

**PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ACTION FUND**  
**R. Keith McDonald & Valerie McDonald**

Thank you to everyone who participated in the video and meeting with the African American Action Fund (the "Action Fund") on Sunday and Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

The Action Fund alongside Creative Theory Agency was in LA shooting the second iteration of the Preserving Black Churches video series with focus on Second Baptist Church. The filming took place over two and a half days and required the participation of leadership and members of Second Baptist Church.

The Action Fund has named Second Baptist as part of its Preserving Black Churches program. This program works to advance long-term and sustainable strategies that strengthen stewardship and asset management, interpretation and programming, and fundraising activities for historic Black churches across the country. They are allocating \$1.5 million to Second through this program.

The program is designed to support Second Baptist Church in the following ways: (1) co-develop preservation campaigns, model innovative stewardship models, and build capacity in partnership with five Black Churches serving as sites of social justice and civil rights in Alabama and nationally; and (2) amplify and promote historic Black churches through digital documentation, storytelling, and media relations.

The Preserving Black Churches video series tells the story of the program and its impact through place-based storytelling through the lens of partners and Action Fund leadership. The first video, which was played at our last church meeting, talked about 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church and Brown Baptist Church.

The second Preserving Black Churches video will focus on the work to preserve Second Baptist Church, highlighting its architectural and societal significance, along with the stories of the people who are currently here stewarding the church into the future. Additional commentary will come from the Action Fund's Executive Director Brent Leggs and Senior Director Tiffany Tolbert.

For pictures in and around the church on Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, big thanks to our participating families: Diane Myrick, her mom, Wrenetta Howard, daughter Sydni Causey and Sydni's children Sarah Jean, Sonja-Wren and James; and the Pugh family, Donna, Korey, Jaimee and children Kori and Kaylynn. Other families submitting pictures included Stephanie Quarles Jackson and Judge Albert Matthews. We've provided the pictures to the Action Fund to include in the video.

For the interviews on Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, much appreciation and thanks to Pastor Epps, Venus Butler, Mrs. Dorothy Gaithers, Charles Myrick, Lorn Foster and Bill Elkins, who spoke on the history of Second and the importance of the black church.

Later in the afternoon, church leaders met with the Action Fund to introduce the program and discuss the needs of Second. Those in attendance included Judith Gadbury, Pam Bizzell, Dorothy Harper, Pastor Epps, Venus Butler, Charles Myrick, Bill Elkins, Pam Elkins, Lorn Foster, Lori McDonald, Keith McDonald and Valerie McDonald. It was a long day for everyone!

As an aside, NPR reached out to Keith on Thursday afternoon, to schedule an interview discussing the preservation of Second Baptist Church.

***And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus - Philippians 4:19***

## MEET OUR ACTION FUND TEAM



**Brent Leggs** is the founding executive director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, the largest preservation campaign in U.S. history on behalf of historic African American places, and a Senior Vice President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Through the Fund, he leads a national community of leaders, preservationists, and activists to preserve the memory and legacy of Black American identity. Since the Fund launched in 2017, Mr. Leggs and his team have secured nearly \$100 million, supported 200 preservation projects nationwide, and established a \$14 million endowment to sustain the Fund's future. Described as the man who "spends time thinking in centuries" by the New Yorker, Mr. Leggs work is rooted in

telling the nation's full history - mitigating the erasure of African American cultural heritage and reconstructing national identity. In June 2022, as part of the "Future Rising" series sponsored by Hearst Magazines and Lexus, Ms. Oprah Winfrey named Mr. Leggs one of the 50 Black trailblazers changing our world. Mr. Leggs is also an Associate Professor of the Graduate Program of Historic Preservation and Senior Advisor, Center for the Preservation of Civil Rights at the University of Pennsylvania's Weitzman School of Design.



**Tiffany Tolbert** is Senior Director for Preservation of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (AACHAF) at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In her position, she leads the high-profile national preservation programs and projects, such as the HBCU Cultural Heritage Stewardship Initiative and Preserving Black Churches and develops preservation strategies for historic sites associated with African American Cultural Heritage such as the Nina Simone Childhood Home, the John and Alice Coltrane Home and sites associated with Emmett Till and Mamie Till Mobley. Tolbert previously

served as Director of the Northwest Field Office at Indiana Landmarks from 2006-2017. Tolbert is a native of Montgomery, Alabama and holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Huntingdon College (Montgomery, AL) in Political Science and History and Master of Historic Preservation from Georgia State University (Atlanta, GA) in Public Relations & Corporate Communications. She has previously worked for the Alabama Historical Commission Black Heritage Council and the Georgia Historic Preservation Division as African American Programs Assistant. She has also completed consulting work throughout the Southeast where she completed National Register of Historic Places nominations, state historic marker preparation and conducted research on the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement. Her preservation expertise includes providing technical assistance to local organizations, advocacy, strategic and preservation planning, historic designation and rehabilitation. Her research on Rosenwald Schools, African American communities and the African American experience in Indiana has been included in multiple publications such as Reflections, a publication of the Georgia Historic

Preservation Division and *Traces*, a publication of the Indiana Historical Society. Tolbert currently serves on the board of Indiana Humanities and as chairperson of the Hobart (IN) Historic Preservation Commission.



Creative Theory Agency (CTA) is a Black-owned, full-service creative, culture, and advertising agency. They understand that the importance of inclusion and equity has never been greater, and they work to help their clients understand and demonstrate that nuance in today's market. Founded in 2015 in Washington, DC, they partner closely with clients to help them speak in cultural moments with authenticity and impact, share stories that matter, and deliver creative that moves the needle. Their core belief

is that there is value in all communities, all people, and all experiences. *They won a Webby Award (honoring excellence on the internet) on Monday night for their video telling the story of Black men in tech at Google.*



Special thank you to Jessica Pumphrey, Senior Strategist for Preservation of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund (AACHAF) at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Art in Public Relations from Hampton University and a Master's Degree in Public Relations & Corporate Communications from Georgetown University. She and her team were a pleasure to work with, and their expertise made completing this project swift and painless. Jessica coordinated the 3-day visit with patience, humor and lots of love for the program.

***Again, thank you to everyone lending their time and talents for this project – now, let's get work!***