

2022 Black Footwear Forum Announces Agenda, Speakers and New Sponsors

Now in its Fourth Year, the Three-Day Event, to be Held in Detroit, Celebrates and Analyzes Diversity in the Footwear Industry



Detroit, MI – Aug 22, 2022 - The [Black Footwear Forum](#) (BFF) today announces featured speakers and panels for this year’s event, to be held at [Pensole Lewis College of Business & Design](#) (PLC) in Detroit, September 16-18, in partnership with the Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA).

“Since its first year, the Black Footwear Forum has evolved into a major industry gathering to celebrate, inspire and acknowledge Black creatives globally who are responsible for the culture of our industry,” PLC Founder and President D’Wayne Edwards said. “This year it’s happening in the only city in the US designated a UNESCO City of Design—Detroit, Michigan.”

At the 2022 BFF, attendees, executives, industry leaders and the community of Detroit will gather for three-day FREE event of celebrations, conversations, and networking as BFF continues to highlight, strengthen, and support Black professionals globally in the footwear industry.

“I can’t think of a better city than Detroit, a better place than the Pensole Lewis College of Business & Design, and a better time than now for the BFF to reconvene in-person after a multi-year hiatus,” said FDRA President & CEO Matt Priest. “Excitement for this event has been off-the-charts as registrations and corporate support continue to roll in. BFF Detroit will be the highlight of our year.”

Thursday, September 15 officially kicks off BFF with the first of many community activations for Detroit residents. A collaborative partnership between [MERIT's FATE Program](#) and PENSOLE alumni, who are designers for some of the top brands in the industry, will conduct a PLC footwear design workshop at the PLC | FDRA | BFF Lounge by StockX in downtown Detroit. This workshop will also be open to the public, who can meet with other Black design leaders from the top brands.

Friday, September 16 will start at University Prep Elementary School for a session called “Kids Are Ready For Design” by A Kids Company About and will feature College of Creative Studies graduate and award-winning designer, entrepreneur and educator Jason Mayden (<https://akidsco.com/products/a-kids-book-about-design>). Following will be the BFF VIP dinner for staff, speakers, and sponsors, at the Detroit Pistons Performance Center, overlooking the Pistons' practice facilities. And the evening will close with a mixer for all attendees at the PLC|FDRA|BFF Lounge by StockX in downtown Detroit.

Saturday, September 17, BFF will begin with opening remarks from PLC President and founder D’Wayne Edwards and [Terrence Floyd](#), activist founder of We Are Floyd and brother of George Floyd, followed by a variety of talks and panel discussions. A schedule of featured panels and speakers, with more to be added in the weeks leading up to the event, is as follows:

Tappedin: Speaking about the new roads that have been paved for women in the footwear industry

- [Jazerai Allen-Lord](#), award-winning and internationally acclaimed sneaker strategist and designer
Additional speakers TBA

Blacklight: Role Models / Hometown Hero

- [Cheresse Thornhill-Goldson](#), Design Director, Adidas S.E.E.D.
Additional speakers TBA

Black Genius: The importance of role models

- [Kevin Carroll](#), author, speaker, performance coach, founder of Katalyst

Storytellers: Speakers share personal projects, or projects of which they are most proud

- [Tyrel Kirkham](#), Vice President, Brand & Marketing Strategy for the Detroit Pistons
Additional speakers TBA

Tappedin: Career Pathways + storytelling

- [Garry Thaniel](#), General Manager, Sneakers, eBay
Additional speakers TBA

Blacklight the Industry: A Conversation about protecting your IP

- [Jason Mayden](#), designer, educator, and entrepreneur author of “A Kids Book About Design”
Additional speakers TBA

Free Game Topic TBD

- Hosted by [James Whitner](#), American fashion entrepreneur; owner of streetwear boutiques Social Status, A Ma Maniere, and A.P.B.
Additional speakers TBA

Dinner and Mixer

- Downtown at the PLC|FDRA|BBF Lounge by StockX

Sunday, September 18th the forum will close with the BFF Black Women’s Brunch and Adidas S.E.E.D Creator camp downtown at the PLC|FDRA|BBF Lounge by StockX, downtown Detroit.

All downtown events are free and open to the public all four days.

Other guests scheduled are:

- Matt Priest, President & CEO, FDRA
- [April Walker](#), fashion icon, creator, author, educator
- [Jeffrey Henderson](#), footwear designer and founder of AndThem
- Portia Blount, VP of Apparel, Reebok
- [Scoop Jackson](#), author, and award-winning journalist, for ESPN
- Sydney James, interdisciplinary artist
- Jessica Smith, Director of Strategy, Adidas
- Alexander John, International Footwear designer
- Lauren Guthrie, VP Global Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Action, VF Corporation
- E. Scott Morris, Chair of Footwear, Pensole Lewis College

- Ashley Comeaux, VP of Product Design, Allbirds
- Damien Hooper-Campbell, Chief Impact Officer, StockX
- Liz Connelly, Sr Manager, Design Education & Growth, Adidas
- Che Pope, Grammy winning producer, WRKSHP

Additional speakers TBA

The 2022 Annual Black Footwear Forum (BFF) in Detroit is a free event thanks to corporate partners including The Athlete's Foot, Caleres, Carhartt, College for creative Studies, Detroit Pistons, Designer Brands, Foot Locker, Gilbert Family Foundation, Logitech, MillerKnoll, NIKE, Off Broadway Shoe Warehouse, Rack Room Shoes, RG Barry Brands, Target, Steve Madden, Bedrock, Wolverine Worldwide, GM, Adidas, VF Corp, StockX, Ford, PEPSICO, and more.

Register to attend at: www.blackfootwearforum.com or follow us on Instagram @pensolelewis for updates and event coverage.

About the Black Footwear Forum (BFF): The Black Footwear Forum, formally known as the African American Footwear Forum (AAFF), invites footwear industry professionals and supporters to share stories and ideas and to create a dialog around the influence, leadership, and passion provided by blacks in the global footwear industry. This forum encourages collaboration to establish industry goals in the development of black talent at all levels. Surrounding the Forum are regional and national events that provide connecting conversations for black footwear professional brands to share concerns and solutions to help shape the conversation while bridging the gaps across the industry.

About PLC: Pensole Lewis College of Business & Design is the pipeline for career education and professional development in the creative industry. We bear the torch, leading the way to creative vision and progress. At Pensole Lewis College, we work at the crossroads of making the industry better, developing unconventional educational experiences and creating ingenious products. Offering a new path to break into the world of product creation, we prepare and empower the largest talent pool of creatives to enter the industry to make it better for the next generation.

About FDRA: Founded in 1944, FDRA is governed and directed by footwear executives and is the only trade organization focused solely on the footwear industry. It serves the full footwear supply chain and boosts the bottom lines of its members through innovative products, training and consulting on footwear design and development, sourcing and compliance, trade and customs, advocacy, and consumer and sales trend analysis for retailers selling shoes around the world. FDRA also runs the footwear industry's weekly podcast Shoe-In Show featuring leading footwear executives and experts discussing key business trends. In all, FDRA supports nearly 500 companies and brands worldwide, representing 95% of total U.S. footwear sales, making it by far the largest and most respected American footwear trade and business association.

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