

We've all had them — those professional moments filled with tension and terror. Yet we pull through, and as time passes, can look back and realize that some of those experiences were career defining.

One moment in particular stands out for me. After a little over a year and half with the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), I was promoted from director of the field program to senior director of programs, overseeing all of the organization's programmatic work. As part of my new responsibilities, I had to present on my department's work before GLAAD's national board of directors, the majority of whom I had never met. I prepared diligently every night for a week, soliciting advice from mentors and working hard to anticipate the board's questions. I was nervous and just beginning to find my voice as a leader.

Despite my nerves, my preparation allowed me to deliver the presentation without notes, tell stories about GLAAD's impact, and field difficult questions from

the distinguished group. When I was finished, I looked to my left and made eye contact with Dr. Yvette Burton, who was then a newer member of the board. She nodded her head, smiled, and in a very subtle and sophisticated way, snapped her fingers. It was a huge sign of approval from a successful and accomplished African American woman to a young, newly promoted African American man. Essentially it was code for "You made us proud. Nice job." What a great moment that was.

Not long into Yvette's tenure on the board, she was elected co-chair, making her the first African American board chair in GLAAD's history. Whether it was her ability to clarify the issues at hand or manage the various opinions and interests of the board, I watched in awe as she communicated with grace, integrity and precision. She sent a powerful message to me that I belonged and that leadership in this organization and movement was possible. It wasn't

long before I began to ask her for advice and insight. Yvette did not play favorites. She asked tough questions and often challenged me to reexamine my ideas.

I'm acutely aware of how Yvette's mentorship and leadership, and that of other leaders have and will continue to impact my career. This is why I applied for the 21st Century Fellows Program, made possible through funding by the Arcus Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund and Gill Foundation.

The 21st Century Fellows Program is a signature initiative of the Pipeline Project, which works to increase the number of people of color working within and leading the nation's LGBT rights, service and advocacy sectors. The program is the vision of longtime movement leader Clarence Patton, who is the founder, developer, and program director of the Pipeline Project and former executive director of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

# Leadership

## BERNADETTE BROWN

Director  
Policy Triangle Foundation/  
Michigan Equality – Detroit, MI



**I often refer to the Pipeline Project as the Lifeline Project because that's exactly what it feels like to me. Clarence, the funders, the fellows and the facilitators comprise an invaluable support and leadership network for which I am eternally grateful.**

## JUAN MARTINEZ

Development Director  
Basic Rights Oregon/Basic Rights  
Education Fund – Portland, OR



**The 21st Century Fellows program provides the opportunity to share ideas, concerns and experiences with each other with an open and honest approach. It is a situation that is rare, so to have this chance to build genuine and trusting relationships with the other fellows is simply incredible and so valuable to each of our personal growth and professional development.**

## WANJA MUGUONGO

Program Manager  
UHA: East African Sexual  
Health and Rights Initiative  
– Nairobi, Kenya



**This is an excellent program and I am honored to be a part of it.**

The Arcus Foundation, like its partners in funding the 21st Century Fellows Program, understands how challenging it has been historically to retain people of color who seek to commit themselves to service in the LGBT movement – and how rarely we create opportunities to provide current and future leaders with resources to develop their talents and abilities.

In my five years in the LGBT equality movement, I have personally witnessed the consequences of this problem play out time and time again, as talented and committed peers have burned out from lack of support or left the movement because they did not see leadership paths for people who look like them.

The 21st Century Fellows Program is working to change that. This year's inaugural class of fellows, of which I am privileged to be a member, comes from broad cross-sections of age, geography, and experience representing much of the diversity of work taking place across the movement.



It wasn't long into our first meeting together during the Rockwood Leadership Institute's Art of Collaborative Leadership retreat, a nationally renowned workshop for social change, that the 20 newly announced fellows were trading ideas for collaboration, discussing our responsibilities

to one another and to other people of color in the movement, and truly grappling with what it will take to support one another's work and to hold one another accountable.

The value of the 21st Century Fellows Program goes beyond the amazing

# The 21st Century Fellows Program

By Rashad Robinson

## ANDRÉS HOYOS

Associate Director  
Center CARE Wellness  
The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender  
Community Center – New York, NY



“This has been one of the most enriching experiences in my life, personally and professionally. It has helped me to improve my leadership skills and expand my professional network, but most importantly, it has helped me to become an agent of change for social justice within the LGBT movement while reconnecting with my passion.”

## CATHERINE SAKIMURA

Staff Attorney & Family  
Protection Project Coordinator  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
– San Francisco, CA



“The 21st Century Fellows Program has given me an amazing support network to help me take my work and leadership to the next level.”

## JONATHAN LANG

Director  
New York State LGBT Health  
and Human Services Network  
Empire State Pride Agenda – New York, NY



“The 21st Century Fellows Program has provided the space for a frank, candid dialogue about the joys and challenges of working within the LGBT movement and being a person of color, while also providing the Fellows the skills needed to be leaders of tomorrow.”

resources offered and the access we have to experts, leaders and mentors. It's also the fact that 20 of us now know that we are not alone as we contend with the daily pressures of leadership while representing our professional and personal identities inside the movement and out.

The mentorship, support and coaching we receive from leaders like Clarence Patton, Michael Bell, co-founder, president and CEO of InPartnership Consulting Inc., and the Rockwood Leadership Institute doesn't stay inside the room. And it isn't meant to. We are focused on building these skills so that we can export them into our organizations, our work, the communities we serve, and the coming generations of our movement's leaders.

In truth, the impact of the 21st Century Fellows Program — and the significant investment that the Arcus Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund and Gill Foundation have made in this vital work — is realized when the training, the relationships and the learning

experiences are replicated outside of the program; when each of us makes good on our responsibility to the interns, junior staff, and rising leaders within our organizations; and when we have leveraged our experiences with solid decision-making, accomplishment and career advancement.

For me — and I suspect many of the other fellows — this experience is about remembering that our visible leadership in the movement for equality is in itself a powerful message. Whether we're standing and delivering, holding one another accountable, or offering subtle finger snaps of approval, we tell our brothers and sisters of color that they too can find their voices as future leaders.

**Rashad Robinson** is senior director of media programs at GLAAD, where he leads all of the organization's programmatic and advocacy work. He has been with GLAAD for five years and works out of the organization's New York City office. Follow Rashad at [twitter.com/rashadrobinson](https://twitter.com/rashadrobinson).

*The 21st Century Fellows Program is supported in part by the Arcus Foundation's Racial Justice, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Program, which works to increase the power and influence of LGBT people of color organizations and leaders, and strengthen the LGBT movement's commitment to racial justice. For more information, contact Roz Lee, senior program officer, Racial Justice, Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity program at [roz@arcusfoundation.org](mailto:roz@arcusfoundation.org).*



**Twenty of us now know that we are not alone as we contend with the daily pressures of leadership while representing our professional and personal identities inside the movement and out.**

—RASHAD ROBINSON Senior Director of Media Programs, Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation – New York, NY

## 21st Century Fellows Complete Listing

Each of the 20 Fellows is a manager at an LGBT organization that is a current grantee of the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, the Arcus Foundation or the Gill Foundation. The Fellows include 18 managers from U.S. LGBT organizations and two from Africa. They are:

- **Eva N. Boyce**  
Chief Financial Officer  
Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders – Boston, MA
- **Bernadette Brown**  
Director of Triangle Foundation/  
Michigan Equality – Detroit, MI
- **Mushin Hendricks**  
Imam, The Inner Circle  
– Cape Town, South Africa
- **Andrés Hoyos**  
Associate Director of Center  
CARE Wellness, The Lesbian,  
Gay, Bisexual & Transgender  
Community Center  
– New York, NY
- **Jonathan Lang**  
Director of the New York State  
LGBT Health and Human  
Services Network, Empire State  
Pride Agenda – New York, NY
- **Kelly Lewis**  
Community Organizer,  
OutFront Minnesota  
– Minneapolis, MN
- **Rebecca Libed**  
Deputy Director of Develop-  
ment, International Gay  
and Lesbian Human Rights  
Commission – New York, NY
- **L. Indra Lusero**  
Assistant Director, The Palm  
Center – Denver, CO
- **Juan Martinez**  
Development Director, Basic  
Rights Oregon/Basic Rights  
Education Fund – Portland, OR
- **Wanja Muguongo**  
Program Manager, UHA! East  
African Sexual Health and  
Rights Initiative  
– Nairobi, Kenya
- **Tawal Panyacosit Jr.**  
Director, API Equality, Chinese  
for Affirmative Action  
– San Francisco, CA
- **Sung Won Park**  
Project Manager, Intersections  
International  
– New York, NY
- **Rashad Robinson**  
Senior Director of Media  
Programs, Gay & Lesbian  
Alliance Against Defamation  
– New York, NY
- **Francisco Roqué**  
Director of Community Health,  
Gay Men's Health Crisis  
– New York, NY
- **Catherine Sakimura**  
Staff Attorney & Family Pro-  
tection Project Coordinator,  
National Center for Lesbian  
Rights – San Francisco, CA
- **Reverend Roland  
Stringfellow**  
Coordinator of the Bay Area  
Coalition of Welcoming  
Congregations, The Center for  
Lesbian & Gay Studies in  
Religion & Ministry at The  
Pacific School of Religion  
– Berkeley, CA
- **Beverly Tillery**  
Director of Community  
Education and Advocacy,  
Lambda Legal Defense &  
Education Fund – New York, NY
- **Hector Vargas**  
Director, Education & Public  
Affairs Department, Lambda  
Legal Defense & Education  
Fund – New York, NY
- **George B. Walker, Jr.**  
Vice President, Leadership  
Initiatives, Gay & Lesbian  
Leadership Institute  
– Washington, DC
- **Javarré Cordero Wilson**  
3MV Program Coordinator,  
Black Coalition on AIDS  
– San Francisco, CA