



# Biographies

2025

*Exra Youth Seminary, Inc., is a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Maryland. It is organized exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. The purpose of Exra is to offer programs in theology and Christian leadership to youth between the ages of 10 and 18; to develop young godly servant-leaders; to develop character of good rapport; to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ and His purpose for their lives; to participate in leadership training; to build lifelong Christian leadership skills; and to support the development of a pipeline of Christian leaders and leaders who are Christian.*

*The primary text is the  
BIBLE.*



## HAROLD DAVID MILES

*Co-Founder*

*Chairman of the Board &*

*Ex-Officio Board Member*

Harold Miles is a native of Washington, D.C. and was educated in the DC Public School system. Harold is a graduate of the University of the District of Columbia with Bachelor of Business Administration, majoring in Computer Information Systems Science. He earned a Master of Science in Administration from Trinity University, Washington, DC with a major in Educational Leadership.

Harold began his professional career in the information systems field working for Fortune 100 companies and consulting on Government projects. Harold then was the Founder and President of THE Coordinator, Inc. (Mitchellville, MD) a small information technology business which supported operations management for a multi-million dollar on-line teleprocessing system that analyzed monthly expenditures, developed forecasts for annual budget activities and assessed technical proposals for the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Ultimately, he pursued his true calling – educator of tomorrow's future and left the information systems field to become an educator.

Harold is a middle school math teacher in the Prince George's County Public School system. He has worked with elementary and middle school-aged students for more than twenty years. His professional experiences in education have included serving as a school Principal, Vice-Principal, Dean of Academics, and Instructional Coach in Maryland public schools and the District of Columbia Public Charter schools. He also has coached boys' basketball and baseball at the middle school level.

Harold Miles accepted Christ as a young adult. He is a former Chairman of the Board of Deacons; a former 10-year member of Board of Trustees; and a former member of the Usher Board.

Harold is married to Tonya Miles and the proud father of their three adult children, Aria, Darius and Kharlin. Harold and Tonya are members of Reid Temple AME Church in Glenn Dale, Maryland where their Pastor is the Rev. Dr. Mark E. Whitlock, Jr.

Harold is a life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

One of Harold's favorite scriptures is Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV - *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

# TONYA MILES

*Co-Founder*

*President & Ex-Officio Board Member*



*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)*

Tonya's former pastor, Rev. Charles E. Betts, of Morningside Missionary Baptist Church in Queens, New York gave her this scripture to commit to memory when she was fourteen years old. It remains as her favorite scripture. Tonya well remembers the Lord speaking to her heart when she was eight years old at her father's funeral and she has tried her best to walk with and trust the Lord ever since through her trials, temptations, falls, rebounds, at all. Tonya knows the Lord has been her strength, protector, provider, and keeper.

A native of Brooklyn and Queens, New York, Tonya is a graduate of New York City public schools. She received her Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Princeton University and her Master of Business Administration (Finance and Strategic Planning) from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She completed two seminary continuing education classes, Ministry with Young Adults I and II, at Wesley Theological Seminary (Washington, DC). In 2023, she earned a Youth & Theology program certificate from Princeton Theological Seminary; and in 2025 is graduated from the Seminary's inaugural Master of Arts in Theology (Justice and Public Life). Tonya is a certified Maxwell Leadership Team speaker, coach, and trainer with additional certifications for Parenting & Family and also Youth Leadership.

Tonya has enjoyed an illustrative leadership and managerial career in the corporate, private, public and non-profit business sectors. She has served on national and state boards focused on public education.

Most importantly, Tonya loves to serve the Lord's people. She has served as a Pastor's executive administrator, church clerk, deaconesses, church trustee, and youth worker.

The same Pastor Betts who assigned her Hebrews 11:6 at age 14 presided over her holy matrimony to the love of her life, Harold David Miles, over 35 years ago. Together, the Lord has blessed them to be the proud parents of three adults, Aria, Darius and Kharlin; and happy in-laws of Keneshia. Harold and Tonya are members of Reid Temple AME Church in Glenn Dale, Maryland where their Pastor is the Rev. Dr. Mark E. Whitlock, Jr.

Tonya is excited for how the Lord moves in her life and for what He will do through Ezra Youth Seminary. All glory, honor, and praise belong to the LORD God for entrusting her with the vision of Ezra in her heart, mind and soul.



## JESSICA ANDERSON

### *Board Member*

Jessica Anderson serves as Youth Leader for the Higher Ground Teen Church at Alfred Street Baptist Church where she feels called to walk alongside young people as they learn, lead, and strive to love themselves and their neighbors.

Jessica is a trainer, facilitator, and minister who views learning as a revolutionary practice. She started her career as a youth developer in shelter, group home, and transitional housing spaces in San Francisco.

She received her Bachelor of Arts in Criminology from the University of Florida and later moved to Atlanta, Georgia to pursue a Master of Public Administration in Nonprofit Management at Georgia State University.

While in Atlanta, Jessica led special projects for hundreds of children and mothers experiencing homelessness in the Atlanta Mission network. Jessica then joined The Young Women's Project in Washington, DC as the Health Justice Director to build the leadership and power of more than 300 teens in 24 DC Public and Public Charter High Schools.

Jessica is a Managing Partner of Training at The Management Center where she has the privilege to train an emerging generation of social justice leaders across the country. While in DC, Jessica received her Master of Divinity at Howard University School of Divinity where she was an Ethical Leadership and Racial Justice Fellow.

Outside of work and Ezra, Jessica volunteers with organizers and activists in need of spiritual support and writes curriculum for churches. She is an introvert who loves a good laugh, a good thrift store, and a good nap.



## ELIJAH FEREBEE

*Chaplain & Board Member*

Elijah Ferebee is the Frostburg State University Chaplain where he is passionate and committed to the discipleship of young people, through empowering them to practice and embody the "servant leadership" model which places emphasis on integrity, leading through acts of service and making the wellness of community their primary focus. It is here where the United Campus Ministries seeks to be a Sanctuary for the students through living into the "open table" teachings of Jesus, where all are welcome! Elijah also serves as the Program Director at Project Transformation D.C. whose mission is to transform communities by engaging children, college-age young adults, and churches in purposeful relationships. Elijah has served as the Campus Ministry Coordinator for The University of Maryland College Park for The United Methodist Church and the Co-Director of Recruitment for Wesley Theological Seminary.

Elijah is a graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary, where he earned his Master of Divinity in Theology/Theological Studies and hopes to one day be ordained as an Elder in the United Methodist Church. Elijah possesses a love for ministry that manifests itself in all areas of his life.

Alongside his love for ministry, Elijah also has a passion for mental health and pastoral care and counseling. While attending his alma mater Virginia State University he earned his Bachelor of Science in the field of Psychology. It is also at Virginia State University where Elijah heard and felt his call into pastoral ministry. During his time at VSU he heavily participated with the United Campus Ministries team on his school's campus, helping spearhead the "Men of Troy" mentoring program at neighboring school Ettrick Elementary in Petersburg Virginia.

Elijah hails from Brooklyn, NY, is the oldest of four children and was raised by his mother and grandmother. He is dedicated to empowering and uplifting others through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and believes that his life's greatest reward is the ability to glorify God with everything that he is and with all he has been given!

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

*Matthew 11:28-30*



## LAUREN JONES

### *Board Member*

Lauren Jones accepted the call to preach in June of 2003. She is a native of Silver Spring, Md. Her parents are Shirley D. Phelps and Roderick A. Blackstone. Early in life, Lauren demonstrated the gift of writing. As a result, Lauren earned a Bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in African-American Literature from the University of Maryland College Park in 2001. In 2007, she earned a Master of Divinity from Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C.

During her matriculation at Howard University, Lauren served as the editor of "The Weekly Word." She produced over 50 publications for faculty and students. She self-published "I'm Singing This Song to You," a heartfelt letter to her children about her life with her deceased husband. Lauren has written for several ministries.

She designed the newsletter for The Power Lunch Ministry founded by the Rev. Matthew L. Watley and served as its editor for three years. She was a contributing writer for Reid Temple A.M.E. Church's Joshua's Journal magazine for 10 years. Lauren also contributed to Gospel Today magazine for several years where she examined women's issues in her column "The Filling Station." She interviewed First Lady Serita Jakes and BET "Sunday Best" finalists during their "All Star" season. She also served as the senior editor for Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church's newsletter, "The Trinity Tablet," for two years. Her work is featured in the A.M.E. Church's "Christian Recorder," Sojourners magazine, Washington Family, "Modern Loss," "Women in Theology," and "Soli Deo Gloria Sisterhood." Her personal blog, Throw Up and Theology, reached approximately 500 readers each month. She launched a blog with the Rev. Dr. William Brown in 2022 called "Mission Shaped Church." In 2020, Lauren won a gold award from the Parent Media Association for her article on the Black Lives Matter protests in Washington, D.C. Her sermon, "Living with the Unknown," was selected to be published in "Preaching During a Pandemic: The Rhetoric of the Black Preaching Tradition" by Peter Lang Publishing in 2022.

Lauren's professional experience includes producing for the nationally syndicated radio show "Interfaith Voices" and interning at Faith in Public Life. She served as the program manager at Southeast D.C. Partners (now the D.C. Dream Center). She launched their annual Hip Hop Summit which attracted over 150 teens in its second year. Lauren served for five years as the executive assistant to the pastor at Mt. Ennon Baptist Church in Clinton, Md. where the Rev. Delman L. Coates, Ph.D. is pastor. She also worked with faculty and students for two years as the executive assistant to the dean at Wesley Theological Seminary. Presently, she works with the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church on congregational development.

Lauren served at Reid Temple A.M.E. Church in Glenn Dale, Md. for over 10 years under the esteemed leadership of the Rev. Dr. Lee P. Washington. From 2015 to 2017, Lauren served at Reid Chapel A.M.E. Church in Columbia, S.C. where the Rev. Carey A. Grady is senior pastor. Lauren is an itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In honor of her late husband, Gabriel Jones, Lauren volunteered as a speaker for Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and was a finalist in MADD's search for a national president in 2018. She is the proud mother of Kent (13) and Lacey (11).

Lauren acknowledges her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as the one who makes all things possible. Her favorite scripture is John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."





## DAVID STEPHEN HOPE, Esq.

*General Counsel & Board Member*

David Stephen Hope is an Assistant Miami-Dade County Attorney, and represents Miami-Dade in a litany of legislative, transactional, administrative, and litigation matters. David handles litigation at the trial and appellate levels, in both federal and state court. Since joining the Office of the County Attorney in 1996, David's practice areas encompass litigation and appeals, finance and municipal bonds, land use and zoning, aviation, telecommunications, housing, code enforcement, small business development, solid waste, torts, and personnel.

David was the lead trial attorney for the County in such matters as a facial constitutional challenge of a regulatory ordinance imposing civil and criminal penalties for certain activities, by fourteen (14) adult entertainment establishments; declaratory and injunctive relief sought to invalidate actions of the County, City of Miami, and two Community Redevelopment Agencies pertaining to the redevelopment plan for downtown Miami, which included a new publicly owned baseball stadium for the Florida Marlins; and allegations that the County's provision of telecommunications services at Miami International Airport violated Florida law, Florida Public Service Commission rules, and County Home Rule Charter. David is admitted to practice in Florida, New York, Southern District of Florida, Eastern and Southern Districts of New York, Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, and United States Supreme Court.

Prior to his legal career, David had over eight years' experience encompassing key aspects of finance related management consulting and commercial banking, with expertise developed in strategic business planning, micro-based financial systems implementation, and marketing. David obtained a Bachelor of Science in Engineering in Electrical Engineering & Computer Science from Princeton University, received a Master of Business Administration in Finance & Entrepreneurial Management from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and graduated *Cum Laude* from the University of Miami School of Law.

David is currently an adjunct faculty member in the Litigation Skills Program at the University of Miami School of Law teaching Trial Skills; President of the Neo Lofts Condominium Association; and an Orange Bowl Committee member.

*I was raised in the Episcopal Church by God-fearing parents.  
I fall short every day, but try to treat others as I would like to be treated,  
and walk along the path that the Lord has laid for me.*





## BRIAN KEITH MCCOLLUM

*Board Member*

Brian Keith McCollum, a Forestville, Maryland native, holds a B.A. in Business Administration (Morehouse College), M.Div. (Princeton Theological Seminary) and a M.S. in Strategic Communications (Columbia University) and is currently completing his Ph.D. from Hampton University. Brian has his ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder) in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Brian is a high-performing, strategic-thinking professional with more than 15 years of executive level experience. As an innovator, self-motivated problem solver with experience working with a diverse population, Brian has a proven expertise in executing fundraising initiatives yielding a 25 percent increase within a single calendar year. He is a highly effective communicator with excellent verbal and written skills. He is a determined, dedicated, and motivated individual with a results-driven mindset.

Brian is currently the Director of Development as Seeds of Peace, former Vice President of Development at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC, where he led the fundraising efforts for a \$35M capital campaign; and the former Director of Alumni Relations and Director of Recruitment at Princeton Theological Seminary. Before working in higher education administration, Brian served in a dual role as the Director of Arts and Education and performer for Step Afrika dance company where he traveled to over 50 countries around the world teaching and performing the art form of step dance.

Brian's life is rooted in Phil. 1:6. "“He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Brian says that is enough for him to be thankful every day.



## ARIA MILES

*Secretary & Board Member*

Aria Miles is interested in improving education, career, and quality of life opportunities for young people of color in the United States. Through her professional and volunteer work, she applies her skills to promote and strengthen initiatives and organizations that focus on the advancement of people and communities. She is looking to continue a career of driving positive social change through strategic planning, innovative initiatives, and policy.

She is a Project Manager for the Maryland State Innovation Team and previously worked as a Senior Consultant with UPD Consulting (Baltimore, MD), Director of Research and Public Policy at Momentum Nonprofit Partners (Memphis, TN), and Operations Coordinator at Center City Public Charter Schools (Washington, DC).

Aria is an incoming Board member of Princeton AlumniCorps and has previously volunteered as a member of the advisory committee for her Baltimore neighborhood's community planning process, Black Policy Conference planning committee at Harvard Kennedy School, and the Princeton Club of Washington. Prior to starting college, she was selected and participated in the inaugural cohort of Princeton University's Bridge Year Program where she volunteered for youth and community-focused entities in Ghana, West Africa for nine months. For over fifteen years, Aria served at her childhood church in various roles and ministries including Director of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Aria holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering in Operations Research and Financial Engineering from Princeton University and a Master in Public Policy with a focus on Social and Urban Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

Aria has enjoyed travel to more than ten countries and loves to explore new places. She loves to spend time with family and friends, try to grow vegetables, and learn about the stories of people and places. Aria is currently a resident of Baltimore City.



## H. DARIUS MILES

*Board Member &*

*Multimedia/Communications Coordinator*

Throughout his professional work, Darius has strived to utilize his knowledge of different multimedia platforms to effectively convey the mission and ideals of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development. He currently serves as a Human Resources Specialist, with a focus on federal classification.

Darius holds a substantial background in design, as he is well-versed in multiple Adobe platforms, including Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere, and InDesign as he looks to continue and enhance his public relations personal and career goals.

Darius earned a Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Journalism from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in Blacksburg, Virginia. He served as a field videographer for Virginia Tech Athletics' HokieVision, contributing to multiple ESPN streams and broadcasts throughout his undergraduate career.

For over fifteen years, Darius served at his childhood church in various roles and ministries including Director of the Media Ministry.

Sports and traveling are two of Darius' most fond hobbies. He enjoys venturing to different cities and countries whenever the opportunities arise to appreciate sceneries and cultures, as he hopes to one day visit each continent.



## KENESHIA MILES

*Treasurer & Board Member*

Keneshia Miles is passionate about building her relationship with Christ and fostering connections with others. Since a young age, she has committed herself to her Christian faith and actively growing in her walk with God.

Keneshia discovered her interest in accounting during high school, which led her to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Towson University, graduating in 2018. Over the past six years, she has established herself in the accounting industry and currently serves as a Portfolio Accountant for a Senior Living Company.

As the Treasurer for Ezra Youth Seminary, Keneshia is excited to bring her skills in financial stewardship along with her natural talent for empathetic relationship-building and creating harmony. Her passion for ministry was nurtured during her three years of attending and volunteering with Merge, a youth ministry that fostered her desire to create spaces where people feel seen, loved, and encouraged. These experiences have shaped her dedication to helping others grow spiritually and find their identity in Christ.

In addition to her professional and ministry roles, Keneshia enjoys planning and hosting events, exploring her creativity through arts and crafts, and trying new foods and activities. She is happily married to Kharlin Miles, and they began their life together in July 2024.

Keneshia is thrilled to be part of the Ezra Youth Leadership Group and looks forward to using her gifts to serve, support, and inspire others as they deepen their faith and live out God's purpose for their lives.



## KHARLIN MILES

*Board Member &  
Health & Wellness Coordinator*

Kharlin enjoys and lives a healthy, active, and adventurous lifestyle. From an early age, he participated in sports and fitness. He also has a passion for working with youth and those who want to improve and live a healthier life.

Kharlin earned his Bachelor of Science in Applied Exercise Science from Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts. As an undergraduate student, Kharlin held numerous leadership roles including health and wellness intern at the Springfield YMCA; Vice President and Treasurer of the Applied Exercise Science Club, and Supervisor for Intramural Sports.

Kharlin taught two years of elementary Physical Education in Prince George's County Public Schools and has his certification from the American Heart Association in CPR/AED and First Aid. He is the former Program Coordinator and manager of the sports performance facility called Parisi Speed School and has also served as its Program Associate and Sports Performance Coach (Baltimore County, MD). He currently is the Fitness & Wellness Coordinator at Coppin State University (Baltimore, MD).

Kharlin is a National Academy of Sports Medicine Certified Personal Trainer and is the founder of his own personal, group, and sports skills training business called *Let's Get Right Fitness*.

He is a child of God and has served in many roles at his childhood church including as a member of the Music Ministry, the Youth and Young Adult Ministry, and the Usher Board.

Kharlin has two older siblings, Aria and Darius Miles, and his parents are the magnificent, dedicated, and high-achieving, Harold and Tonya Miles. Kharlin is married to the lovely Keneshia.

Kharlin enjoys to travel, go on adventures, and experience different places, cultures, and food. He has traveled to Italy, Sicily, Greece, and Jamaica and enjoys having a great time with people.