

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## DOWNTOWN LONG BEACH ALLIANCE PRESENTS VIRTUAL DOWNTOWN DISCUSSION: “THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN LONG BEACH: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE”

*February 23 Virtual Roundtable to Feature Local Black Leaders in Faith, Activism, Government, Business, and Community*

**(LONG BEACH, CA – February 11, 2021)** In celebration and recognition of Black History Month, [the Downtown Long Beach Alliance](#)'s (DLBA's) February [Downtown Discussions](#) virtual event will address, “The Black Experience in Long Beach: Past, Present, and Future.” On February 23 from 9 AM – 10:30 AM, a panel of local Black activists, faith leaders, municipal professionals, business owners, and community leaders will convene to discuss the history and contributions of the Black community in Long Beach, as well as the past and present challenges it faces and what the future may hold for this community.

Moderated by Carl Kemp, a longtime communications professional and Long Beach local currently serving as Environmental Public Affairs Manager with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, this conversation will include different perspectives and aspects of the Black experience in Long Beach with a focus on Downtown. Panelists will consider what role established institutions and organizations, including DLBA, have played in the Black experience in Downtown Long Beach, and what their responsibility may be moving forward to enact positive change.

“For progress to ever truly be made, it is crucial that we all invest energy in understanding and advancing the cause of ‘the other,’” said Kemp. “By presenting ‘The Black Experience in Long Beach: Past, Present, and Future,’ DLBA is setting an example for other organizations that are interested in making real change. I look forward to facilitating a dialogue with this powerhouse panel.”

Roundtable participants are listed below. Headshots and biographies are provided at the end of this press release.

**Moderator:** Carl Kemp, Environmental Public Affairs Manager, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

### Panelists:

- Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager, [City of Long Beach](#)
- Wayne Chaney Jr., Senior Pastor of [Antioch Church](#)
- Kena Fuller, Founder, [Fuller Management Corporation](#)
- Melissa Morgan, Director of Communications for [Long Beach Forward](#)
- Ahmed Saafir, Owner/Administrator, Orange Community Care

“DLBA’s intent in hosting this event is to inform the community about the Black experience in Long Beach,” said DLBA President & CEO Kraig Kojian. “Our goal is to have an honest and open conversation about the challenges experienced by this community, including that which has occurred within Downtown Long Beach, and design actionable pathways to create positive change.”

To participate in this free event, which will be held via Zoom, register at [downtownlongbeach.org/downtown-discussions](https://downtownlongbeach.org/downtown-discussions). The event will also be livestreamed by the Long Beach Post at [lbpost.com](https://lbpost.com), and on DLBA’s Facebook [@downtownlongbeach](https://www.facebook.com/downtownlongbeach). A question-and-answer session will conclude the roundtable discussion. Viewers on Zoom may submit questions through the Q&A feature, and viewers on other platforms may post their questions as comments on the livestreamed video.

Downtown Discussions is a monthly free virtual webinar series hosted by the DLBA. Its goal is to connect the community with experts on topics of importance to them, from racial inequities to economic development, the digital divide, and more. Visit [downtownlongbeach.org/downtown-discussions](https://downtownlongbeach.org/downtown-discussions) for more information and to view past events.

### **Participant Biographies**



**CARL KEMP** is currently Environmental Public Affairs Manager with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and has more than 20 years of experience in communications and public affairs. Prior to joining Public Health, Kemp managed his own government affairs and public relations practice with a wide range of clients from profits. He also created the Office of Government Affairs and Communication in the City of Long Beach, and went on to create the Office of Government Affairs and Community Relations at the Port of Long Beach.

Kemp has a long history of community involvement in the Long Beach area, including earning a B.A. and MPA from California State University, Long Beach, where he served two terms as student body president. He also has earned a certificate in Executive Leadership from the Harvard University School of Government. He has developed messaging around many major initiatives from local to federal government, including the Green Port Policy at the Port of Long Beach. Over the years, he has served on many boards and has been blessed to be involved in numerous initiatives to improve the community and contribute to the people within it.

Kemp's proudest accomplishment is being a father.



**TERESA CHANDLER** is a Deputy City Manager for the City of Long Beach with the responsibility of elevating the City's coordinated efforts related to homelessness, violence prevention, and youth development. She also provides oversight and leadership to the City's Office of Civic Innovations and the Office of Equity. She most recently supported the team through a racial equity and reconciliation planning process to develop a City-wide plan to eliminate systemic racism by advancing racial equity in Long Beach. Chandler began her career with the City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services in 2015 as the City's Homeless Services Officer and soon after moved into the Human Services Bureau Manager position. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and a Master's in Public Health from San Francisco State University and more than 20 years of management experience in both public and nonprofit organization settings.



**PASTOR WAYNE CHANEY, JR.**, affectionately known as Pastor Wayne, is the prototypical contemporary spiritual leader. His relevant teaching style and ability to cultivate spirited worship environments aids in unifying people from diverse, cultural, ethnic, and generational backgrounds. Born into a three generation long spiritual lineage, he continues the legacy left by his grandfather, Joe Chaney, Jr., through his work as senior pastor of Antioch Church of Long Beach. However, Pastor Wayne's ministry extends beyond the congregation he provides leadership to. His determination to influence culture, with the culture of Christ's kingdom, is evident in his work both inside and outside of his local church context.

Pastor Wayne is the visionary behind the creation of the Long Beach Gospel Fest, the city's premier gospel experience. This event brings over 20,000 people of diverse backgrounds, together to worship, pray, and be inspired.

He has served on the Executive Board of Global Tribe International, whose mission is to rescue those in physical and spiritual poverty, reach communities with the gospel and recruit and empower young leaders. He is also the past president of the Long Beach Ministers Alliance and continues to serve as a mentor and friend to many leaders across the region and globe.

Pastor Wayne Chaney Jr. has been the recipient of various awards and commendations. He has received congressional, senatorial, and presidential recognitions and is noted in various publications. Pastor Wayne was featured on the cover of Church Executive Magazine, and for two

consecutive years, the Long Beach Post named him one of its “Ten Most Powerful People.” Pastor Wayne has received the City’s Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Maker Award and continues to steward a decades long legacy of civic engagement.

As an intellectually curious individual, Wayne has committed himself to remaining a lifelong learner. He has studied at Morehouse College, Luther Rice University, Fuller Seminary, Claremont School of Theology and is currently in doctoral studies at Duke University’s Divinity School.

Pastor Chaney was a cast member of Oxygen’s hit television series Preachers of LA. On the show, Pastor Chaney and his wife Myesha, along with their three beautiful children: Wayne III, Reign, and Cadence, shared their ministry and lives with the world. Pastor Chaney has also appeared on Extra, Access Hollywood, Showbiz Tonight, The Arsenio Hall Show, The Real, Insider, Boris and Nicole, Lift Every Voice and News One Now with Roland Martin. He found success amongst the radio audience of Stevie Wonder’s KJLH 102.3 FM. His weekly show “Real Life” gained popularity because of its ability to address life’s most perplexing issues. In 2016, Pastor Chaney published *Your Miraculous Potential: Maximizing God’s Creativity, Power and Direction*. In this book, he places in the hands of his readers the tools to clearly hear and understand the voice of God and discover God’s divine purpose for their lives.

Pastor Wayne Chaney Jr. has never been satisfied with the status quo, so whatever the platform; he is determined to impact culture, create positive change, and lovingly work to advance the cause of Christ and His Kingdom.



**KENA FULLER** has a passion for business development and set out to build a consulting firm revered for its hands-on expertise, executive coaching, expansive knowledge, and award-winning services. Aligned with her education in Behavioral Economics, Global Business Management, Marketing, and Small Business Enterprise, it is her 20-plus years of experience in business management, development, sales, marketing, and higher education management that provides each client and organization with a level of professional prowess that is unsurpassed. As Executive Director of Fuller Management, she is adamant about client engagement and overall customer satisfaction. Personally managing every client account, it is her careful attention to detail and integrated strategy that has helped consistently support and grow each client’s revenue year over year.



**MELISSA MORGAN** (she/her/hers) serves as Director of Communications for Long Beach Forward, Co-Founder of the Black Wellness Collaborative (B-Well), and Founder of VERB works and [allthingsblack.us](http://allthingsblack.us). Since moving to Long Beach in 2001, Morgan has focused her professional and personal work in areas related to diversity and inclusion, civil rights, racial justice, economic equity, education, and youth-serving initiatives, primarily in communities across Southern California.

Morgan is unapologetically Black and believes that race and income should not determine one’s future in Long Beach. Her passion for social justice and equity come from her roots as a biracial person growing up in the South, where she engaged people in community service and leadership development to build relationships and empathy for others’ experiences.

She graduated from the University of North Florida with a bachelor’s degree. Upon graduation, she served as a Rotary Cultural Ambassadorial Scholar of Good Will in Merida, Venezuela, before making California her home. Morgan has worked at the Anti-Defamation League, Orange County Human Relations Council, the Heart of America Foundation, the City of Long Beach Human Dignity Program in the City Manager’s Office, and the Long Beach Center for Economic Inclusion. She is a founding member of the Alpert Jewish Community Center’s JCC Cares volunteer organization. Her current passion project is a public education and awareness campaign around Black-centered mental health through the B-Well Collab. Morgan is also a member of Black Lives Matter Long Beach.

She is a professional graphic designer, a creative, a youth advocate, a learning ally, and the mom of two awesome daughters. Morgan enjoys thinking out of the box, creating art, facilitating dialogue, public speaking, laughing, connecting people, giving voice to the unheard, and amplifying important messages, especially justice related ones.



**AHMED SAAFIR** is the Owner/Administrator of Orange Community Care (OCC), a Long Beach-based mental health residential facility for adults. Saafir founded OCC in 1985 with the mission of providing an ideal psycho-social environment for the care and development of its residents, of whom around 10,000 have been served over the years. He is also the owner of two All Tune and Lube franchises in Long Beach and is partner in the businesses Energy Smoothie Bar.

Saafir has an extensive background of involvement in the Long Beach community, and currently serves as the Chair of the Long Beach Community Improvement League. He is the current Chair of Masjid Al-Shareef of Long Beach and is Vice President and former President of the Hundred Black Men of Long Beach. He formerly served as: President of the Long Beach Branch NAACP, President of the Atlantic Economic Development Corporation, a Long Beach Civil Service Commissioner, Board Member for the Conservation Corps of Long Beach, and Treasurer of the Long Beach Central Area Association. Saafir is also a founding member of the local African American Cultural Heritage Center Committee.

His extensive community work has earned him certificates of recognition from Congressman Alan Lowenthal, Long Beach Vice Mayor Rex Richardson, former Mayor Bob Foster, former State Senator Ricardo Lara, former 9th District Councilmember Steven Neal, former Vice Mayor and Harbor Commissioner Doris Topsy-Elvord, the NAACP, and the African American History and Cultural Club of Long Beach.

Saafir attended California State University, Long Beach and Long Beach City College. He has been a Long Beach resident since he completed his tenure as a Petty Officer, Second Class in the United States Navy in 1966. He and his wife Bernice have been married for 54 years and are blessed with seven children, 39 grandchildren, and 20 great grandchildren.

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**About the Downtown Long Beach Alliance:** DLBA is a non-profit, community-based organization whose mission is to cultivate, preserve and promote a healthy, safe, and prosperous Downtown. By balancing the interests of the residents, as well as businesses, the DLBA creates tangible progress by way of vested interest and solidified partnerships across local, municipal, and commercial lines. For additional information, visit [www.downtownlongbeach.org](http://www.downtownlongbeach.org), or follow on Facebook @downtownlongbeach, and on Twitter and Instagram @DLBA.



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