

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) developed the theme for this year's African American History Month, "The Crisis in Black Education". The theme addresses the role of education in the history of African Americans, citing that the crisis first began in the days of slavery when it was unlawful for slaves to learn to read and write. Throughout the last quarter of the twentieth century and continuing today, the crisis has grown significantly in urban neighborhoods where public schools lack resources, endure overcrowding, exhibit a racial achievement gap, and confront policies that fail to deliver substantive opportunities. Addressing the crisis in black education should be considered one of the most important goals in America's past, present, and future. ~ASALH

"This year, African American History Month calls upon us to reflect on the crucial role of education in the history of African Americans. It reminds us of the importance of teaching and reflecting upon the many roles African Americans have played in building this Nation and driving it forward. This year's theme also calls upon us to rededicate ourselves to the work of ensuring that all children in this Nation have access to quality educational opportunities that give them the skills, experiences, relationships and credentials that can empower them. . . ."

*Excerpt from President Donald J. Trump's
2017 African American History Month Proclamation.*

Three African American Figures Who Left a Footprint on Education

Booker T. Washington – Founder, Tuskegee Institute and considered to be the most influential Black educator in the late 19th and Early 20th Century.

Mary McLeod Bethune – Educator, stateswoman, philanthropist, humanitarian and civil right activist, served as the first president of Bethune-Cookman College in 1942.

The Little Rock Nine – Integrated all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas - 1957.

U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Civil Rights 2017 African American History Month Program



"The Crisis in Black Education"
February 14, 2017

2017 African American Heritage Month Program



Ms. Venita Fields
Keynote Speaker
Partner at Pelham S2K
Small Business Investment Company (SBIC)

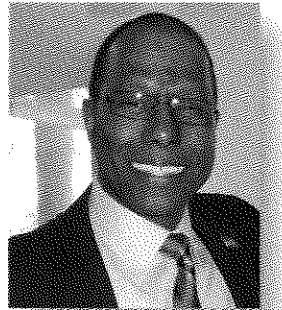
Welcome and Introduction of Guest Speakers
Bruce Purdy
Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Women Business Ownership

Mr. and Mrs. Thornton
Visionary Consulting Partners

Fireside Chat with
Ms. Venita Fields
Moderated by
Eugene Cornelius Jr.
Deputy Associate Administrator
Office of International Trade



Eleanor (Ellie) Thornton
President, CEO
Visionary Consulting Partners, LLC

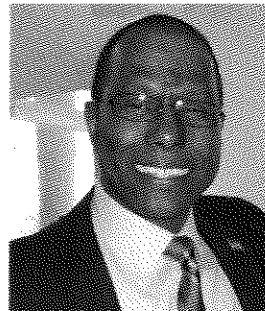


Michael D. Thornton, Sr.
Chief Operating Officer & Co-Owner
Visionary Consulting Partners, LLC

Special Presentation and Closing Remarks
Larry Stubblefield
Assistant Administrator
Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights



Visionary's leadership team, Eleanor (Ellie Thornton and Michael D. Thornton Sr., have more than 30 years of experience in their respective areas of expertise. These areas include disease management, health education, and health administration. The principal consultants of Visionary also specialize in health information technology and the management of large-scale programs and projects. Our leaders believe that optimum promotion of health and responsible management of chronic disease are dependent upon a health care system that is capable of reaching all individuals and integrating personal health care with population based public health.



Eleanor and Mike are active members of numerous organizations and associations, including the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS), where Mike serves as co-chair of the HIMSS Small Business and Diversity Roundtable. Both are volunteer members of the National Health Information Technology Collaborative for the Underserved Education and Outreach, Policy, and Privacy and Consent workgroups. Eleanor is also a member of the American Public Health Association, American Association for Respiratory Care, Association of Asthma Educators and the Society for Public Health Education.



Ms. Fields is Partner for Pelham S2K Managers, LLC ("Pelham S2K"), providing junior capital and private equity investments for privately held middle market companies. Pelham S2K formed in late 2015, is the Manager and General Partner of Pelham S2K SBIC, a \$100 million Limited Partnership. Ms. Fields manages the Firm's Illinois office, where she generates investment opportunities in the Midwest. Prior to joining Pelham S2K, Ms. Fields was a Partner with Smith Whiley & Company. As a Partner she managed the firm's Illinois office. She was also a senior member of Smith Whiley's Investment Committee and oversaw the investment and commitment of 38 mezzanine and private equity transactions that the Advisor directed and managed in its three private equity funds: SW Pelham Fund, L.P., SW Pelham Fund II, LP and SW Pelham Fund III, L.P. As a leader of the Midwest offices of Smith Whiley & Company she led a team that structured and invested over \$145 million in eighteen portfolio companies throughout the country.