



Cultivate Her Roots and Wings Program Bios

Courtney Leonard (Program Emcee)

Courtney "Courtney B./Courtney Boston" is known as one of the definitive "Voices of Boston." The FAMU and Emerson College Alumna, began her professional on-air career at Cumulus Radio in Tallahassee and has spent just under two decades in Broadcast and Digital Media as on-air talent, program director and creative director at various local, commercial and independent, TV and radio stations, and ethnic media platforms.

Courtney continues to be a woman in perpetual motion. She launched her own entrepreneurial efforts, HerVision Media & Consulting LLC in 2013 and most recently Co-founding in 2020, WWOC Media Network, Boston's Premier Black Women owned Urban Media Company. Long committed to youth and community service, the capital city's "Favorite Boston Baked Bean," is the Director of Partnerships for TechBoston Academy 6-12 and volunteers as COO/Co-Director of the Boston Showstoppers Girls Academic & Athletic Enrichment Program. Her board work includes Berkshire Partners Boys & Girls Club, and a pair of leadership roles with Holmes Elementary School Governing Board, and FAMU National Alumni Assoc Massachusetts Chapter.

Christina Gordon - Women's Foundation of MA (Partner Speech)

Christina Gordon is the Co-Founder and CEO of the Women's Foundation of Massachusetts. She holds a dual master's degree in International Finance and Applied Economics from MIT's Sloan School of Management. She earned her bachelor's degree from Boston University and also studied for a joint master's degree in Women's Studies and Sociology at Brandeis with a focus on women in the workplace. Christina is a former fund manager and technology industry equity analyst at Wellington Management. She also worked as a stock analyst at Fidelity Investments. She is a trustee of a private foundation, a member of Women Moving Millions and proudly served on the board and Executive Committee of Rosie's Place, a sanctuary for poor and homeless women in Boston.

The Women's Foundation of Massachusetts is a statewide nonprofit public charity dedicated to economically empowering women and girls throughout the Commonwealth. Established by four longtime Boston philanthropists and businesswomen, the Foundation creates and funds high-impact leadership and economically empowering programs in partnership with MA women's and girls' nonprofits. The Women's Foundation has supported Mother Caroline Academy in a variety of focus areas over the years, funding a marketing consultant, as well as expansions to their STEM program, including: a coding and makerspace teacher, a lower school math specialist, and transportation for their annual program with Boston Children's Hospital.



Mother
Caroline
Academy

Christina Qualls (Alumni Speaker)

Christina Qualls is a proud MCA alumna from the Class of 2005. Christina began her role as principal in July 2025, after serving as an Instructional Consultant for MCA during the 2024–2025 school year, where she worked closely with teachers and leaders to strengthen instruction and student outcomes.

She brings over 11 years of experience in education, having served as Director of Humanities, Interim Principal, Dean of Students, team leader, and classroom teacher in several charter schools. Christina is deeply passionate about empowering young women through rigorous academics, strong values, and joyful learning, and is honored to return to MCA to lead the next generation of MCA girls.

The King Family (Award Honorees)

The King Family represents a remarkable legacy at Mother Caroline Academy, with deep roots extending nearly 30 years. Since 1996, several daughters from this extended family have walked through MCA's doors, shaping a powerful story of generational commitment to education and community.

It began when Althea Hankey enrolled her daughters, Camille and Latoya, at MCA's former Bird Street campus in Dorchester. Camille graduated in 2000, followed by Latoya in 2001. Their experience sparked inspiration among relatives Allison Lawrence and Lisa Spencer, who were moved by the transformation they witnessed and soon made the same pivotal choice for their own daughters. Afeisha, Ashley, Amber joined MCA soon after. Afeisha graduated in 2005, and Ashley and Amber graduated together in 2008.

As Althea and Allison's daughters found success at MCA and beyond, their journeys inspired the pursuit of continued education and professional growth within the family. Through a grant provided by the Tudor Foundation to MCA Althea earned both her BSM and Master's degree from Cambridge College. This opportunity helped propel her career forward as she went on to become a program manager at Boston Children's Hospital. It was in this role that Althea laid the foundation for MCA's now well-established week-long career camp with Boston Children's Hospital, introducing 7th and 8th graders to careers in medicine and healthcare.

The legacy continued in 2012 when cousin Allison Queensborough enrolled her eldest daughter, Alyssa, at MCA, followed by her younger daughter, Kristen, in 2015.

Over the years, the King Family has continued to pour back into the MCA community in meaningful ways. Althea and Latoya have served on the MCA Board for a number of years. Afeisha has been a constant presence in the lives of MCA students for the past three years—first



as the chair of the alumni council, and more recently as a consultant for the high school placement program, guiding the 8th grade class as they prepare for their next academic step.

Alyssa, now an award-winning writer, returns to share her talents through a creative writing workshop, helping 8th graders craft compelling high school admissions essays. And at the heart of it all, Althea continues to lead and inspire, spearheading MCA's annual career camp in partnership with Boston Children's Hospital, ensuring that young students of color are exposed early to pathways in the medical field.

The impact of the King Family is a living testament to the power of education, family, and the strength of a shared vision. Mother Caroline Academy is deeply honored to have been part of their journey and grateful for the ways they continue to shape the journeys of others.

Nia Grace (Auctioneer and Host)

Nia Grace is an award-winning entrepreneur and the President and CEO of Bar and Kitchen Hospitality, Inc., known for her role as the owner of the acclaimed restaurants *Grace By Nia* and *Darryl's Corner Bar and Kitchen* in Boston. Recently named the 2023 "Restaurateur of the Year" by *The Boston Globe*, she is celebrated for her contributions to Boston's culinary scene, particularly as a leading Black restaurateur. Beyond her culinary ventures, Grace has a background in the nonprofit sector and is actively involved in community service, holding positions on various boards and organizations. Her innovative approach to hospitality has earned her numerous accolades, including recognition as one of the "100 Most Influential Bostonians" by *Boston Magazine* and a spot in the *Boston Business Journal's* "Women Who Mean Business" list.