



# Community Report



2023

## Dear Friends and Supporters of the MKE Fellows,

2023 has been a phenomenal year of growth and accomplishment for the Fellowship Open and the MKE Fellows. In addition to national recognition by some of America's most prominent service organizations, the Fellowship Open was acknowledged locally by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation for outstanding achievements. It is not an overstatement to declare that the corporate, civic, and community partnership model, created and implemented through the MKE Fellows professional development initiative, has been enthusiastically and measurably successful. In terms of national African American male college graduation rates, internships, and over 50% of alums returning to work to contribute to Wisconsin's workforce, the numbers speak for themselves. The impact of this powerful engagement model is evidenced in the exceptionally-high degree completion rate established over the 11-year life span of this remarkable program.

There are now several public events, wholly embraced and supported by friends and committed benefactors of the MKE Fellows, which continue to feed into our lifeline of financial stability. It has always been a goal of the Fellowship Open to refrain from seeking or accepting government funding. Through innovation and limiting administrative costs, our long-term objective is to transform business and community culture, perspective, and action in order to produce the exceptional results we are witnessing through the MKE Fellows program. For example, ACT scores and traditional grades for students in southeastern Wisconsin are dismal. We addressed that deficiency through the creation of the Lead Generation initiative in partnership with a nationally-acclaimed accelerated learning entity. The significant improvement in those ACT scores was recorded and verified by an independent, third-party panel of educational professionals. During the pandemic, we launched the Five Pillars tutoring program to assist children and families in

Milwaukee's most disproportionately-affected neighborhoods. We respond to community need

through skilled leadership, practical application, and state-of-the-art technology.

Because of our work and reputation, professional development opportunities for MKE Fellows have come from a wide array of career backdrops. Many corporations and organizations have targeted both our graduates and matriculating students and provided unique growth opportunities across the country. As an example, this summer, The School of the New York Times Writers Project gave eight Milwaukee students a chance to expand their horizons by spending two weeks at Fordham University. There they were introduced not only to the world of international news publishing but to New York's singularly unique culture and spectacular milieu. In 2024, we intend to send 10 students to participate in this life-changing initiative.

In light of the recent US Supreme Court decision, many students and their families face imminent challenges. We will be proactive in supporting efforts to improve college and postgraduate admissions scores. It is vital we create a pipeline to key professions and career options for this talented and motivated group of young scholars and future leaders.

**None of this could ever happen without your support.**

Gratefully,



John W. Daniels, III  
President & Director of MKE Fellows



## About the MKE Fellows

Young African-American men in Wisconsin face daunting challenges. Rates of unemployment, crime, and poverty are excessively high, while the graduation rate is well below national averages. Despite these grim statistics, there are many high-potential and resilient young African-American students performing above the achievement gap. Unfortunately, even after they complete high school, there are

many barriers that keep them from graduating from college and launching successful careers. Too often these students lack the social networks, personal mentors, financial wherewithal, and access to pre-professional experiences that lead to career success. MKE Fellows is a well-documented, growing youth leadership initiative providing support to Wisconsin's talented and ambitious young African-American men designed

to facilitate academic excellence, degree completion, and career and vocational preparedness, never veering from commitment to community. The phenomenal success of the Fellows initiative has been evidenced in its ability to respond to today's urgent social and health conditions while engaging Wisconsin communities most affected by these calamities.

# MKE Fellows **5** Pillars of Success



## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

The MKE Fellows program offers students valuable opportunities to build networks, secure jobs, and thrive in their careers. Through events like “Lunch and Learn” and social gatherings, Fellows connect with organizations and form meaningful relationships with peers, fostering mentorship and strong connections among talented city leaders.



## **CAREERS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

By partnering with dedicated businesses, corporations, civic, and community organizations, MKE Fellows provides internships and post-graduation career opportunities to young scholars. This unique focus on career advancement showcases the success of MKE Fellows and is supported by long-lasting committed partnerships.



## **MENTORSHIP**

Each Fellow is paired with a volunteer leader from the community who serves as a dedicated mentor providing career guidance and leadership advice. Fellows also have opportunities to meet successful professionals across a range of careers and consult with dedicated program staff as they navigate through the program.



## **INTERNSHIPS & JOB EXPERIENCES**

MKE Fellows are paired with Wisconsin companies that offer paid internships that help them gain on-the-job experience, build professional networks, and present fresh perspectives to company teams & cultures.



## **SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Earn merit-based book scholarships to help with academic materials. MKE Fellows has emergency funds to provide support to Fellows in emergency circumstances. Outstanding leaders also win awards, medals, and special gifts.



## MKE Fellows Hosts MSOE and Motorola STEM Camp

ALIVE collaborated with the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) and the Motorola Corporation giving students from Milwaukee an opportunity to attend the MSOE Summer Engineering Camp, a learning and enrichment experience they otherwise would never have had. The program focused on many diverse concepts of the user experience including coding and industry practices and standards. Campers explored methods like “design spread” which demonstrated practical application solutions for complex, multifaceted tasks and projects while familiarizing them with the crucial, fundamental skills necessary for a career in engineering.

One notable outcome from the 2023 MSOE Summer Engineering Camp was the development of a prototype video game for Milwaukee’s championship NBA basketball franchise, the Milwaukee Bucks. Aimed at decisively connecting and tangibly engaging the greater Milwaukee community and the Bucks enthusiastic fanbase, this innovative project received acclaim and buy-in from the Bucks organization and will likely be implemented as the season progresses.

This exceptionally powerful initiative would not have been possible without support from both MSOE and Motorola. We thank these patrons and partners for providing such an immersive experience, utilizing a hands-on approach, and fostering access to

specialists and experts. Students tested theories and ideas, investigated apps, and developed a sense of real-world vocational opportunities in the expanding multiverse of technology. Motorola went even further in facilitating a holistic professional experience through planning and discovery meetings, and practical application sessions with executives and working professionals.

Through this collaboration, several students were able to visit businesses and corporate operations in Chicago where they learned about national agendas and global career opportunities and witnessed in motion the establishments and enterprises where their future employment might culminate. MKE Fellows and student participants reported the experience to be transformational. Many left camp with a new perspective and refreshed enthusiasm in pursuing dreams as technologists and scientists.

The concept and practice of onboarding and on-the-job training coupled with mentoring and professional development was an unavailable and inaccessible notion only a few short years ago. With committed partners like MSOE and Motorola, ALIVE plans to continue to prepare engineers of the future through annual renewal of this transformative summer program.

## MKE Fellows Light The Hoan

Created to inspire civic pride, generate awareness, and serve as Milwaukee’s “Symbol of Light,” in 2020 Light the Hoan was born, fostering a sense of unity throughout the city by recognizing the positive contributions of local businesses which are all working toward a better, more inclusive Milwaukee. Described as passionate, dedicated, and in love with the city, the business and civic collective which designed Light the Hoan celebrates the entirety of Milwaukee’s rich culture of nonprofit and quality of life programs, initiatives, and organizations.

On July 10th, the Fellows got their turn to throw the switch, shining the light on the tremendous impact our program has had on youth in Milwaukee for over a decade, by illuminating the iconic Daniel Hoan Bridge - proudly sharing their colors and their story - in the unmistakable royal burgundy and white of the MKE Fellows. The entire city bore witness to the stunning display of colors drawing attention to the Fellows mission, recognizing potential for future prosperity, and celebrating the phenomenal accomplishments of this nationally-acclaimed, professional development and leadership program. With this display, Milwaukee further recognizes and endorses the MKE Fellows initiative as one of its own - standing out as a model for replication and support, positively affecting the community every day.

Festivities included tasty cuisine from local food vendors as guests enjoyed the soulful tunes served up by MKE Fellows alum Zechariah Simmons, DJ Brotha Z, beneath the Hoan Bridge. All in all, the MKE Fellows Light the Hoan ceremony and experience truly enhanced the value of Milwaukee’s collective of dedicated community servants and fell nothing short of superb!



# Careers & Professional Development

Professional Development is an essential dynamic of the nationally-acclaimed MKE Fellows Five Pillars of Success model. Fundamental to progress and vocational advancement, this structured interaction with industry professionals provides insight, knowledge, support, access, and opportunity in both classroom and workplace settings which cannot be delivered in any other manner. Monthly, the MKE Fellows meet for mandatory, strategically-formatted, industry-specific sessions which regularly engage executives and experts across the broad spectrum of career options from healthcare to finance to the legal profession to the arts and beyond.

Throughout the year, the MKE Fellows hosted many prominent, well-respected professionals who eagerly imparted wisdom and shared experiences, answering questions and offering industry insight. Revealing nuances of career progression and suggesting strategies to advance, presenters shared stories of challenge and achievement, and offered a variety of approaches for consideration. Personal anecdotes regarding their own individual paths to success and accomplishment afforded invaluable lessons for future MKE Fellows professionals bringing enlightenment for their journeys ahead.

In 2023, the MKE Fellows sought to engage speakers from multiple fields of endeavor. Knowledgeable presenters brought sagacity and unique awareness of their individual areas of expertise and the encouragement to explore and evaluate. An overview of useful methods to access possibilities in education began the series of Saturday morning development sessions in January.

To guarantee Fellows were prepared to step into these new, emerging, and exciting roles, dialogue often centered on effective workplace and networking tips. LaDonna Reed, Senior Vice President and Director of Community Accountability at Associated Bank, brought a team of colleagues to discuss the importance of effective communication in both personal and professional relationships. Several respected thought-leaders and influencers also added to the discussion on the importance of utilizing social networking platforms. Lakeland University Director of Admissions Elizabeth Julian and Brianna Brooks, an Admissions Counselor from UW-Parkside, were articulate in examining and surveying opportunities on campus and in the postgraduate working world.

Nationally-recognized author and LinkedIn consultant, Wayne Breitbarth, visited the Fellows several times during the year, ensuring that each had the necessary tools and resources to create an impactful LinkedIn profile.

From the flight industry, Dr. Charles Allen, a UWM professor and flight instructor, brought information and access to a completely new career alternative for the Fellows. Dr. Allen dedicates his time to ensuring youth of color are exposed to careers in aviation. Through the Black Pilot School, Dr. Allen offers free flight lessons, training, and the opportunity to obtain a private pilot's license. Thanks to this unique industry entrée, not surprisingly, several MKE Fellows have already taken to the skies.



## Bastille Days



Each year the staff who work with the MKE Fellows gather in the streets of downtown Milwaukee for Bastille Days. We enjoy our time as a team promoting physical wellness as we walk together during Milwaukee's biggest festival. This year, over 5,000 people participated in the two-mile walk.

As a part of our training for the Fellows, we use wellness programs that promote physical activity to create a healthier lifestyle. Exercise is a powerful tool for stress management in two primary ways. First, exercise provides an opportunity for immediate stress release. Second, regular exercise, repeated over time, trains the body and mind to respond to stress more effectively.



# Learning Lab: Alabama - The Empower Initiative



A judicious overview and comprehensive understanding of the historic significance of the events which occurred during the civil rights movement of the 1960's are critically essential in universal appreciation for African-American history. ALIVE's intent is to fully engage and empower our communities - and in particular Milwaukee's African-American youth - in pursuit of the same quality-of-life standards for all Americans everywhere. As one of the nation's premier professional development and leadership youth initiatives, the MKE Fellows design mandates that we enable a practical and factual, historical and cultural perspective for the next generation of leaders we expect to move us forward to equity and prosperity. To

that end, MKE Fellows Engagement Manager, Michael Hyler, and ALIVE team members Reggie Williams and Nathanael Washington embarked upon journeys to the state of Alabama to visit and document in person many of those sites of great significance, reminding us of the struggles and triumphs of Blacks in America,



and the challenges which remain. Over two separate excursions, the team from ALIVE visited a multitude of monuments, exhibits, and institutions where the story of black America was lived out. From Birmingham to Montgomery, the inspirational tour began at the Legacy Museum, an establishment that focuses on how African-Americans escaped enslavement only to be recaptured by a new threat - mass incarceration. The National Museum for Peace and Justice, informally



known as the National Lynching Memorial, was on the list, the sobering display identifying racial terrorism once rampant in the south and now serving to advocate for social justice in America. Imagine living in a place where you're allowed to



go to the store but not to try on clothes, or a place where you had to trace your shoe size to make sure you bought the right shoes because returning merchandise was prohibited. Think for a moment if you had to order food from the back door of a restaurant because you can't order or eat inside. What would life be like if you were living in a state with no black police, no black elected city officials, and no black representatives in government anywhere? For many, this was a reality only seventy years ago.

An entire immersive curriculum and live guided tour experience exist within the framework of the Empower Initiative - Learning Lab: Alabama, an organization which hosts a broad diversity of groups, individuals, and organizations from across the country on a three-day journey through the annals of the American Civil Rights movement. Resulting from the powerful impact of this compelling expedition, the MKE Fellows will now implement annual opportunities for our students to travel to Alabama and experience this perspective-changing voyage for themselves.

# Konnor Stewart

Konnor is a recent graduate of Rufus King High School and now attends the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During his time in high school he participated in numerous extracurricular activities and was an active member of the MKE Fellows. Following graduation from high school, he was given an opportunity to apply for an internship at Quad MKE, a global marketing experience company. Konnor came to the Fellows office for advice on his interview and to rehearse with two staff members. Shortly after this, he received news that he was hired as an intern! Over the summer, Konnor was able to gain a valuable set of new skills as he worked with the staff at Quad MKE. He gained a new appreciation for the Milwaukee community while learning about recruiting and developing talent, removing barriers to successful employment and community engagement and investment. In his words, "Being able to secure an internship straight out of high school has been a tremendous boost to my confidence and enthusiasm."

While attending school, Konnor will continue to be an active member of the MKE Fellows in Madison.



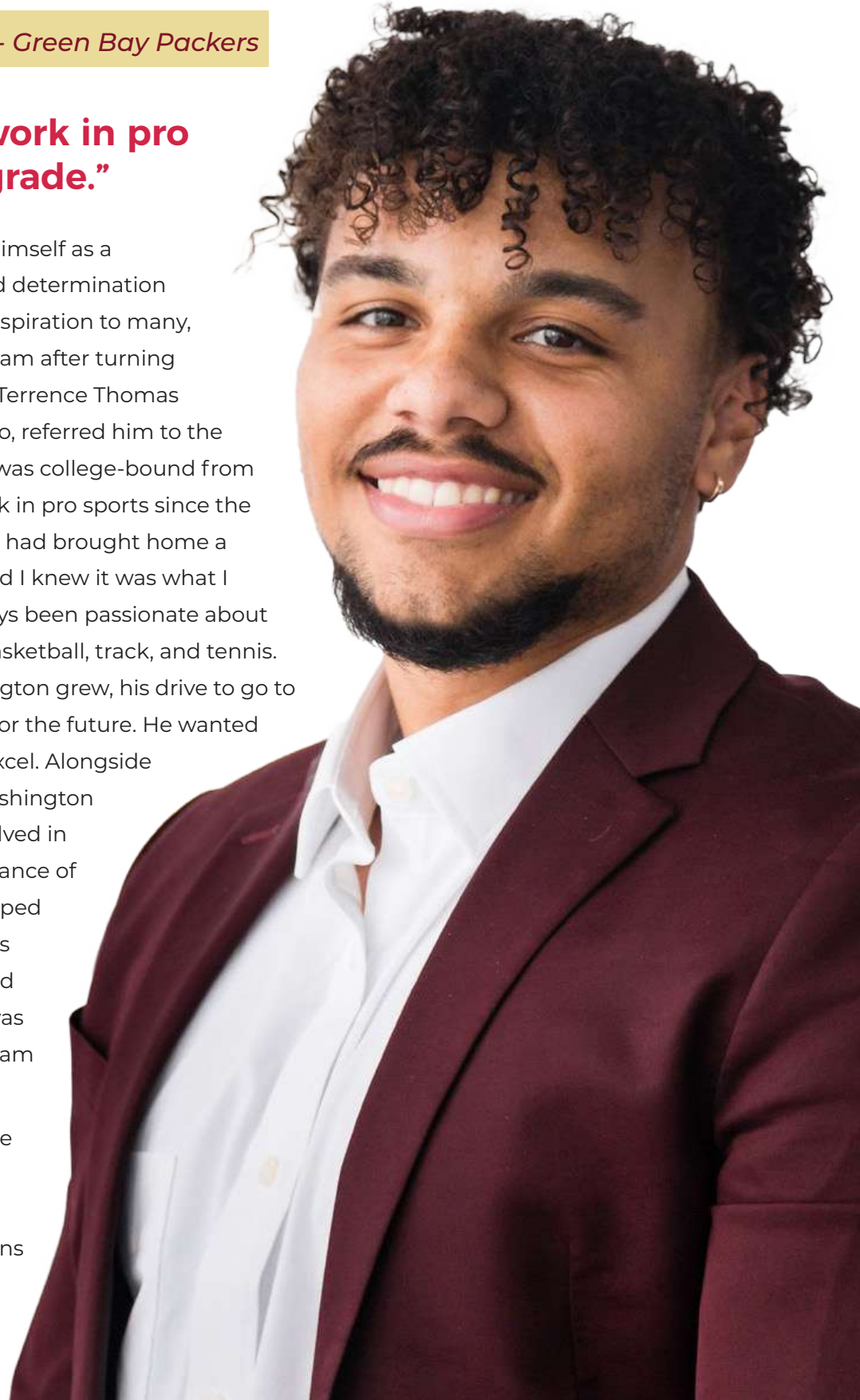
# Nathanael Washington

Player and Alumni Specialist - Green Bay Packers

**“I knew I wanted to work in pro sports since the 7th grade.”**

Nathanael Washington established himself as a precedent through his hard work and determination with the MKE Fellows Program. An inspiration to many, Washington joined the Fellows program after turning eighteen. He'd just recently won the Terrence Thomas Scholarship and his mentor, Dr. Patillo, referred him to the program. Washington knew that he was college-bound from a young age. “I knew I wanted to work in pro sports since the 7th grade. I remember that my mom had brought home a college brochure that described it and I knew it was what I wanted to do.” Washington had always been passionate about sports. In school, he played soccer, basketball, track, and tennis. He was eager to be active. As Washington grew, his drive to go to college evolved. He became excited for the future. He wanted to become more independent and excel. Alongside sports and other extracurriculars, Washington dedicated his time to becoming involved in leadership roles. He knew the importance of developing a skill set. The Fellows helped Washington recognize and pursue his goals. He was taught how to build and maintain an effective network, and was encouraged by both peers and program leaders to continue to work hard.

What started out as a mentor-mentee relationship between John Daniels III and Washington, quickly became a close-knit friendship. Daniels, who runs the Fellows program, saw Washington's potential and brought



him onto his team after he graduated from college. Daniels was determined to help Washington grow and placed him in positions that continually changed him, while ensuring that he was equipped with the tools to succeed. Washington, who recently left the MKE Fellows to work for

**“I learned invaluable lessons about business from Mr. Daniels, he invested so much time into my future.”**

the Packers, accredits the opportunity to his mentor, John Daniels. “I wouldn't be where I am today without him,” Washington says. As Washington steps away from his professional role with the MKE Fellows, he leaves his peers hoping that his story can serve as an inspiration to other Fellows. “Patience is important and you shouldn't just rush through opportunities because another one sounds good. Your focus should be to be the best you can be in each position, even if that means you have to work in roles that aren't your favorite. Some of the jobs I wanted to do the least have prepared me for my current role the most,” Washington concluded.



CONGRATULATIONS

# Brandon Ramey

Site Director - Quad

**“Through Quad MKE, we are building roots in the community and continuing to listen. We are identifying these needs and breaking down the barriers as best as possible to get folks into the family-sustaining careers we have at Quad.”**

Brandon, an MKE Fellow alumni, was named as the Site Director of Quad MKE, a new location that Quad opened last year. Quad, a marketing solutions company, established Quad MKE as a recruitment, training and retention business hub which was developed to create a pipeline into entry-level manufacturing careers as well as creative and administrative agency positions within Quad. Through recruiting and training Quad hopes to develop and retain talent from the Milwaukee area.

As Site Director, Brandon will be using his connections that he gained as an MKE Fellow to develop community partnerships. He will be managing on-site activities including workforce development training, employee support programs and more.

Brandon is excited to direct the vision of Quad MKE, working to remove barriers to employment and create opportunities for everyone in Milwaukee to pursue careers at Quad. His time with the MKE Fellows developed a commitment to the Milwaukee community and to civic engagement.



# Marques Washington

Edison Engineer - GE Healthcare

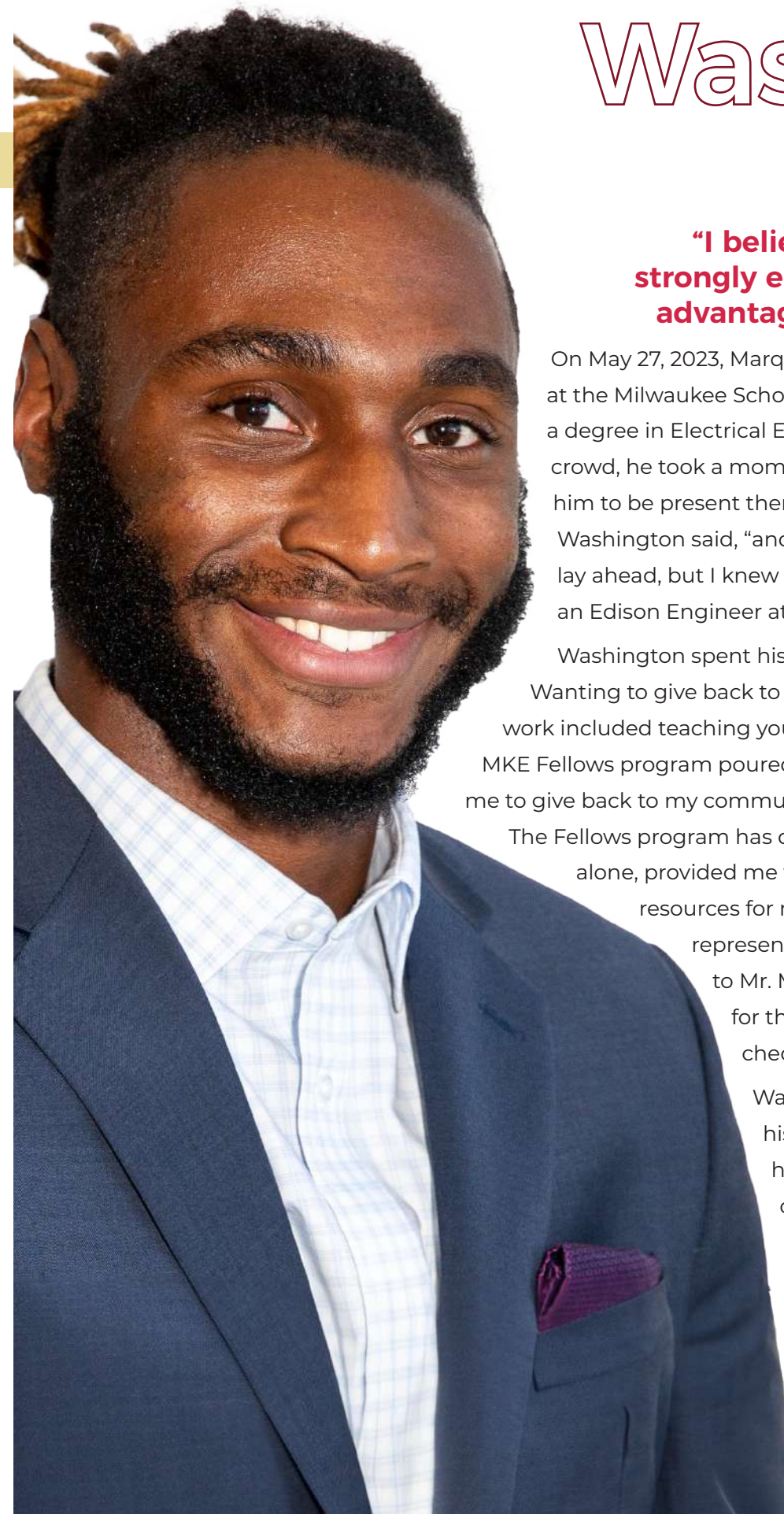
**“I believe in the Fellows program and strongly encourage eligible youth to take advantage of this massive opportunity.”**

On May 27, 2023, Marques Washington walked across the stage at the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE), graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering. As he smiled and waved to the crowd, he took a moment to think about everything it had taken him to be present there in that moment. “It wasn’t easy,” Washington said, “and there were times when I wasn’t sure what lay ahead, but I knew that I couldn’t give up.” Today Washington is an Edison Engineer at GE Healthcare.

Washington spent his time at MSOE studying and volunteering. Wanting to give back to the community, Washington’s volunteer work included teaching youth how to engineer and troubleshoot. “The MKE Fellows program poured a lot of resources into me, and it’s inspired me to give back to my community and to leave my mark wherever I go.

The Fellows program has done a lot for me. It’s helped me to feel less alone, provided me with a sense of community, helped me find resources for my education, and shown me a positive representation of black people. I’m most grateful to Mr. Michael Hyler, the Engagement Manager for the Fellows Program, who calls frequently to check in on me.”

Washington’s persistence and dedication to his education and serving others have helped him strive far ahead of the game. After completing the Edison Engineering Development Program, Washington is considering pursuing his master’s degree. Great work Marques! We can’t wait to see what the future holds in store for you!





# NBA All-Star Game

Salt Lake City, UT was not ready for the All Stars that showed up in February 2023. And we don't just mean the big names, athletic legacies, and dominators on the court. We mean the all star generation of young talent being groomed for bigger dreams and impact in our Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

ALIVE as a proud partner of the NBA Foundation, was invited to participate in the series of activations hosted by the Foundation to promote and highlight entrepreneurs, students, and rising talent from often diverse backgrounds, interests, and skills. It began with the NBA Foundation team Pitch Competition aimed to grow the next generation of Black entrepreneurs providing the tools, resources, and funding for innovative ideas. This was followed by the HBCU Career Development Workshop. Being invited to facilitate discussions with students to further inspire their career aspirations was yet another opportunity to invest into today's talent in line with the passion of ALIVE. Sitting across the table from students who were from opposing teams for the HBCU game, but coming together for the shared goal of learning from leaders was an enlightening time and one that we continue to get inspiring feedback from, as we watch young talent soar.



The ALIVE engagement at the All-Star weekend was a strong demonstration of continued collaboration between the organization and the League. Since receipt of its \$75,000 COMMUNITY BUILDER grant, ALIVE has and remains committed to innovative and insightful ways to put partnership in action, where investment can turn into impact. We are honored to highlight the story of NBA relationships along the journey of MKE Fellows, furthering our efforts and young talent being aware of the organizations that believe in their future.



**“The NBA Foundation is proud to support the MKE Fellows in their endeavor to prepare young Black men to excel in their careers and as leaders in the Milwaukee community,”**

**-Greg Taylor**

**NBA Foundation Executive Director**



# MKExplore: Wealth Management Options for MKE Fellows



RW Baird is foundationally-established as a pivotal, inaugural supporter of the MKE Fellows program. One of our most dedicated and valuable corporate partners, providing internships, professional development, and career opportunities since the initiative began in 2012, Baird has shown exceptionally robust leadership in their community outreach efforts under the leadership of Founder and Managing Director Mary Ellen Stanek and Managing Director of Client Services Peter Hammond.

In 2023, Baird continued to expand their engagement and strengthen their commitment to the MKE Fellows through the creation of MKExplore, a collaborative workshop, industry overview, and professional development concept bringing together young people from schools throughout Milwaukee to learn about the world of financing and investment. Baird advisors offered students an insider's look and a wealth of knowledge on investment strategies, compliance, real estate, and many aspects of fiduciary oversight. Wealth management professionals explored roles as financial advisors, investment analysts, and portfolio managers. Terms and industry-related protocols reviewed in depth a plethora of types of investments, like stocks, bonds, and mutual funds, and how these investment strategies are managed to achieve financial goals.

As a leading national wealth management firm

providing investment advice and financial planning services to individuals and institutions, interaction with Baird professionals proved uniquely instrumental in expanding perspective and awareness for the MKE Fellows' scholars interested in exploring the world of wealth building and personal finance. The astute and eager-to-learn young investors quickly grasped the terms and concepts of risk management, diversification, and



asset allocation in building a successful investment portfolio. MKExplore also included investment simulations and financial planning exercises to help students better understand the philosophies of wealth management and apply them in real-life situations. The concepts of sound, practical, money management, decision-making practices, and available, applicable investment strategies aimed at future personal financial growth resonated well and successfully hit home in an exceptionally valuable MKExplore well spent with RW Baird.



## 2nd Annual Fellowship Youth Open

The Fellowship Open has become one of America's premiere charity golf events. The annual tournament is not only crucial in driving local fundraising efforts, it has become instrumental in fostering opportunities for youngsters to connect with a diverse group of business leaders, community servants, and sports professionals on the national level. One of the most promising expansions toward this objective has been the formation of a powerful partnership with the PGA of America through PGA Reach Wisconsin, First Tee Southeast Wisconsin, and Milwaukee County.

This energetic collaboration, sponsored and endorsed by RW Baird Wealth Management, hosted the second annual Fellowship Youth Open on Friday, August 11, 2023 at Currie Park Golf Course in Milwaukee. Launched as a city, county, and Wisconsin state youth initiative, this free-to-the-public golf clinic and competition event for youth aged 12 to 18, brought together young people from throughout Milwaukee

County to introduce them to the game of golf while providing mentorship and engagement opportunities for several community-based organizations and initiatives including We Black/We Golf and the Kappa Leadership Development League. Baird Managing Director and past Fellowship Open Civic Leadership Awardee, Peter Hammond, stopped by to drop some knowledge and a few practice putts while engaging with the new golfers, joining Wisconsin PGA Executive Director Joe Stadler, First Tee Southeast Wisconsin Executive Director David Cohn, and Fellowship Youth Open Tournament Director Billy Young. The Fellowship Youth Open has been so successful in only its second year, that it has been added to the PGA Reach Wisconsin regular season tournament schedule, greatly expanding access for Milwaukee youth to participate fully in the benefits of the game and transformative experience of golf.



## 23rd Annual Fellowship Open

As successful as the past 22 Fellowship Open golf events have been, in the two-decade plus history of one of Wisconsin's most powerful corporate, civic, and community gatherings, it will be hard to argue that the 2023 Fellowship Open Motown Special at Kettle Hills Golf Course was perhaps the most enjoyable of all time. Fellowship was indeed the business of the day and continued support for Milwaukee's youth was again the outcome of the efforts of literally hundreds of volunteers, honorary chairs, and dedicated staff who work diligently all year to make it come together.

Hall of Fame "Legends" Honoree, former Pittsburgh Steeler, Jerome Bettis, not only found time to stop by the gleaming IPAMA museum and personally salute "National Corporate Leadership" Honoree, Church Mutual Insurance

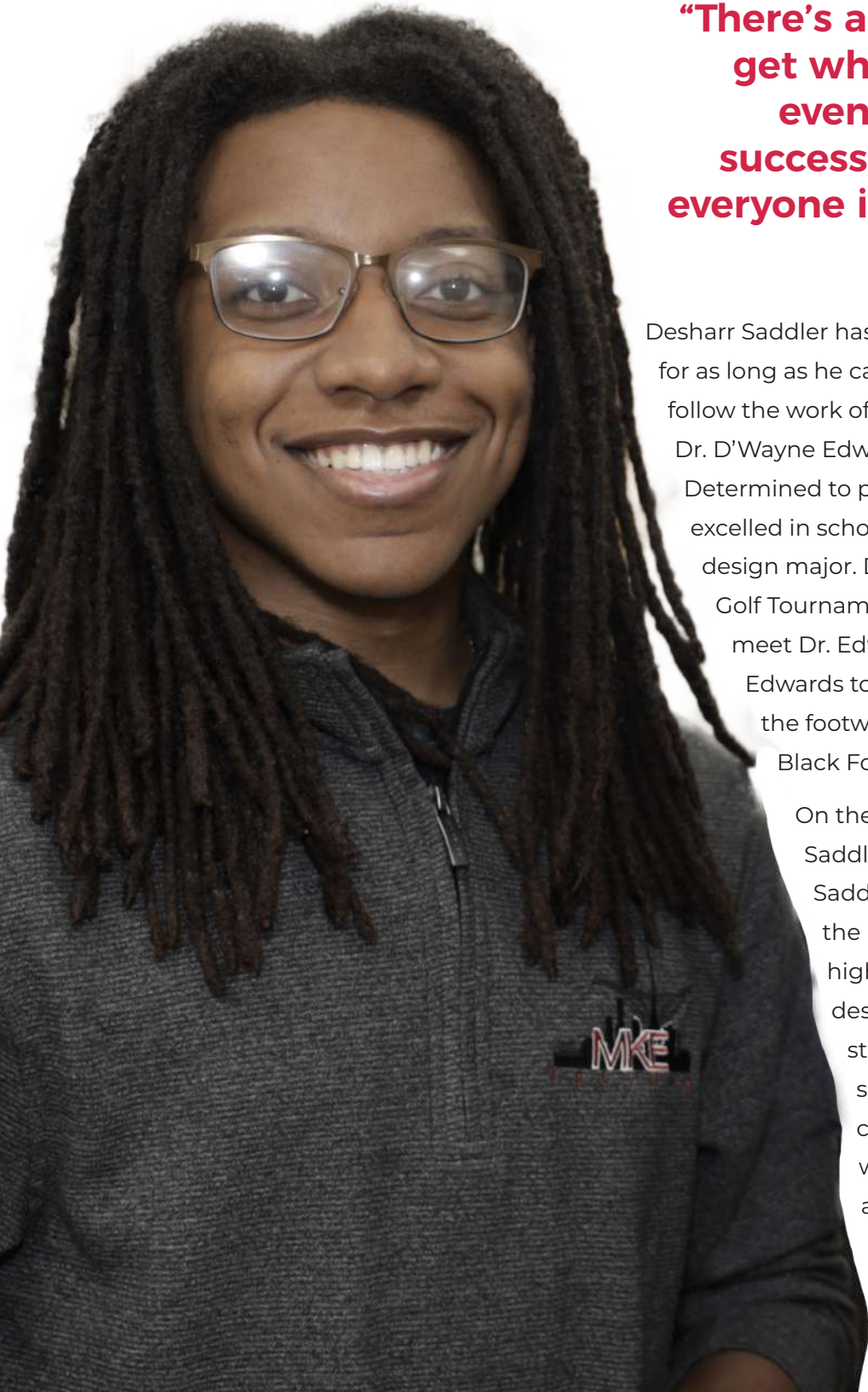
President and CEO, Rich Poirier, at the Thursday night VIP kick-off reception, "The Bus" stop in Milwaukee also prompted his buddies, Packer greats LeRoy Butler and Jerome's high school teammate in Detroit, Gilbert "Gravedigger" Brown, to stop by, rub elbows, trade anecdotes, and turn the traditional Friday after-golf awards luncheon into a Hall of Fame Motown Special event to remember.

The Fellowship Open, which has launched several successful youth-focused partnerships including the nationally-acclaimed MKE Fellows program, drew record attendance, overwhelming support, and serves as one of Wisconsin's most compelling examples of what can be accomplished across aisles, across fairways, and across America.



# Desharr Saddler

Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design



**“There’s a very unique feeling you get when you attend a Fellows event, it’s an environment of success, everyone is driven, and everyone is offering resources and aid. It felt like home.”**

Desharr Saddler has been interested in designing footwear for as long as he can remember. He recalls beginning to follow the work of icons from the industry such as Dr. D’Wayne Edwards at the young age of fifteen. Determined to prove himself, Saddler worked hard, excelled in school, and entered college as an industrial design major. During the 23rd Annual Fellowship Open Golf Tournament, Saddler had the opportunity to meet Dr. Edwards. After reviewing Saddler’s portfolio, Edwards told Saddler that if he was serious about the footwear industry, he needed to be at the Black Footwear Forum in Detroit, Michigan.

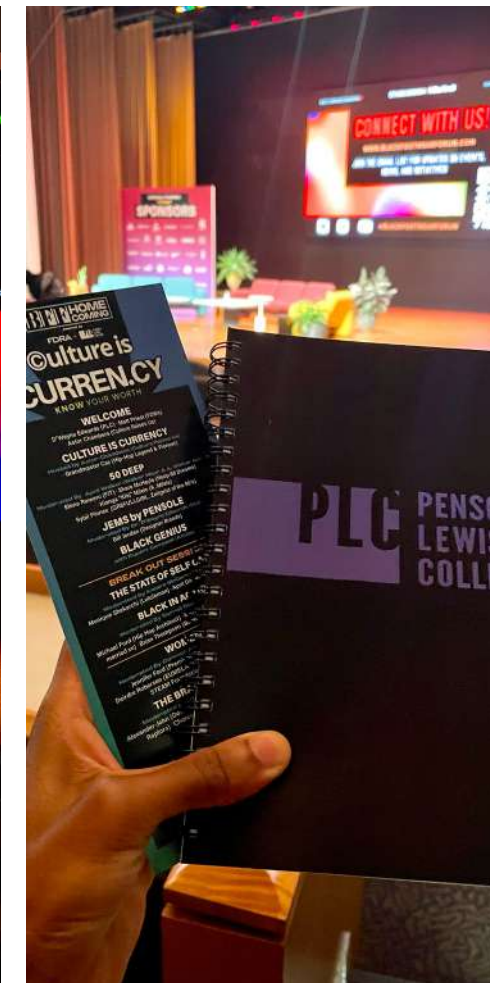
On the morning of September 21, 2023, Desharr Saddler left Milwaukee on a flight to Detroit. Saddler spent two days in Detroit attending the Black Footwear Forum, an event highlighting black footwear industry designers, executives, entrepreneurs, and students, centered around creating a safe space for interested people of color to come together and learn more about what goes on in the footwear industry and what one needs to become successful in the field. Saddler was in awe, it wasn’t only the event itself that impacted him, but the drive of the



attendees. Saddler found himself in a room with nearly three hundred people of color who shared his passion, his drive, and his ambition to create something amazing and excel in their career paths. “It felt like a Fellows’ event,” Saddler said.

During his time at the Black Footwear Forum, Saddler met a lot of his inspirations in the footwear design field. This unique one-of-a-kind event allowed Saddler to network and ask questions to designers he wouldn’t otherwise have had the chance to meet. Saddler got to meet Future NBA Hall of Famer Russell Westbrook and attended a panel discussion with Ruth E. Carter, who designed the costumes for Black Panther, Wakanda Forever, and countless other major films.

Saddler returned to Milwaukee on September 23, 2023, rejuvenated, inspired, and ready to hit the ground running. He looks forward to continuing to expand his knowledge in the footwear industry, and looks forward to leaving a lasting mark.



# Andy Guzman

Ronald Reagan IB High School

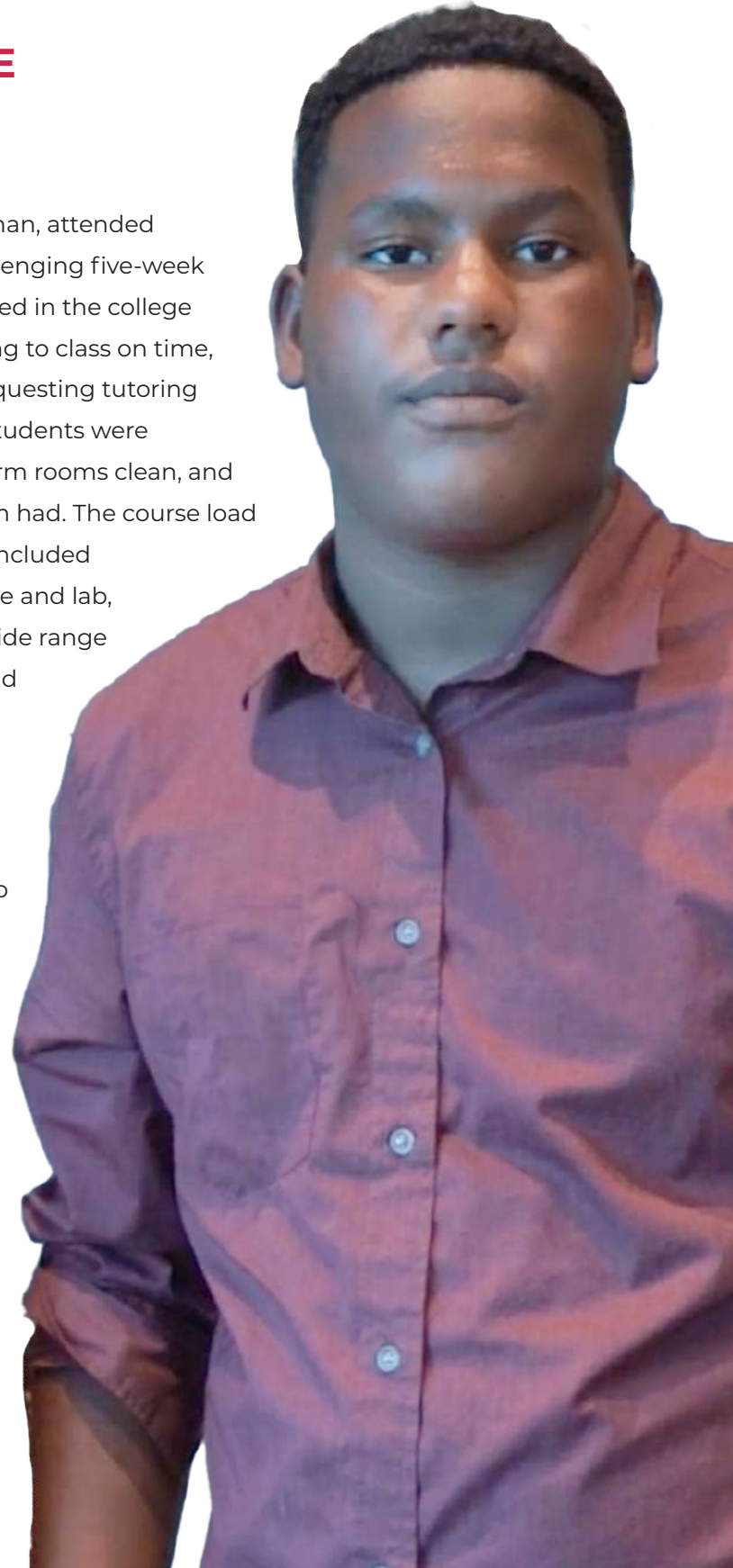
**“My time with t.Lab and the MKE Fellows ensured that I was prepared for the tasks ahead.”**

Throughout the summer of 2023, MKE Fellow, Andy Guzman, attended Kettering University’s AIM program, an academically challenging five-week college prep program. Students were completely immersed in the college experience. Academically, this meant getting up and going to class on time, asking questions in class, taking notes, and looking for/requesting tutoring opportunities if needed. On a personal note, this meant students were responsible for doing their own laundry, keeping their dorm rooms clean, and being on time for every mandatory excursion the program had. The course load was demanding, but Andy found it enticing. His courses included Investments, a Physics lecture and lab, a Chemistry lecture and lab, Calculus, and Computer Science. Andy learned about a wide range of concepts. He was taught to work with Excel, Macros, and visual basics in Computer Science.

Overall, his favorite part of the program was the new knowledge he was obtaining each day. He loved being in a space with so many talented minds and students with such dedication. He didn’t only grow academically, he also developed emotionally, stating that some of his courses helped him better understand his own decisions. Furthermore, he enjoyed excursions the group took to the movies, Escape the Room, and Camp Covenant Hills.

In the future, Andy looks forward to finishing high school before pursuing a degree in either Chemistry or Computer Science. Andy also voiced interest in taking business courses.

Andy shared his deep gratitude to the MKE Fellows and t.Lab programs for their support in obtaining this opportunity.



## The School of The New York Times

During the summer of 2023, sets of MKE Fellows cohorts were given a rare and exclusive opening to live and breathe the transformative experience that is uniquely New York City. ALIVE sponsored a series of two-week excursions to Fordham University in NYC where aspiring writers, journalists, and young communicators dived deeply into the world of international publishing accessed through The School of the New York Times Writers Project. Students resided on-campus at McKeon Hall while attending classes, seminars, workshops, and inner-city excursions exploring a plethora of topics and themes - from “Writing for Television,” to “A Million Lives in the Law,” to “Food and Culture in New York City.”

The SNYT Writers Project was established to facilitate awareness, access, and professional development for talented, young writers, enhancing and expanding career options in the growing multiverse of communications. Students from across the country were afforded a multitude of networking occasions and personal introduction to recognized leaders and industry influencers. The spectrum of expertise and influence of the collective of professionals represents reputations and skills with global impact and is comprised of reporters, editors, columnists, bloggers, and publishers covering every aspect of life - finance, media, healthcare, legal, politics, technology, and beyond without creative limit.

The Fellows hit the bright lights of Broadway, caught an exhilarating performance, took in Times Square, the Staten Island Ferry, Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, and some local NYC workspaces where peers, contemporaries, and aspiring professionals embodied and reflected their own emerging interests as narrators, influencers, messengers, and future communicators. The SNYT Writers Project was nothing short of game-changing, and fuel to the fire in the bellies of these rejuvenated and motivated young writers.

We celebrate and salute our MKE Fellows and the 2023 “Big Apple” experience. Every returning Fellow reported a transformational experience and increased clarity toward newfound ambitions and personal goals. ALIVE now plans to renew this alliance annually and adopt it into the programming moving forward as an added component within the overall MKE Fellows leadership and professional development design.

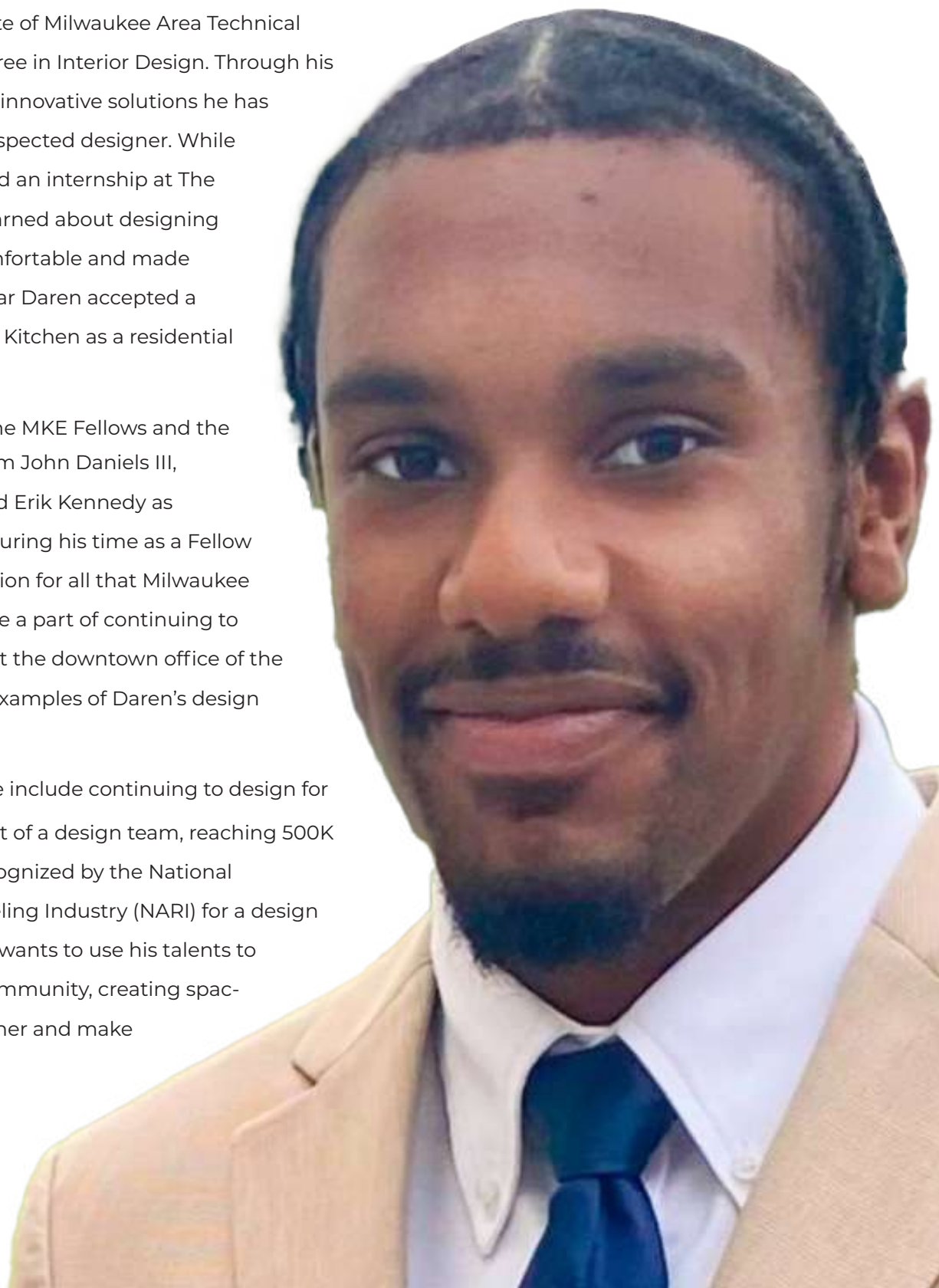
# Daren Thomas

*Interior Designer*

Daren Thomas is a graduate of Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) with a degree in Interior Design. Through his hard work, dedication and innovative solutions he has established himself as a respected designer. While attending MATC, Daren had an internship at The Simple Home where he learned about designing spaces that were both comfortable and made people feel at ease. This year Daren accepted a position at AB&K Bath and Kitchen as a residential designer.

Daren credits his time in the MKE Fellows and the mentoring he received from John Daniels III, Nathanael Washington and Erik Kennedy as influential in his success. During his time as a Fellow he developed an appreciation for all that Milwaukee has to offer and wants to be a part of continuing to improve the community. At the downtown office of the MKE Fellows you can see examples of Daren's design work.

Daren's goals for the future include continuing to design for a commercial firm as a part of a design team, reaching 500K in remodels and being recognized by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) for a design project. In addition, Daren wants to use his talents to improve the Milwaukee community, creating spaces that bring people together and make them feel at home.



## Black Arts Fest

Internships are one of the five pillars of the MKE Fellows program. We are proud to have Black Arts Fest MKE as one of our intern partners. Black Arts Fest is an annual event held each summer to celebrate African heritage and Black cultural arts. The festival showcases entrepreneurship and entertainment as two of the main attractions that inspire attendees to celebrate culture and strengthen pride in their ancestry. Each year two of our Fellows intern over the summer as Vendor Coordinators. This internship involves coordinating the vendor market portion of the festival which comprises the handling of all of the phone inquiries and vendor setup for this event using the Microsoft Suite.

Partnerships, such as the one with Black Arts Fest, are enriching to the Fellows, the festival and the community. The MKE Fellows believe that internships benefit our young people in so many ways. While interning, not only are Fellows able to connect with a company in Wisconsin, but they learn valuable work skills and "soft" skills that are useful in a variety of career fields. One participant from last summer found that the skills that he gained using Excel and speaking to vendors was critical to the success of his next internship, one in New York City in the fashion industry.



## Seat at the Table

Seat at the Table was an event held in July, put together by two former MKE Fellows to promote the city of Milwaukee to talented young professionals. Milwaukee natives, Brandon Ramey, who is the Site Director at Quad, and Braylen Stevens, who works in Product Finance for Google and has a consulting business (MBRACED CULTURE LLC), are both MKE Fellows alumni. This special event held at the Saint Kate - The Arts Hotel, brought together young professionals from around Milwaukee for an evening that included networking, table conversations, music and special guest speakers. The evening's speakers included Sherilyn Whitmoyer from Quad, Andres Gonzalez from Froedtert, LaShonda Hill from ABM Industries and Maudwella Kirkendoll from Community Advocates. Each of these professionals spoke about their journey to success, inspiring our next generation. Brandon and Braylen hope to expand peer networks in the future and retain our talented young professionals in Milwaukee.



# 2023 Graduates



**Favour Kerobo**

*University of Michigan*

Biopsychology Cognition and Neuroscience,  
Pre-Medicine / Pre-Medical Studies  
April 2023



**Isaac Wells-Cage**

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Industrial Engineering  
May 2023



**Mark Lawrence**

*Central State University*

Exercise Science  
May 2023



**Khari Davis**

*University of Wisconsin-Parkside*

Psychology  
May 2023



**Markel Harper**

*Marquette University*

Psychology  
May 2023



**Emmanuel Akpan**

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Industrial Engineering  
May 2023



**Donald Singleton**

*University of San Francisco*

Finance  
May 2023



**Evan Harper**

*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

Biological Sciences  
May 2023



**Corion Smith**

*Marquette University*

Information Systems  
May 2023



**Michael Maney Jr**

*University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

Digital Arts & Culture  
May 2023



**Steven Owens**

*Tennessee State University*

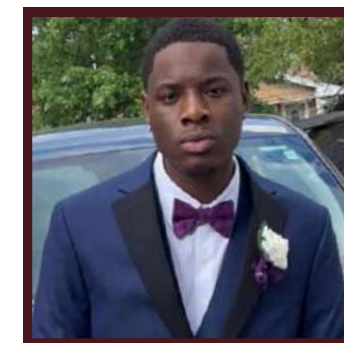
Supply Chain Management  
Marketing  
May 2023



**Marques Washington**

*Milwaukee School Of Engineering*

Electrical Engineering  
May 2023



**Adrien Calvert**

*Tennessee State University*

Mass Communications / Media Studies  
December 2023



**Malachai Crenshaw**

*University of Wisconsin-Platteville*

Environmental Engineer  
December 2023

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*MENTOR Greater Milwaukee*

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*Milwaukee Education Partnership*

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*United Way Worldwide*

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*Sabljak & Budisch*

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*Greater Milwaukee Committee (Retired)*

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*Bader Philanthropies*

**Billy Young**

*Advisor*



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President & Director



**Justin Carr**  
Media Specialist



**Bianca Gallegos**  
Graphic Designer



**Kayla Hall**  
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**Michael Hyler**  
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**Marcelino Ishag**  
Special Project Coordinator



**Sandra Washington**  
Office Coordinator



**Reggie Williams**  
Digital Specialist