



HOST: Valerie Tutson,
Executive Director,
Rhode Island Black Storytellers

Tutson graduated from Brown University with a self-designed major, Storytelling as a Communication's Art, and a Masters in Theatre. Since 1991, she's performed on national and international stages. She hosted Cultural Tapestry, an award-winning show for COX Television. She is a director of FUNDA FEST: An Annual Celebration of Black Storytelling. Tutson has received numerous awards and recognitions for her work, including an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Rhode Island College and the 2017 Public Humanities Scholar Award from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. Currently Valerie is a 2018/19 Intercultural Leadership Institute Fellow. She will receive a 2019 Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts from Trinity Repertory Company.



GUEST SPEAKER: Michael Forte,
Chief Judge, Rhode Island Family Court

Judge Forte was appointed Chief of the Rhode Island Family Court in 2016 by Governor Gina Raimondo. As Chief, Judge Forte initiated several programs designed to transform Family Court into a treatment-focused, rehabilitative court that addresses families as a whole. This has included establishing a Women's Service Department, the "Safe and Secure Baby Program" that provide services for at-risk babies who come into the care of the court, and the "APPLA" calendar designed to assess case plans to provide readiness services to help youths coming of age to experience a safe transition out of the child welfare system. Under Chief Judge Forte's leadership, Family Court and the Department of Children, Youth and Families, have collaborated on implementing the newly enacted legislation which allows children who are aging out of foster care at age 18 to continue to receive care and placement services until age 21.



GUEST SPEAKER: Peter McWalters,
Chair of the Big Picture Board of
Directors and Consultant to
Education Reimagined

Peter McWalters is the former Commissioner of K-12 Education of the State of Rhode Island, where he served for over 17 years. Prior to that, from 1985 to 1992 he was the Superintendent of the Rochester City School District in NY. A life long educator, he began as an English as a Second Language teacher, served as a middle school social studies teacher in an alternative, advisory based, individualized program, and went on to be a magnet school planner before becoming a Superintendent. He has served on the Board of the National Center for Education and the Economy, on the Board and as past President of the Council of Chief State School Officers, on the Advisory Board of Education Reimagined, and currently is serving on the Board of the National Center. As an advocate for learner centered education, his focus as Superintendent and Commissioner has been of finding the nexus between expectations, standards, assessments, instructional effectiveness, individual student competency and system accountability.



GUEST SPEAKER: Larome Myrick,
Executive Director of Juvenile
Correctional Services for the
State of Rhode Island

Myrick worked at the Ohio Department of Youth Services as a Juvenile Parole Services Supervisor and Reentry Administrator before coming to RI in May 2018. He received the 2015 Leadership Award from the African American Legacy Project. Myrick recently became a lifetime member of National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice NABCJ which he first joined in 2002. He received his B.A. in Healthcare Administration from the University of Toledo and his Master's in Organizational Leadership from Lourdes University. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in Criminal Justice from Capella University.