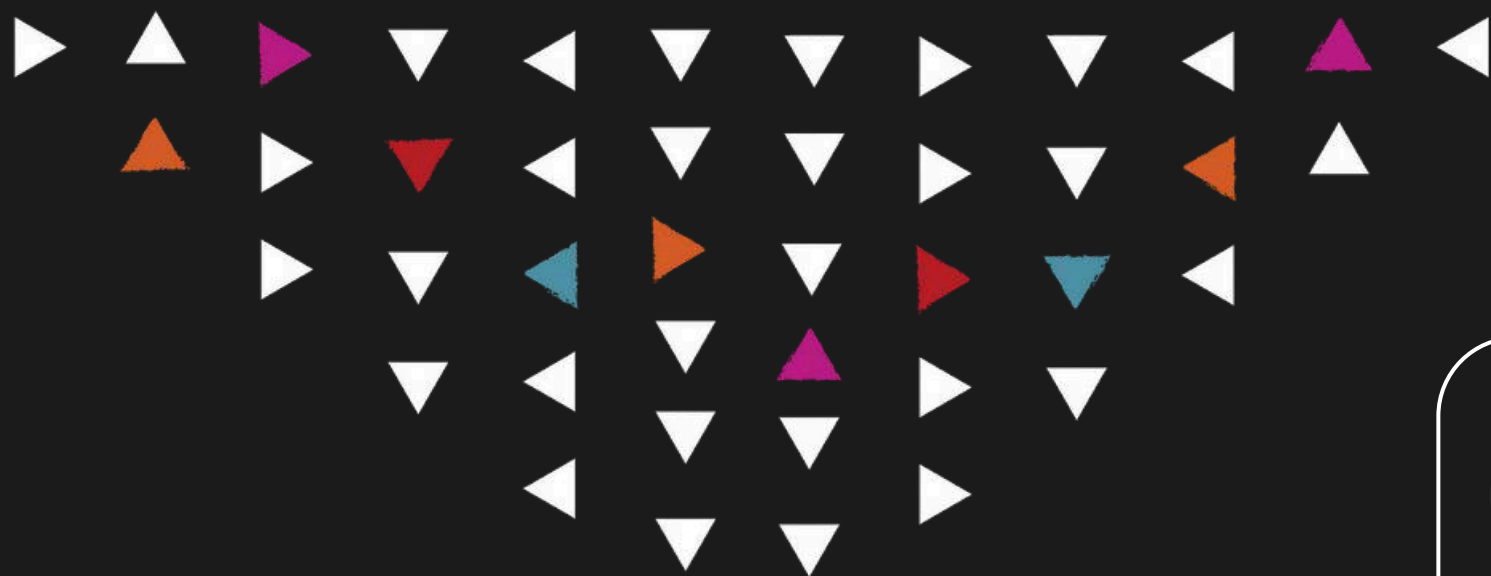


# IIDA

GEORGIA  
chapter



# 20 24



## GEORGIA VOICE OF DESIGN

Chapter Awards Submission

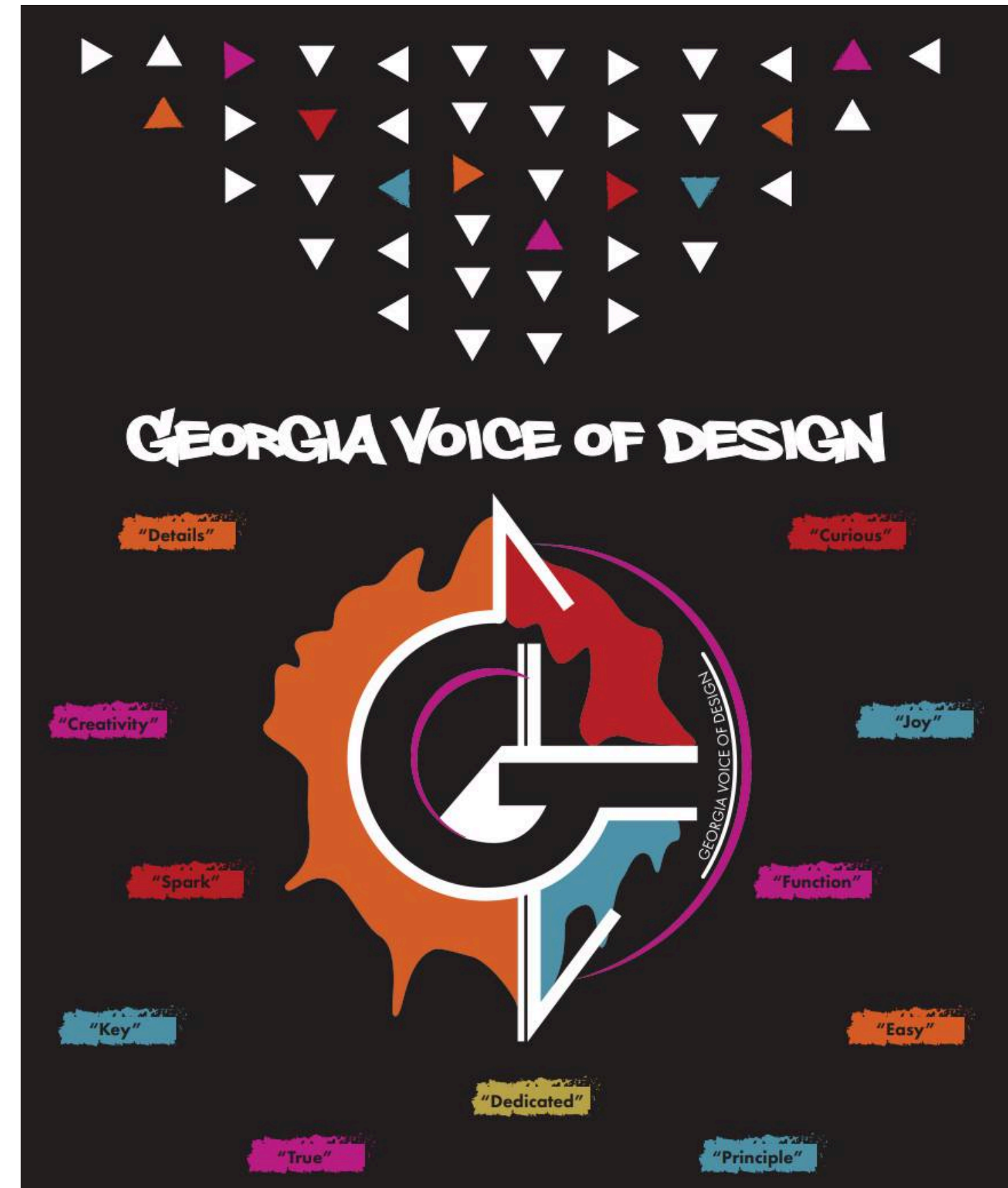
February 28, 2025

# What is Georgia Voice of Design?

Born from a visit to the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry's Black Creativity exhibit, **Georgia Voice of Design** is an enthusiastic celebration of the design work and journeys of people of color in Georgia.

The GVOD committee met, proposed a list of design professionals, and through research and a collection of personal experiences, selected 10 honorees. The committee expanded this to 11 to include the design professional that designed the exhibit.

For the physical exhibit boards, each honoree completed a questionnaire and submitted photos of themselves and their work.





# The Exhibit



Exhibit Entrance at Buehead Art & Co.

The designs for the inaugural 2024 GVOD Celebration represent a modern twist on vernacular traditions of pattern making across numerous people groups on the African continent. The triangular shape speaks to concepts of harmony, firmness or stability, and spirituality, its dynamic repetition on the page, evoking a zig-zagging pattern, embodies the dynamism of the journey of life. The bold expression of the fonts and color fills represent the audacity, unapologetic approach, and enduring nature of the African Diaspora as whole, but also of the individual designers that embody these principles in their work.



Christian Coles, Architect, Educator, & Exhibit Designer



# The Event

The exhibition was held  
on February 21st, 2024  
from 6-8pm at  
The Buckhead Art & Co.



Each honoree  
had a chance to  
engage and  
share their  
journies in their  
personal and  
career  
achievements.

Attendees had time to take in the exhibit,  
mingle with honorees, and enjoy some  
wine and charcuterie. Afterward,  
everyone settled in for a panel discussion  
with the honorees.




**Panel Discussion**



# The Honorees

RONNIE BELIZAIRE

FIIDA



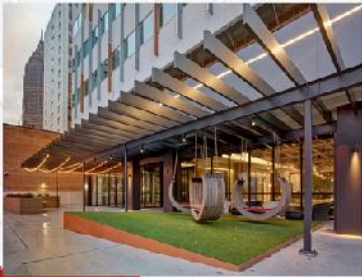
Independent Design Consultant

Ronnie Belizaire is an accomplished project executive renowned for her work with various companies, including several Fortune 500 corporations, where she has played a pivotal role in transforming organizations through design. Her expertise spans architecture, interior design, branded environments, master planning, real estate development, diversity and inclusion, ESG, capital planning, and client relationships. With an extensive portfolio covering nearly 500 acres and over 5 million square feet of architectural, interior, and industrial projects across North America, Belizaire is a passionate advocate for equitable and inclusive practices in the built environment.

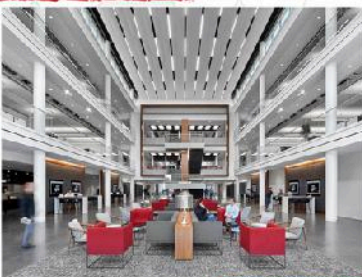
A proud graduate of both Florida A&M and Florida State Universities, Ronnie holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and MBA from FAMU, a long with a Master of Science in Interior Design from FSU. Currently, she serves on the Advisory Board for the Interior Architecture & Design Program at FSU.

In addition, Ronnie has dedicated her time to the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), where she served as the IIDA Georgia Chapter President from 2013-2014 and as the IIDA Foundation Chair from 2017-2019. Since 2019, she has been an active contributor on IIDA's International Board of Directors and currently holds the position of President. Beyond her professional roles, Ronnie actively engages with the community through volunteer work, driven by her aspiration to promote goodwill through the transformative power of design.

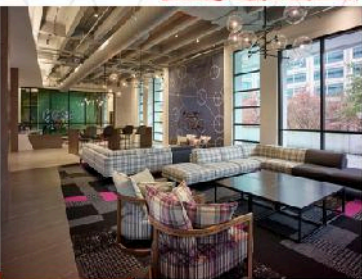
"THE DESIGN INDUSTRY CAN TAKE INDIVIDUALS ON QUITE THE PROFESSIONAL ROLLERCOASTER STAY CURIOUS AND ENJOY THE RIDE!"




Green 700 Atlanta, GA



Marriott Marlin L&M Headquarters Tampa, Florida, FL



Green 700 Atlanta, GA



TCHERNAVINA REESE

NCIDQ, LEED AP



Managing Principal

Tchernavina Reese is one of the managing principals at The Hunter Group Architects and has over more than 20 years of experience. She played a crucial role in establishing and developing the interior design department, which specializes in offering healthcare, architectural and interior design services, as well as client services for furniture, fixtures, and artwork (FF&E). Since the inception of the interior design department in 2009, Tchernavina and her team have designed more than 1 million square feet.

Tchernavina completed her Bachelor of Architecture with honors from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Apart from managing the firm, Tchernavina spends her weekends volunteering and visiting Disney or running marathons at Disney.

"I BELIEVE THAT NOTHING WORTH HAVING COMES EASY. IF IT WERE EASY EVERYONE WOULD HAVE IT OR BE DOING IT."



Target/Exo Architecture and Surgery Center of Georgia, Georgia, GA



Georgia State and North University, Georgia



Delta 10 North West Beach, FL



RENITA WOODSON

NCIDQ, LEED AP



Principal


Renita Woodson is a NCIDQ licensed & LEED AP certified interior designer whose passion is to create functional and innovative designs that enhance the lives of all who experience them.

With 15 years of experience in interior design, her belief that the most important element in every design are the people who use it. It is this belief that guides Renita as she approaches every project. Whether Pediatric Healthcare, Multifamily developments or recently Product Design, the desire to create unique environments and experiences drives her and attention to detail and ensures results that resonate with the users while surpassing clients' expectations. In 2009, she created Renita Palana Designs, her own Atlanta based design firm as a container to allow her to practice design in a more authentic way. Since that time, her goal continues to be - a consistent composer of cleverly functional design.

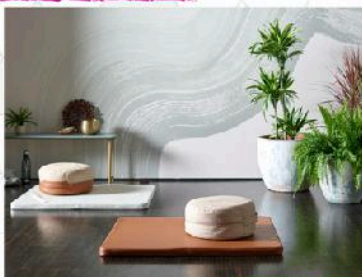
Renita holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Interior Design from American InterContinental University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from Spelman College. She resides in Atlanta with her husband and three children.

"FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION."


JOHN H. SHANNON



Booster Room, K&L Pediatric & Dental Office, Georgia, GA



Product Photos - Table for QES



The Exchange Office, Midtown Atlanta, GA



PAM ROBINSON

NCIDQ, LEED AP



Associate/Business Development

With degrees from the University of Cincinnati and Kent State, Pam Robinson has practiced the art of design since 1998. She began her career in Ohio before being transferred to ASD | SKY's headquarters in Atlanta. A valued team player, Pam's reliability and consistently fresh outlook made her the go-to resource for on-call client portfolio projects. She has completed countless nationwide locations for KPMG, McKenra, Long & Aldridge (now Dentons), and PricewaterhouseCoopers, just to name-drop a few of her satisfied repeat clients.

While at ASD | SKY, Pam led a number of community projects including guiding art classes for @Prom's at-risk children; assisting children with hands on crafts through WeCare; working with co-workers to create a 'ready to wear' dress for IIDA Georgia's Dressed event; and participating in IIDA's ZeroLandfill challenge.

With a natural eye for interior design, Pam chose this field to offer clients an elevated experience whether they were working, gathering for a meal, or simply enjoying a coffee together. Embracing that life is the journey, not the destination, she wanted to make every step along the way worth savoring. Pam enjoys walking the line between opulence and accessibility. She endeavors to design comfortable spaces with intentional touches of elegance and whimsy.

When she isn't creating unique experiences within built spaces, Pam enjoys spending time with her husband, her daughters and grandchildren; cultivating her garden; and playing with her dog.

"GOOD CHANEL SAID IT BEST, 'BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE, LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND TAKE ONE THING OFF.' THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO INTERIOR DESIGN!"



EMMA Spectrum Center Atlanta, GA



KPMG Spectrum Center Atlanta, GA



KPMG Spectrum Center Atlanta, GA





# The Honorees

LUPITA MURRAY



Associate/Sr. Interior Designer

Born and raised in Hyde Park Chicago, Lupita Murray's creative talent stems from being a third generation of artists to attend the Art Institute of Chicago. With a degree in interior architecture, Lupita approaches each project as a unique canvas. Transforming spaces into captivating havens is more than a job for this seasoned interior designer. With a keen eye for detail, Lupita is armed with a passion for creating environments with an artistic flair and a love for cultural diversity, allowing her to weave a tapestry of textures and colors that evoke emotion and tell a unique narrative. With a portfolio that boasts diverse projects from education/science and technology to dynamic commercial spaces, each project reflects a commitment to creating atmospheres that enhance well-being. Outside the design realm, she draws inspiration from cultural explorations, vibrant colors of nature, global cuisine, and the ever-evolving tapestry and rhythm of city life.

Currently Lupita is an associate, senior interior designer with Harris+Smith and leads their interior design studio with over 30+ years in her professional career.



Savannah College of Art and Design  
Savannah, GA



Georgia State University  
Atlanta, GA



Tulane University  
New Orleans, LA

DESIGN IS AN EVER-EVOLVING FIELD, AND STAYING INFORMED ENHANCES YOUR SKILLS AND CREATIVITY.



LISA WHITE



Principal Owner

Lisa White has enjoyed a successful career in the commercial interiors industry for 20 years, founding a Kimball International Select Dealership in 2017. WHB serves public facilities within government, corporate, medical, higher education, hospitality, industrial and retail environments. In addition to supplying furnishings and interior accessories, she can very often be seen working on strategic and employee relations initiatives. WHB holds several certifications with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), Minority Supplier Diversity Council (NSMDC) and Women Owned Small Business (WOSB). WHB is consistently awarded such high-profile projects as the Hartford-Jackson International Airport expansion, Hospital redesign with an expected facility changes from the academic, Emory University's USD, certified academic buildings, Microsoft's Atlantic Yards campus and so many more.

As an engaged member of the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW), Lisa has served on the Programs Committee, co-chairs the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee, participated in the Leadership Program, volunteered with Atlanta Women's Foundation and Habitat for Humanity. Lisa also holds a seat on the board of the Museum of Design Atlanta (MODA).

With the Women in Defense (WIDGA), Lisa was instrumental in providing guidance to the organization as a founding member and went on to chair their programs committee. As co-host of "Small Business Matters," Lisa had the opportunity to pay it forward by sharing tools for securing certification and working with federal agencies.

Beyond supporting peers and clients, Lisa is an advocate for empowering our younger generation with career planning tools, interview preparedness, and community involvement through her affiliations with Year Up and Girl Scouts of America.

Lisa attributes her success to a supportive family. She is the proud mom of two adult children, Jafari and Courtney, both college graduates and accomplished professionals. The backbone of her foundation which also includes her siblings and parents. A network of professionals who are talented in their crafts and a collaborative team dedicated to achieving the ideal working space for their clients. Most of all, her enduring faith is what truly keeps her going!



Georgia Power Conference Center  
Atlanta, GA



Emory University  
Atlanta, GA




Harris+Smith  
Atlanta, GA

"YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU'RE GOING TO ENCOUNTER AT THE STORE, AIRPORT OR IN THE CLASSROOM, THAT PERSON COULD BE THE KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS."



FELICIA CHESTNUT

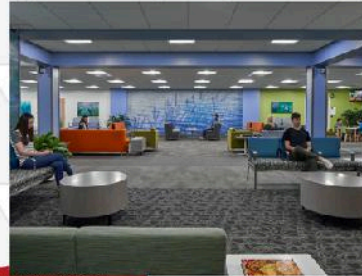


Account Manager

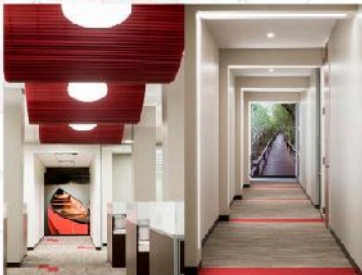
Felicia is the proud single mother of Isabella, who just started her freshman year at KSU, and is an "empty nester" in every sense of the phrase. Design and Construction has been a part of Felicia's life from a very young age - she grew up cutting out house floor plans in the Sunday Paper and drawing her own floor plans. Additionally, her dad, who started his career as a construction project manager, would take Felicia and her brothers to his construction sites after church every Sunday - begrudgingly they went. She is beyond thankful for the opportunity to watch projects being built from the ground up, especially one designed by IAT. Felicia in Dallas, Texas. In 1938, she graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in interior architecture.

Her design career started at a full-service architecture and design firm where she learned and grew for 5 years, later moving on to another firm where she spent 12 1/2 years designing and managing interiors projects. Her introduction to healthcare design began when she joined the Planning, Design and Construction department of a major children's healthcare system. She spent 10 1/2 years supporting capital projects, operational projects, furniture selection and development and installing furniture and interior finish standards. Felicia has developed numerous skills throughout her career from managing client relationships, providing design services, to consulting design firms/furniture dealers on best design solutions for corporate and healthcare standards. In 2016, she joined a reputable and successful interior design firm where she managed and designed numerous projects during her 8-year tenure. Felicia narrowed her focus, specializing in healthcare projects.

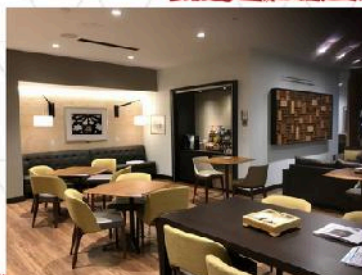
Although her professional passion lies in the design world, she is most passionate about continuing to watch her daughter grow into a compassionate, wise and self-sufficient young woman. It has been the greatest privilege of her life. From the moment Isabella was born, Felicia knew her purpose - to nurture Isabella's heart and mind to their fullest potential.



Kaiser Permanente  
Oakland, CA




Springs Medical  
Auburn, AL




Harris+Smith  
Atlanta, GA

"THRIVE ON THAT SPARK OF CONNECTION WHEN YOU MEET A CLIENT FOR THE FIRST TIME AND JUST KNOW A REWARDING RELATIONSHIP LIES AHEAD."



COURTNEI MAXWELL




Director of Interiors

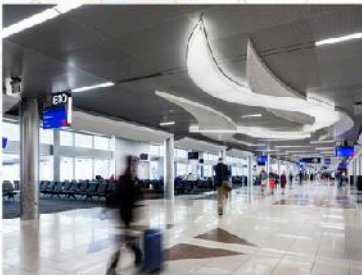
Transformative, Forward-thinking, Elevated - are just a few of the attributes that embody the drive, vision, and style of Interior Designer Courtney Maxwell. A Hampton University graduate and Registered Interior Designer, Courtney's unique perspective on design comes from her principal training in architecture, and the deep interest in the effects of color, texture in architecture, and the deep interest in the urban environment, which she uses as a foundation for her interior inspiration. Courtney, a native of Louisville, KY discovered her passion for design and creation at a very early age. The welcomed support and encouragement from her parents and being nurtured in an atmosphere of African American and ethnic pride, catapulted all the components of her life's vision.

As Director of Interiors at CHASM Architecture, Courtney brings extensive knowledge and expertise, contributing to her strengths in design. Her ability to focus on the details of complex projects produces aesthetically distinguished results. With more than 15 years of experience, Courtney is well versed in Higher Education, K-12, Corporate, Civic, Healthcare, Multi-Family and Aviation design. She was a key team member in the comprehensive 1.25 million SF of interior renovations for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport-Airside Modernization Project. Her work ethic demonstrates relentless commitment to strong design concepts and re-imagined innovation.

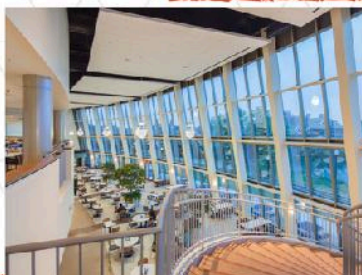
Courtney is committed to serving the community by volunteering with the Georgia Chapter of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA). Courtney is a member on the board and continues to use her talents by participating on committees for signature events.



Savannah College of Art and Design  
Savannah, GA




Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport  
Atlanta, GA



Hampton University  
Hampton, VA

THE DETAILS ARE NOT THE DETAILS... THEY MAKE THE DESIGN"





# The Honorees

**BRY AYERS**



**Sr. Designer/Sr. Project Manager**

Ms. Ayers extensive history of experience in both project management and design leads her to consistently achieves successful results on progressive project assignments. As a manager, she is experienced in handling complex projects with a broad range in size and type from start-ups at 20,000 SF to large hospitals over a million SF. Ms. Ayers has a proven ability to satisfy client expectations while effectively working within established budgets, costs and schedules. Her rapid response to clients is augmented by her excellent design/management skills and dedication to her work.

Ms. Ayers also has impressive organization skills. Her previous experience in construction as senior estimator and project director enables her to effectively bridge the gap between design and construction. Ms. Ayers' experience and commitment to monitoring workflow, project hours and schedules from initiation to move-in has enabled the client to maximize their overall goals and dollar value of their project. Her understanding and ability to coordinate with multiple stakeholders including IT vendors, AV, and FF&E while serving as a client representative allows her to consistently deliver successful projects.



Microsoft Building  
Atlanta, GA



Georgia Tech  
Atlanta, GA



Marriott Atlanta South Station  
Atlanta, GA

"SOME SAY TO FIND JOY IN THE PROCESS AND NOT THE FINISHED GOAL. I SAY FIND JOY IN BOTH."



**MURIEL CRAWFORD**



**Interior Architect**

"AND SO IT IS... a 64-year LIFETIME CAREER IN DESIGN... 1956-2018"

What happens in the largely reflects personal philosophies (one's system of beliefs, values, and viewpoints) attitudes. The details that emerge from the creative process of one's mind and CRAWFORD are intricately integrated, the perception of which is one of interdependency through ideas and innovations of personal, practical, and professional aspects. (Both Professional PRACTICE AND ACADEMIC). It has been a LIFETIME DESIGN OPPORTUNITY to be able to exercise the right to LIVE, TO WORK, TO BE CREATIVE, and to BECOME whatever things HUMANITY DESIRES and VISION (individually and collectively) have combined to make.

Design was not a personal choice. DESIGN was the PURPOSE of this life, given that a five-year old announced to her parents upon receiving a Fashion Doll with trunk filled clothes, "I will be a FASHION DESIGNER when I grow up." Indeed, a B.S. Degree (1956) in ART, evoked an ART Teacher whose career and life, Design, Art, leading to Residential and Commercial Interiors Design.

Thirty years later, personal choice evolved into Commercial Design, requiring graduate-level Education in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design (M.A.S. Degree 1972), Arizona State University. Thereby, a career at the ARCHITECTURAL level elevated "Interior Design" to INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE, making extremely more complex processing, employing artistic, judgmental, and creative skills.

Quality design requires collaborative and creative integration between and among interdisciplinary components - both technical and artistic - philosophically and technologically. While analysis (focus on the part) is an important aspect of the design process, it does not provide a larger means for thinking, the imagination process, known as SYNTHESIS, allows the designer to transcend and become sensitive to the collective interaction of humans, society, culture, and nature. "The ART of GOOD DESIGN."

Humans alter environments to provide an improved quality of life, an improved sense of well-being, of purpose, use of enhancement, less stress, and have led to progress, and its incorporation as understanding of their behavioral patterns and traditions.

People have come to operate under the premise, but new technology can always be understood to meet the problem. Design, Architects and Professional Architects must accept assigned roles for SYNTHESIS in preparing to teach and guide creative synthesis thinking. All too often, synthesis is added to the list that is addressing problems, when the premeditated or declared actions (practical Design actions) have HUMAN (physical perception senses [feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling, & tasting]) and HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL aspects. Synthetic thinking directs one's thoughts to larger issues, whereas analysis is usually based on precision.



Ray Charles Performing Arts Center and Music Academy Building - Peachtree College  
Atlanta, GA



Churches through Alabama, AL



Georgia Tech Public Space  
Atlanta, GA




University of Georgia  
Athens, GA

"I HAVE STOPPED WORRYING ABOUT THE FUTURE. MY GOAL IS TO DROP THE EGGS AND BE TRUE."



**CHRISTIAN COLES**




**Architectural Designer/Instructor**


Christian Coles has a passion for designing for minority communities, especially the African American community, and delving into the human aspect of architecture and urban design by integrating psychological principles into his work. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Architecture alongside a certificate in Psychology from Georgia Tech in 2015, followed by further studies at the University of Michigan, exploring the intersection of architectural design and human psychology. His thesis focused on the impact of racially restrictive urban planning in Newport News, Virginia, and the resulting challenges for the local African American community, along with proposals for remediation.

Currently employed at CHASM Architecture in Atlanta, GA, he also teaches a course on African American Design and Aesthetics online through CPDI Africa, undergraduate design studios at Georgia Tech, and acts as an advisor to Georgia Tech's VIP program concerning Afrofuturism. Christian has previously taught studio courses at Kennesaw State University on Cultural Efficacy Through Design and Regenerative Urban Design in Atlanta's Swann Auburn neighborhood.


Christian advocates for approaches to design that tell a triumphant narrative concerning the daily lives of minority communities, reconcile a history of racially restrictive and exploitative design practices, and explore black futures. His latest entrepreneurial endeavor, Melanite Futures Tribe, is dedicated to fostering empowerment among communities, encouraging them to envision a range of vibrant futures that celebrate the essence, joy, and diversity of black experiences. His vision is realized through multi-disciplinary design interventions, workshops, consulting services, and speaking engagements.



Ray Charles Performing Arts Center and Music Academy Building  
Atlanta, GA




Harold L. Richmond House Historic Rehabilitation  
Atlanta, GA



University of Georgia  
Athens, GA

"ALMOST ALWAYS, THE CREATIVE DEDICATED MINORITY HAS MADE THE WORLD BETTER..."

-Maurice L. L. Williams







# By The Numbers

## Expenses

Venue, Musician, Bartender	\$4,400
Graphic Design	\$1000
Chair Rental	\$300
Catering	\$1600
Photo Backdrop	\$600
Awards	\$300
Misc. Supplies	\$150
<hr/>	
Total Event Cost	\$8350

## Funding & Donations

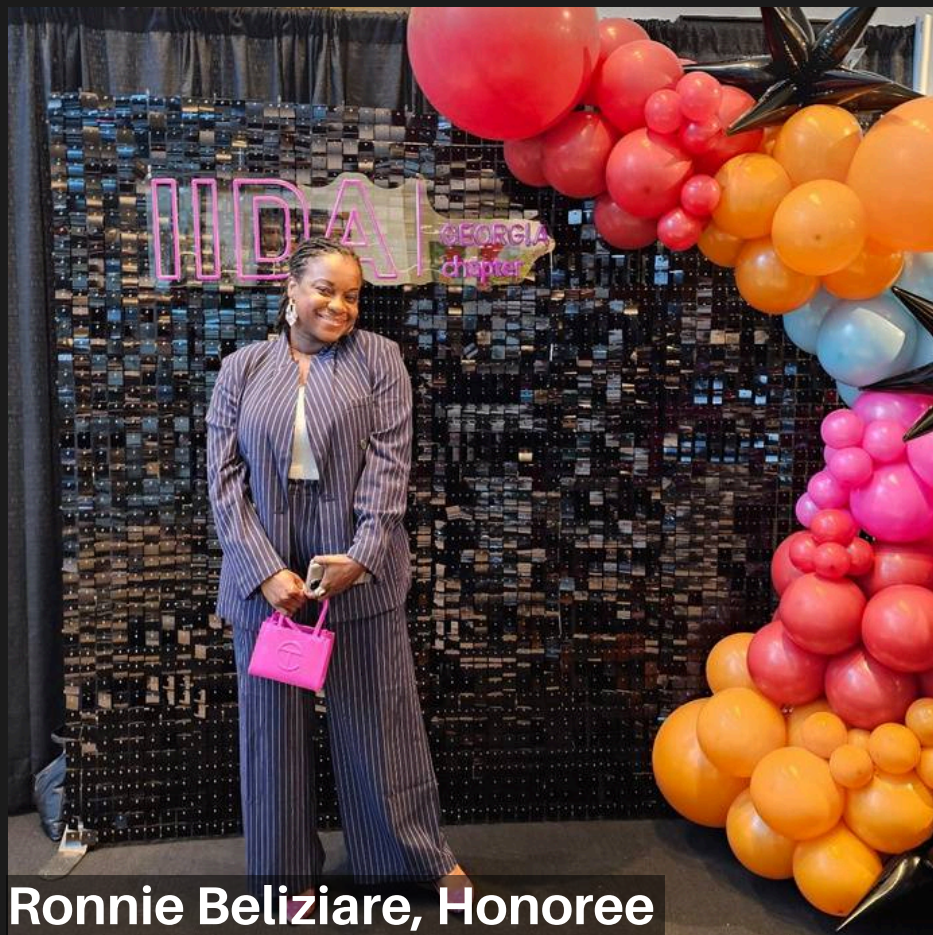
IIDA HQ Catalyst Grant	\$6,500
Printing & Mounting	Patron Provided
Panel A/V	Patron Provided
IIDA Georgia Funds	\$1850

## Other Insights

Total RSVPs	130
Total Attendees	110
The Georgia Voice of Design Committee was very intentional about the money spent. <b>95%</b> of the dollars spent were spent at businesses owned by people of color. The remaining <b>5%</b> of funds were spent at retailers Amazon, Awards.com, and FedEx Office.	



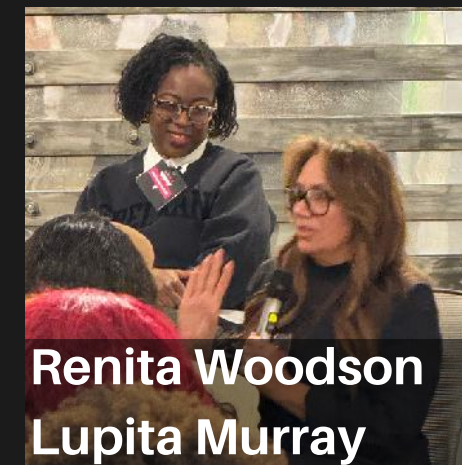
# Photo Gallery



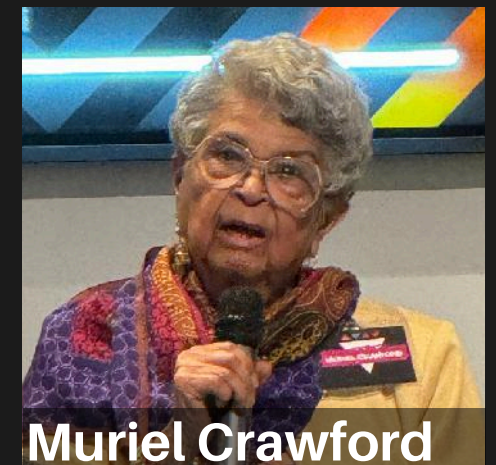
Ronnie Belizaire, Honoree



2024 Honorees



Renita Woodson  
Lupita Murray



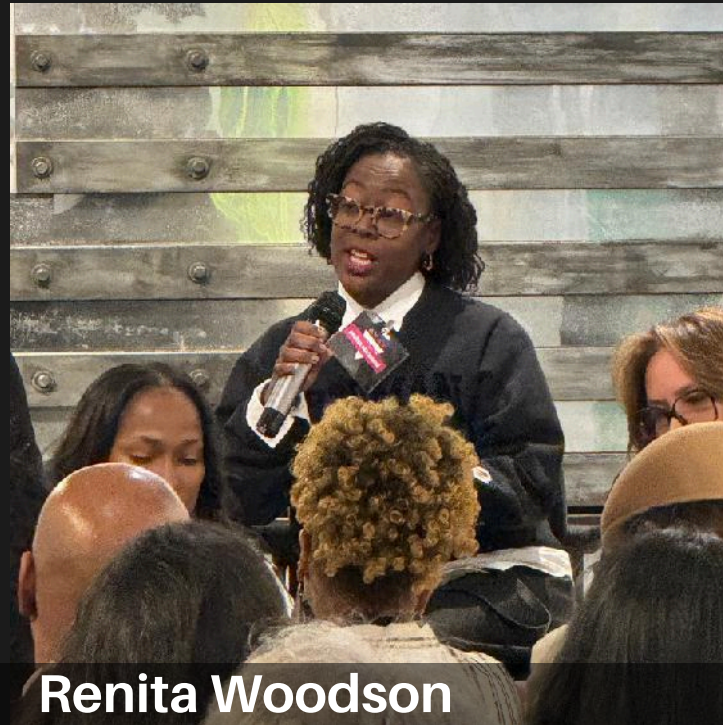
Muriel Crawford



# Photo Gallery



Ronnie Belizaire



Renita Woodson



Lisa White



Courtnei Maxwell



Alaina Penn, Moderator, Muriel Crawford



# Photo Gallery



Tchernavina Reese



Christian Coles



Courtnei Maxwell, Ronnie Belizaire, Alaina Penn



2024 Honorees & Committee Members





# IIDA

GEORGIA  
chapter



Georgia Voice of Design Committee

Chapter Awards Submission

February 28, 2025

GEORGIA VOICE OF DESIGN