and adjusted to ATL coming from South Georgia...so it became an adjustment period with basketball and the rigors of my academic schedule. I made sure that I played extremely hard at all times when I transitioned to college and to become the best student-athlete possible. It was

an extremely difficult process in the beginning but so rewarding in the end when I got my opportunity to play at a very high level, especially on the defensive end.

I also had the same mentality when it came to my academics because I wanted to be known as much for my academic success off the court, just as much on the court. I knew attending college was bigger than me because I was the **FIRST** to attend college in my immediate family. My older brother, younger sister, nephews, nieces, cousins, and family members looked up to me.

The number #1 priority was to get my college degree and dedicate it to my deceased mother, just like I did in high school when I graduated. Her love and spirit was driving me on a daily basis to graduate. As a result, I graduated from Georgia State University with two degrees, a Bachelors' Degree in Business Administration Degree in 1995 and Masters' in Sports Administration in 1999.

One of the most important highlights of my academics and athletics career was being named team captain in both my junior and senior year, and making All-Conference Academic team for three consecutive years.

## **You served as head coach at both Fort Valley State and Tennessee State — what makes coaching at an HBCU uniquely meaningful?**

Fort Valley State University and Tennessee State University are two prestigious HBCUs that gave me my first head coaching opportunities on the NCAA Division I and Division II levels. I love everything about coaching at these tradition rich and esteemed HBCUs, my players, our relationship, the university, and athletics departments, administrators, faculty, staff, students, community leaders, alums, supporters, the true family environment, and loving atmosphere. There's so much love and support at HBCUs, a sense of belonging, purpose, and fulfillment, and the number #1 reason GOD placed this HBCU All-Stars vision in my spirit in October 2019.

## Over 20+ years in NCAA coaching, what leadership lesson impacted you most?

I got into coaching because of the relationships all my coaches had with me and the impact they made in my life. Coaching for me has never been about X's and O's when I coached. I have always been about valuing relationships, trust, accountability, responsibility, and love for my players. That's why to this day that I am in numerous group chats with so many of my former players. In addition, many of them are coaches now...what a full circle moment!

## What inspired you to launch HBCU All-Stars LLC in 2019?

My wife and I were inspired to launch HBCU All-Stars LLC out of my deep desire to advocate for, elevate, and create opportunities for Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) students, student-athletes, and coaches — especially given my long coaching career and firsthand perspective on the lack of national exposure for HBCU talent. As a former NCAA Division I and II coach at HBCUs, I saw a great talent and culture that often went under-recognized on national stages. We wanted to change that narrative by creating events that put HBCU excellence in the spotlight — most notably during the NCAA Final Four Weekend. My wife and I founded the company in 2019 with a mission to advocate, educate, expose, mentor, and invest in hardworking and talented HBCU students and coaches. The goal is to showcase their ability and hard work through elite events, media, and mentorship opportunities. It is very important and our genuine inspiration with this sacred space using the Final Four Weekend as a national and global platform to give HBCU players a moment where they could be seen alongside the biggest events in college basketball — giving them exposure that traditionally has been reserved for athletes from predominantly white institutions.

This is “God-driven,” is about service, HBCU cultural pride, and a commitment to lifting up our young people beyond athletics, at the same offering access,



recognition, opportunity, resources, and results for them and their communities.

HBCU All-Stars was created to change the narrative around HBCUs and build legacy, while expanding beyond a game to include global exposure, professional opportunities, scholarship support, and community impact initiatives.

I was inspired by my own coaching journey, my commitment to HBCU excellence, and a vision to give Black college athletes and coaches the recognition, opportunities, and platforms they deserve.

## Your organization has partnered with major brands like CBS, Coca-Cola, Capital One, and AT&T — what do strategic partnerships unlock for HBCUs?

These strategic partnerships with major brands support our of HBCU All-Stars mission of providing equity, visibility, credibility, and collaboration. In addition, they help us unlock exposure, access, recognition, and provide opportunities, resources, and results through our HBCU

All-Star Game Experience and ATL Has Something to Say HBCU Challenge showing the world HBCUs matters. It gives our sports marketing, events, and media company brand recognition, direct access to opportunities, and open doors for HBCU students through internships, fellowships, and early-career pipelines, and academic scholarships. We are all about relationships, mentorship, exposure, and partnerships with major brands to provide real-world experience, projects, and access that our HBCUs, students, student-athletes, and coaches need.

## The Travis L. Williams Foundation focuses on mentorship, academics, nutrition, and sports — why is a holistic approach important to you?

The Travis L. Williams Foundation (TLWF) and Patricia's Blessed Closet (PBC) is a 501 c-3 non-profit organizations founded in July 2020. We are headquartered in Atlanta and Tifton, Georgia. I started also

“Patricia Williams Scholarship Fund” in memory of my deceased mother providing financial and academic scholarships to graduating seniors from his alma mater Tift County High School and metro Atlanta High School students to assist them in college.

This is a GOD-driven vision of love for youth and families in need through philanthropy, community outreach, engagement, mentorship, exposure, academic scholarship opportunities, mental, physical, nutritional health awareness, academics, athletics, financial assistance and resources. PBC was established in memory of my deceased mother Patricia Ann Willians and through a life of service and purpose. The TLWF has touched countless lives and families through coaching, academics, athletics consulting and scholarships, ministry, food, clothing, shoes, furniture, books, toys, while devoting valuable time, money, and resources to provide for children and families in need in Tifton and Atlanta.

It is our sincere hope, pledge, honor, duty, and responsibility to continue helping people, making a difference in our communities, and impacting the world we live in with Cause of Effect Fitness. For the past five years, we have done so much more in memory of my deceased mother Patricia’s Blessed Closet and through a life of service and purpose through the eyes of GOD. We have been using our gift from GOD through coaching, academics, and athletics consulting, ministry, and devoting valuable time, money, and resources to provide for children and families in need in Tifton and Atlanta with food, clothing, shoes, furniture, books, toys, academic scholarships, and will continue paying it forward.

In July 2025, the Travis L. Williams Foundation (TLWF) and Patricia’s Blessed Closet (PBC) organization partnered with Cause of E.F.F.E.C.T. Fitness to fight hunger and homelessness in metro ATL and Tift County communities. Together, we will provide food, clothing, and critical resources to those in need. The Cause of Effect Fitness, Travis L. Williams



Foundation, and Patricia's Blessed Closet, have amazing organizations that truly believe in giving back and serving the metropolitan Atlanta communities, surrounding areas, and the people.

We are truly committed and instrumental in fundraising, volunteerism, community service projects, initiatives, basketball camps, clinics, and finds the necessary time, energy, and resources to give back to youth sports, basketball, baseball, flag football, and so on.

Our team constantly gives back to the children in Atlanta, and surrounding metropolitan areas, and my hometown of Tifton, GA with free basketball camps and clinics.

### What do you believe young men need most today from leaders and mentors?

I have been able to have some amazing mentors and leaders throughout my life. Young men today needs to understand their purpose, their "why", and not being afraid to be told "NO". Young men need leaders who see them, challenge them, and walk with them in the good times and challenging times. They don't need a savior, but steady guidance, nurturing spirit, and people who help prepare them become disciplined, and purpose-driven with their families, communities, and careers.

They need clarity, consistency, and connection from leaders and mentors, and not just motivation. However, authentic and sincere guidance they

can trust. Young men need adults who will tell them the truth without shaming them. Set high expectations and refuse to lower the bar. Hold them accountable while still believing in them. They need leaders who are present, and not distant, living examples of integrity, discipline, and resilience, Willing to share failures, and not just successes. I have learned throughout my life representation matters, but relationship matters more. Many young men aren't lacking talent; they're lacking a roadmap, Clear pathways to education, careers, and entrepreneurship, Guidance on navigating money, relationships, and purpose, Tools to turn ambition into action, Structure creates stability; stability creates growth.

Young men need safe spaces where they can express emotion without judgment, ask questions without being ridiculed, and learn that strength includes vulnerability.

Finally, they need chances to lead early and learn by doing, Fail forward with support, Take ownership of their future. Mentorship works best when it empowers, not controls.

### Where do you see HBCU athletics and athlete development evolving over the next decade?

Over the next 5-10 years, HBCU student-athletics and athlete development will continue evolving in this NIL space on and off the basketball court or playing field. With NIL fully embedded and changing the game and landscape in college sports, HBCU student-athletes must continue to build their personal brands rooted in culture, authenticity, community, relationships, business, and

entrepreneurship. They will continue monetize their name, image, and likeness through national and global platforms, and HBCU partners. It is very important to receive education in financial literacy, marketing, and entrepreneurship and athlete development will extend far beyond performance on the playing field. Mental health and wellness will always be essential and play a major role for career readiness and life after sports. When it is all said and done, HBCU student-athletes success will be measured by graduation rates, career placement, and their long-term well-being, career goals, ambition, drive, and not just wins.

Our HBCUs and Athletics Departments must have strategic investment and infrastructure growth with facilities, sports science, and technology in today's changing world. We must value culture, community, legacy, and create strong pathways to professional sports, media, and business for our HBCU students.

The next decade will position HBCU athletics as a model where culture, education, and competition intersect. HBCU student-athletes will not just leave with stats, but will leave with a sense of pride, purpose, fulfillment, skills, networks, and purpose that lasts long after the final whistle.

### Where can the readers follow your journey?

You can follow us on this link below.

#### Follow us on IG

@HBCUAllStarGame  
@HBCUAllStarsLLC  
@HBCUAllStarsGameExperience  
@HBCUAllStarsInternationalTour  
@ATLHBCUChallenge  
@CEOHBCUAllStars  
@TravisLWilliams24

#### IG SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

[https://www.instagram.com/ceohbcuallstars?igsh=MXNkdXdsMWZremF5d-Q%3D%3D&utm\\_source=qr](https://www.instagram.com/ceohbcuallstars?igsh=MXNkdXdsMWZremF5d-Q%3D%3D&utm_source=qr)  
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#### Facebook

HBCU All-Star Game  
HBCU All-Stars LLC  
ATL HBCU Challenge  
Travis L. Williams

#### X/Twitter

@HBCUAllStar Game  
@HBCUAllStarsLLC  
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@CoachTravisWill

<http://www.HBCUAllStarGame.com>  
<http://www.HBCUAllStarsLLC.com>  
[www.HBCUAllStarGameExperience.org](http://www.HBCUAllStarGameExperience.org)  
[www.HBCUAllStarsFoundation.com](http://www.HBCUAllStarsFoundation.com)  
<http://www.IamTravisLWilliams.com>  
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[www.ATLHBCUChallenge.com](http://www.ATLHBCUChallenge.com)

#### LINKED IN

##### Personal:

[https://www.linkedin.com/in/travis-l-williams-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%88-%F0%9F%91%8C%F0%9F%8F%BE-7b28057?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_campaign=share\\_via&utm\\_content=profile&utm\\_medium=ios\\_app](https://www.linkedin.com/in/travis-l-williams-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%88-%F0%9F%91%8C%F0%9F%8F%BE-7b28057?utm_source=share&utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utm_medium=ios_app)

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[www.HBCUAllStarGameExperience.org](http://www.HBCUAllStarGameExperience.org)



# MYCHEL “SNOOP” DILLARD



**Tell everyone who you are and what you do.**

I'm Mychel "Snoop" Dillard, an Atlanta-based entrepreneur with a background in hospitality, nightlife, and franchising. I'm best known for co-owning Escobar Restaurant & Tapas alongside 2 Chainz, as well as owning and scaling Remedy Spa & Salon Suites, a franchised brand with over eight locations. I'm also the founder of Forever Family Life Co., a financial services and life insurance company, and I'm deeply committed to mentorship, supporting Black-owned businesses, and building generational wealth. In addition to my business ventures, I'm the star of the reality series Snooping for Love and the author of Who Is Snoop, both of which premiered in 2025.

**You became a mother at 15 and went on to graduate from Vanderbilt at 20 — what inner drive kept you moving forward during that season of your life?**

My child — knowing I wanted to provide for her and give her opportunities I didn't have.

**Looking back, what moment would you say marked the turning point where you truly stepped into entrepreneurship?**

Moving to ATL was a trajectory point in my life. Seeing people who looked like me helped me totally step into entrepreneurship.

**You've experienced both wins and losses in business — what failure taught you the most, and how did you bounce back from it?**

Losing my newspaper because my company was stolen from me by an employee I trusted. It taught me to always stay engaged in my businesses.

**What role has faith, mindset, or discipline played in your success story?**

Everything — I can't make it in anything without God. He is the reason for it all and the person who will never leave my side.

**What inspired your partnership with 2 Chainz, and what makes your business collaboration work so well?**

In 2016, I partnered with 2 Chainz to launch Escobar Restaurant and Tapas, which became a hit in Atlanta's competitive dining scene. I now co-own multiple restaurants with him and in 2022 we franchised our brand.

**Escobar Restaurant & Tapas took off in a competitive market — what do you believe set it apart?**

Providing good food and nightlife. Our motto was restaurant during the day, lounge at night with dope vibes and great food.

**Remedy Spa & Salon Suites now has over eight locations — what factors helped it scale successfully?**

Systems being in place and being careful who I accepted as franchisees.

**What impact do you hope the National Salon Suites Conference will have on future Entrepreneurs?**

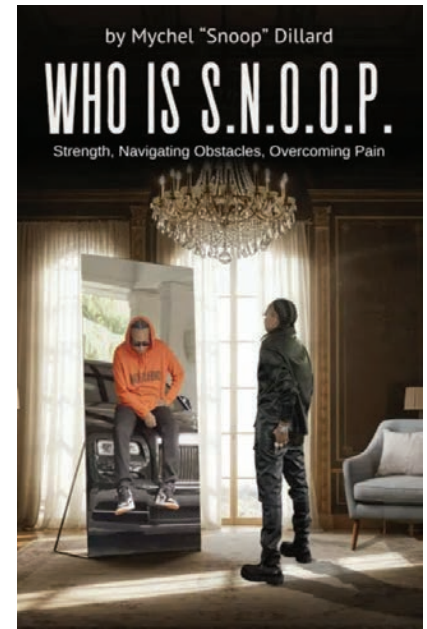
I hope it will continue to inspire people to get in this industry and celebrate those already in it. Our victories are grand, but the recognition — not so much!

**How does Forever Family Life Co. connect to your passion for financial education?**

It was a business I created after losing my daughter. I didn't have life insurance on her, and although I could afford to bury her, I could relate to so many who lost people and couldn't.

**Your book "Who Is Snoop" — what inspired you to tell your story now?**

Who Is Snoop was inspired by my journey of overcoming early challenges, building multiple businesses through trial and



error, and evolving into the entrepreneur I am today. From becoming a mother at 15 and graduating from Vanderbilt at 20, to navigating layoffs, failures, and major successes in business, I wanted to share the full story behind the resilience, pivots, and the purpose that shaped me.

**What's a fun fact about yourself?**

I love to travel and I love to laugh.

**When you think about the next 5–10 years, what legacy are you most intentional about Building?**

Giving back. The beginning of my life was about building success — I have that now. It's time to totally focus on helping others.

**Where can the readers follow your journey?**

IG: @whoissnoop and whoissnoop.com



# EBONY KARIM



**You've built businesses across tech, wellness, and beauty — what first sparked your entrepreneurial drive?**

Honestly? I got tired of doing the work and not owning the outcome. Early on, I was always the one fixing problems, building systems, and making things run better—but someone else was always holding the keys. Entrepreneurship gave me agency. It gave me the freedom to build things my way and create access where it didn't exist before.



**What experiences early in your career shaped the leader you are today?**

I came up in high-pressure environments where mistakes were expensive and accountability mattered. Working on large government and tech programs taught me how to lead with clarity, stay calm in chaos, and make decisions that impact real people. It also taught me empathy—because behind every process is a person.

**How did your education at the University of Maryland Global Campus influence your approach to business and innovation?**

UMGC met me where I was. I was working, building, and living life—and my education had to fit into that. It sharpened my strategic thinking and taught me how to apply theory in real time. That balance shows up in how I build businesses today—practical, flexible, and always forward-looking.

**What inspired you to launch Embarkus Solutions back in 2013?**

I saw a gap. So many small businesses—especially minority-owned ones—had the talent but didn't understand how to navigate federal contracting. The system felt intimidating and opaque. I started Embarkus to pull back the curtain and help people realize this space wasn't off-limits—it was just misunderstood.

**Federal contracting can be intimidating — what barriers did you have to break through?**

Access and perception were the biggest ones. I had to learn a whole new language—compliance, procurement rules, long sales cycles—while also proving myself in rooms where I was often underestimated. It wasn't easy, but once I cracked the code, I realized how much opportunity lives on the other side of understanding the process.

**What motivated you to write “So You Want to Be a Federal Contractor”?**

People kept asking me the same questions, over and over. I realized the fear wasn't about capability—it was about not knowing where to start. I wrote the book



to say, “You're not crazy. This is confusing. Let me walk you through it.” If readers walk away knowing that federal contracting is procedural—not exclusive—then I've done my job.

**The Beauty Genie merges tech with textured hair care access — how did that idea come to life?**

The Beauty Genie is deeply personal. I saw how hard it was to find quality textured hair products in everyday spaces—campuses, airports, even retail areas. So I asked, why not bring the products to the people? Technology gave me the ability to do that in a smart, scalable way—while centering culture and community.

**What's the most powerful reaction you've heard from someone who used The Beauty Genie?**

A student told me, “This is the first time I felt seen on my campus.” That hit me. Because that's what The Beauty Genie is really about—visibility, dignity, and representation, not just convenience.

**You've been featured in Forbes and recognized in Times Square — what did those moments mean to you?**

They were surreal, honestly. Not because of the spotlight, but because they affirmed the journey. Building something from the ground up—especially as a Black woman—can feel lonely. Those moments reminded me that the work matters, even when no one's clapping yet.

**What's next for Embarkus Solutions and The Beauty Genie®?**

Embarkus is entering its legacy era—more education, more scale, and helping businesses build long-term sustainability. The Beauty Genie is expanding—new markets, deeper tech integration, and continued innovation at the intersection of beauty, STEM, and culture. We're just getting started.

**Where can readers follow your journey?**

You can find me by searching *Ebony Karim* on **Linked In** or *@ebony\_j\_karim* on **IG** and **Substack** where I talk candidly about entrepreneurship, leadership, and building in real time.



**T**here's something special about a place you keep coming back to—not once, not twice, but a third time—and that's exactly how I feel about **Golden Apple Buffet in Snellville, Georgia**. If you know me, you know I love a good buffet, and this spot continues to hit every single time.

From the moment you walk in, you can tell why Golden Apple stays busy. The restaurant is clean, organized, and constantly full of energy—always a good sign when it comes to food. And trust me, the food does not disappoint.

# A Buffet Lover's Dream: **Golden Apple Buffet** in Snellville, GA



One of my favorite things about Golden Apple Buffet is the variety. This isn't your average buffet. They offer hibachi made fresh, a solid sushi selection, and even pho with rich, flavorful broth that feels comforting from the first sip. Everything tastes fresh and thoughtfully prepared, which is not always easy to find at a buffet.

Let's talk seafood—because if you're a seafood lover like me, this place will make your heart (and belly) happy. The fresh seafood options are one of the main reasons I keep coming back. There's nothing better than being able to go back for seconds... or thirds... without guilt. That's the beauty of a buffet done right. The authentic Chinese dishes are full of



flavor, the sushi is well-made, and the pho brings warmth and depth that feels homemade. Even the fruit stood out—fresh, juicy, and perfectly ripe, which is always a pleasant surprise at a buffet.

By the end of my visit, my belly was full and my soul was satisfied. Golden Apple Buffet delivers comfort, variety, and quality all in one place. It's perfect for family

dinners, casual outings, or when you're just in the mood to eat a little bit of everything. If you're ever in Snellville, GA, or nearby, make sure to check out Golden Apple Buffet. Come hungry, take your time, and enjoy the experience—you'll definitely leave full and happy.

**Until the next bite,**  
Cece in the City 🍴🌟



# ATL

# HIGHLIGHT SOUL VIBES

## Moment That Set the Tone for The Year

As we step into the new year, *Where It Begins Magazine* reflects on defining cultural moments that helped shape the close of last year. One such highlight took place in November, when ATL Soul Vibes celebrated its 10-year anniversary with an unforgettable night featuring Nappy Roots at DBS Sounds.



# XNAPPY



Having Nappy Roots as the first group to grace the ATL Soul Vibes stage was both intentional and symbolic. Their performance reflected not only their musical legacy but their continued commitment to community and culture. Beyond the stage, their entrepreneurial venture Atlantucky Brewing stands as another extension of their creative impact.



Despite rainy weather, the energy inside told a different story. The experience was soulful, intimate, and rooted in connection — a reminder that true culture can't be stopped. Fans gathered not just to hear music, but to feel it, creating a shared moment that captured the spirit of Atlanta's creative community.

At its core, ATL Soul Vibes is Atlanta's invite-only live music series, curated to spotlight soulful artists and authentic storytelling while fostering meaningful community connections. Filmed at DBS Sounds, the series has become a trusted space where music, culture, and creativity meet.



The evening was powered by collaboration. Special recognition goes to DJ Ms. Eclectic, whose partnership and creative vision continue to drive ATL Soul Vibes forward, along with When We Speak TV, Gary on sound, and the entire DBS Sounds team for executing an experience that felt seamless and intentional.



As we begin the year ahead, this November celebration serves as a reminder that the moments that move culture forward don't always happen under perfect conditions — they happen when passion, purpose, and people come together.

Follow [@ATLSoulVibes](#) on all social platforms to stay connected and be part of what's next.

*And at Where It Begins, this is exactly the kind of story we love to tell.*





*Pretty in  
Pinkston*  
SKINCARE

**GET  
THAT  
GLOW**