

APRIL 2022 ISSUE  
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# C.O.B.S.

CIRCLE OF  
Boss SISTERS

## THE KING'S COURT

**Antonio J. Wheeler -**  
CEO Of Anchored  
in Wellness Chicago

## THE QUEEN'S COURT

**Ariana C. Smith ESQ -**  
Owner and Managing  
Attorney The A.C.  
Smith Law Firm, PLLC

## WOMEN'S WERK

**Danielle Murrell Cox -**  
Founder of  
dmcox/Zuri & Dre

# MELI'SA MORGAN

**CEO/Founder of Asilem Production**

**a.k.a - Hit Singles**

**"Do Me Baby & Do You Still Love Me"**

## WOMEN INNOVATORS

**Amberstar Saunders -**  
CEO of Farrow Skincare

**Felicia R. Fencel -**  
Co-Founder & Senior  
Publicist For The  
Collective Shine Agency

# From The Office of the Editor

TREVI BOOKER PERSHAY

## SPRING FORWARD – A TIME TO SHIFT

March is the month when we adjust our clocks to spring 1 hour ahead for daylight savings time. We generally lose 1 hour of sleep and personally, the day goes by faster. As I was pondering what content I

would like to share with our readers, a title hit me like a sermon for a Sunday service. If I was preaching a sermon or speaking to women at a conference my topic for application would be.



## It's Time to Shift Forward.

Shifting is just another way of training your mind to enter a new way of doing things (a new reality). Imagine, if we would make the springing forward applicable to our personal lives, we would have already put into motion our dreams. As the clock shifts to spring forward, we should consider and re-evaluate how far did we get to pursue our dreams, goals, or aspirations.

My grandmother would always say time waits for no one – think about this, time never stands still. I am at the busiest time of my life, and I keep saying I just don't have personal time for myself. I work a full-time job; I'm a Pastor, a full-time

student, author, playwright and I am a serial entrepreneur. What is a serial entrepreneur? According to Smart Asset "A serial entrepreneur starts several businesses one after another rather than beginning one venture and staying focused on it for many years like a more typical entrepreneur. I realized that I don't want to work for people all my life, but I rather build businesses during my God-given time on this planet called earth. I stopped saying I don't have personal time because the legacy that I'm trying to build is personal and it takes time. My sole life mission is to leave a legacy for my daughters instead of debt and memories. To stand out you have to first accept being different. I

have a hustler's ambition. A hustler is an aggressively enterprising person; a go-getter that will work hard at achieving their goals. When you shift forward, you're not thinking about what happened last week because you're focused on what's going down next week. To shift you must be ready for your next level of greatness. You must be hungry enough to research, learn, network, and explore how to get that business started. You must find like-minded people and not individuals that have ideas and no plans to get it started. It's time to Shift Forward! Don't be afraid to do something you have never done before.

<https://smartasset.com/small-business/serial-entrepreneur#:~:text=A%20serial%20entrepreneur%20starts%20several,a%20certain%20level%20of%20maturity>

*Trevi Booker*

Trevi Booker Pershay

# MEET THE C.O.B.S. TEAM



**Tinika Thomas**  
Co-Editor-N-Chief/Beauty Editor

Tinika Thomas is CEO & Founder of Shay Beauty Consultants, she currently is Vice President on the Board of Directors for Trevi Pershay Productions, PDM Performing Arts as well as business advisor/manager to Trevi Booker Pershay. Tinika juggles many hats, she is a mom, soon to be wife, make-up designer and enjoys being with her 3-year-old grandson Cam.

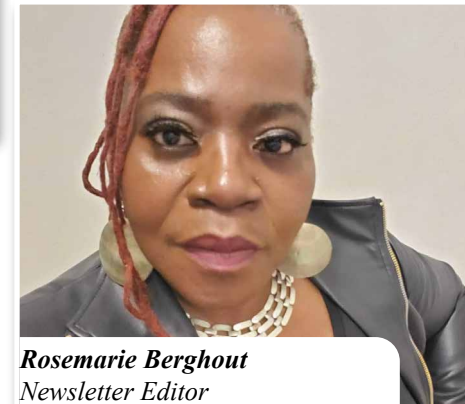
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Newsletter Editor

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**Trevi Booker Pershay**  
Editor-N-Chief

Trevi Booker Pershay is Editor-N- Chief and Founder of C.O.B.S. – Circle of Boss Sisters. Trevi wears many hats she is CEO & Founder of PDM Performing Arts Corp., Trevi Pershay Productions Inc, PDM Productions LLC and she is author of the book "A Different Type of Church Girl – The Battle of the Calling on Amazon. Trevi is also Senior Pastor of Restoration, Hope and Deliverance Center, mentor, dance teacher and she is known as Tyler Perry of the Hood and the Purpose Pusher.

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**Rodnisha "Nisha" Pershay**  
Hair Editor

Nisha Pershay specializes in taking care of weaves; therefore, you will have them for a long time. She is CEO & Founder of The Traveling Salon 2. Nisha holds down a full-time job with an investment company as well as she is Sound & Stage Manager for Trevi Pershay Productions Inc.

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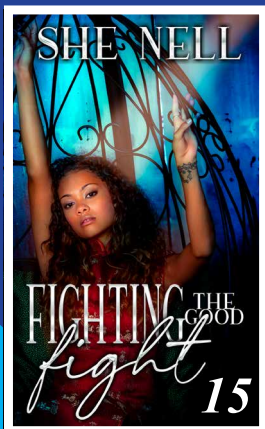
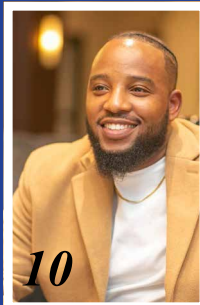
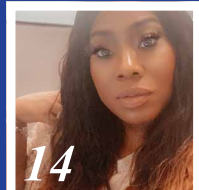
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MEET  
**MELI'SA MORGAN**  
R&B SINGER, ENTERTAINER, RECORDING ARTIST,  
PRODUCER, AND CEO OF ASILEM PRODUCTION

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

Welcome to COBS!!! We are elated to have the legendary and multitalented Meli'sa Morgan take the time out to interview with us. Meli'sa Morgan is known for her captivating presence and one of the most memorable female voices. We have the honor of diving a little bit deeper into the life of this amazing songstress past, present, and future. Can you share about your upbringing?

**MELI'SA MORGAN:**

Hi ... Thank you for that introduction and I am honored to be interviewed by COBS Magazine. I was born and raised in Queens, New York. Corona Queens to be exact. Born in Flushing Hospital. I had a nice childhood, no complaints by me. My Mom Margie Morgan was a loving and caring Mom who

loved cooking, plants, and flowers. My Mom raised me and my siblings to be kind and to care about people. My dad John P. Morgan was the light of my life. My dad was a Chemist and worked hard and provided well for me. I was my father's only child. My mother and father did not stay together during my childhood, and I stayed with my mom for a while. After my father remarried, I chose to live with my father. It was my choice and my mom understood. My mom was always in my life, I just did not live with her. I loved my parents very much and am grateful for their love for all the things they taught me. I loved my stepmother Rosa Morgan as well. Rosa taught me a lot growing up, like how to save my money and important lessons on how to take care of myself.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

You grew up singing gospel music at the early age of 9 years old. I am sure that was too young for you to decide that singing was going to be your career path. Was there a moment that your parents realized that you had a gift that needed to be shared? How influential were your parents through the process of you learning how to hone your craft?

**MELI'SA MORGAN:**

Yes, I started singing right in my mother's living room with my sister Rita. My mom would tell us if we rehearsed and performed well, she would take us to Amateur Night at The Apollo. We started singing and coming up with dance moves for songs like Respect by Aretha Franklin and Stop in The Name of Love by the Supremes.

We would dress up in my mother's fancy dresses and you couldn't tell us we were not fabulous and entertainers! Lol! Great childhood moments. My mom would request us to perform for our aunts and uncles when they would attend our weekend house parties. We would be so nervous, but we would sing and dance it was so much fun. I like singing more than my sister who likes acting and dancing more. My Mom decided that I should join a Gospel Choir (The Starlets of Corona). My dad agreed. I sang with the choir until my early teens. My dad was very supportive in getting me to rehearsals and to church on time to sing. I then went on to sing in school talent shows. I eventually joined a working band and the rest as they say is history. My parents always encourage my talent all through my childhood and adult life. They believe in my talent Always!!!!

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

In your bio, it mentions as a teenager you went to modeling school, studied at Juilliard's School of Music, took acting classes at Lee Strasberg Acting School. You recorded your first song at 16 years all while gaining experience and touring with top musicians. Can you share your experiences because you were so young? How did these experiences prepare you to write and produce most of your hit songs?

**MELI'SA MORGAN:**

My stepmother and father saw that I really wanted to sing after I went to stay with them. So, they told me if you are serious about your singing, we will help you become a singer if you continue to show us that you are serious. It was up to me. I had a conversation with a friend of mine who was attending the Barbizon School of Modeling. I asked her if I could go to a class with her and she said yes. I went and I Loved it. They were teaching teenagers like myself then how to talk, walk, and dress. I was fascinated. I told my father I wanted to attend Barbizon and he paid for me to attend. I graduated but I must be honest...I was one of two African American teenagers that were in the classes every Saturday for like 3 months. I learned a lot, however, I felt that Barbizon did not teach me things about being a teenager of color. My stepmother Rosa heard about a Modeling School called Ophelia DeVore School of Modeling mostly for African American Girls who wanted to be Models. We went to an introductory meeting and when I saw all the black girls like me in their learning, modeling and there was unity among them. I wanted to be a part of that movement. They enrolled me and it was the best experience of my teenage years! I graduated at the top of the class and got to sing at the graduation. I went on to be in Hal Jackson's Talented Teen Pageant. Like I said, my parents, supported me 100%. I was never afraid to take classes to learn how to be better. As I grew up and graduated from high school, I went

on to attended Juilliard's School of Music to learn Music Theory. At Juilliard, I would be learned how to understand chord structures, notes, and how they all fit together. I think that helped me as a singer, especially in the studio. Doing sessions as a background singer with some top artists like Melba Moore. Also helped me be in bands and write songs. I was attending Lee Strasberg School of Acting when my first hit song "DO ME BABY" came out. I had been on the road with one of my idols Chaka Khan. I just felt kind of shy still on stage. I thought if I took acting classes and worked on my stage presence .... It would help me as a Solo Artist. It did and it helped my acting ability as well.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

Can you tell us about Asilem Productions? How long has your company been established? Why was it important for you to start your own production?

**MELI'SA MORGAN:**

This is a wonderful question that is good but hard to talk about. When my father passed away, I was devastated. I Loved my father so much. I was already known as a Recording Artist and had success from my hit songs. I had gotten married and divorced. I was back at home with my parents. It was a real transitional time for me. I had to find out.... who I was and what I was going to be in my life? I had managers, record labels, and all these people around me who I just did not see or think they were Pro-MELI'SA like they should have been. The industry was changing more towards Hip Hop rather than R&B music. People were telling me I needed to change and be something and someone other than myself. I woke up one day after my dad passed away and realized I had to Fire Everyone! So, I did! I remember what my parents would always tell me.... "THE FIRST LAW OF NATURE IS SELF-PRESERVATION! This means you must believe and take care of yourself first before anyone else will or can. I had to restructure my whole life and career. So, the first thing I did was start my own Management /Production company that would represent and look after the MELI'SA MORGAN Brand. It would protect and be the umbrella for MELI'SA MORGAN the Artist, the Person, The Songwriter, Producer, and The Woman. My company ASILEM Productions (MELISA spelled Backwards) protects me. It is one of the best decisions I made for my Career. It has not been easy, reinventing myself and letting people know that going forward they will have to deal with me, and my company. I had to learn how to manage my Career and Life. I am happy overseeing my Career and making my own decisions. I had to get all my songwriting, publishing, and artist's royalties in order. If I had not taken control of all of this, my finances would not be in good shape now. Being the CEO of my career has been a learning process for me but a great one.

I think this is truly the key to being successful in the Music Industry or any industry. Don't forget even if you enjoy your career and what you do. It is still a Business! They call it Show "BUSINESS" for a reason. **ASILEM PRODUCTIONS** have been incorporated for 25 years!

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

Can you please talk about your blog website Lifestyle with Meli'sa Morgan? What made you want to start blogging? Did you create this website during the pandemic?

**MELI'SA MORGAN:**

I started my website and lifestyle blog before the Pandemic. I already had a website for my career and my fans to know where to reach me and find out about my show schedule, etc. I use all my social media Pages (Re: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) as well. I decided I needed a Blog/Website that allows me to talk about and showcase my hobbies like Crocheting (Crocheted by MELI'SA), my MELI'SA'S FRUITSTICKS that I do which are my Fruit Arrangements. I do them for special events and at restaurants like DESHAWN'S seafood restaurants in South Carolina for Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. It is so much fun. I do Parties and Events as well. It shows a different side of me. I like planting flowers and arranging flowers in my Flowerbed Garden...just like my mom. I share Renovations of my home that I do. I am now working on plans to build my dream home from the ground up. I want my lifestyle website/Blog to be a place where people can go and see the process and progress on that. Hopefully, it will also help people who are going through the same things. Building a new home now is not easy but doable.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

Being the CEO of your Career involves taking control of your destiny. In the entertainment world, it can often be hard for others to recognize your value. How do you continue to keep control, know your worth, and invest in yourself?

**MELI'SA MORGAN:**

I do believe my history and what I have done and contributed to the entertainment and music industry speaks for itself. I have #1, Top 5 and Top 10 hit songs like "DO ME BABY", "LOVE CHANGES With KASHIF", "DO YOU STILL LOVE ME", 'STILL IN LOVE", 'BODY TO BODY", 'BACK TOGETHER AGAIN with Freddie Jackson". As well as my most loved hit song "FOOL'S PARADISE" and more. I will always have value because of my history and legacy. My songwriting, producing, publishing, and music catalog will continually make money for me, and I will collect royalties. So, I kind of always will be taken care of. That is a blessing. I just must be smart, manage and do right with what I am given. I believe in researching and going on the internet and picking up the phone to find out things and get infor-

mation. I have continued to be relevant by always working by performing. I also attend important events like the Grammy Awards and being a Recording Academy member, I've done collaborations with **NAJEE (IN THE MOOD TO TAKE IT SLOW)**, **FULL FORCE**, and other recording projects I am on. I continue to work and do shows, which is such a joy to me. I have new material coming out and I am always thinking ahead. I don't think only about what I have done... I think about What Can I do Now! As for investing in myself. I have a new Song and Video coming out very soon on my AsileM Label entitled **"FOOTPRINTS OF AN ANGEL"**. It is produced by my company. I did everything with my Fiancé Sabastin Commas and I am so proud of it and us.

#### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Your first hit single "Do Me Baby" was number one on the Billboard charts for 4 weeks. Then after that, you produced five more hits which include "Do You Still Love Me" and "Fool's Paradise" which are still in constant rotation on the radio today. What an impressive introduction to the world can you describe that moment? Can you share the meaning behind your first single "Do Me Baby"? Did you have any idea that these songs would top the charts as they did?

#### MELI'SA MORGAN:

**"DO ME BABY"** I consider a gift to me. I did not pick it. It was given to me by The President of Capitol Records at the time when I signed with them. The song was on hold for two years and Don Grierson said the next R&B Singer he signed had to do this song. I was the singer he signed. I was still in my teens when I did that Recording. I had to ask permission from my dad to do the song. I did not want to do a song like that without his blessings! Lol! Now the lyrics are so provocative and to the point, it is hard to believe that "DO ME BABY" lyrics in the 80s were risky for a female artist to sing and record. I had no idea it would be as big of a hit as it was, is, and has been for me. What a wonderful gift. Then **"DO YOU STILL LOVE ME"** followed and I just love singing that song! **"FOOL'S PARADISE"** has a life of its own! That song is loved not only in the United States but around the World! It is like an Anthem in the United Kingdom, especially LONDON. What a blessing to have such great songs in my repertoire of music.

#### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

This music industry can be tough, especially for female artists, producers, and songwriters. Have there been moments when the towel is in your hands ready to throw? What keeps you going? How do you keep yourself prepared mentally and physically? What advice can you offer to upcoming female entrepreneurs who are preparing to step into the industry?

#### MELI'SA MORGAN:

I guess there have been times when I have felt underappreciated and under-

valued. Yes, but I can tell you that I **NEVER** stop believing in myself and my God-Given talent of Singing! **NEVER!** The reason why is because of my results with what I have already done. The music industry has changed and will continue to change. There is nothing we can do about it that's how life operates. All things in life change and you adjust. Mentally you need to be strong. I Always remember that being in the music industry is a part of my Career. I still have a life outside of the music industry as a woman and person. I like cooking, going out with my Fiancé and we things outside of the music industry. Physically, I clear my mind, body, walk, and exercise. I allow myself to have time to do stuff like facials and shopping, manicures, pedicures, and getting my eyebrows done. Take a minute for yourself. I have a place in Aruba, and I go there every year to de-stress for my Birthday! I get recharged and I LOVE the Beach! That is my advice to everyone. Love your Career and Love your Life, too!

#### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You have received numerous platinum awards for songwriting on other CDs like Mary J. Blige, Jay-Z and even LL Cool J. You have also received awards for background singing for the iconic and legendary Whitney Houston. You have performed on many TV shows and concert venues. With so many accomplishments and accolades, where do you see yourself in the next five years? Any last words you like to share with the readers? Can you please share all your social media platforms?

#### MELI'SA MORGAN:

Being blessed to be on multi-platinum records with such iconic artists is such a blessing and especially as a songwriter. So thankful that I met the One and Only Whitney Houston and was able to be on her Diamond Platinum (14 Million plus) first self-entitled Album/CD and to have sung with her on the Album is an honor that is unmeasurable for me. Memories I will treasure forever. Whitney was a friend to me. That is more priceless and special than anything. I look forward to all the new things that are happening in my career as being the beginning of the next level for me. We go through different levels in life. I look forward to it. I will do more TV shows and Magazine Covers and hopefully get nominated for a Grammy. We are also working on getting my first Album/CD "DO ME BABY" finally certified Gold (500,000.00 copies sold)! I know it is well over the number required but the records sold and history of the albums and CDs sold need to be found and confirmed by the record label. With sound scan changing the counting of units, it is one of those music Inc changes that now must be rectified.

We hope to get it certified soon though. I don't know what will happen in the next five years... I think about today and how to get the most out of every day. Thinking too far ahead can be mentally draining. I think about the future, but I live each day and try to accomplish things every day. I Love my life. I like the person I have become, and I I am happy in my skin. I still love learning new things and I don't live like I know everything. Growing with the Universe and exploring the new thing life has to offer is what will continue to inspire me in my life.

#### My Social media information is:

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[www.lifestylewithmelisamorgan.com](https://www.lifestylewithmelisamorgan.com)  
(I also have Lifestylewithmelisamorgan pages on Facebook and Twitter)



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## MEET

## ANTONIO WHEELER

CEO OF ANCHORED IN WELLNESS CHICAGO RESILIENCE-FOCUSED

## COBS MAGAZINE:

Welcome to COBS. It is our pleasure to be speaking to Antonio J. Wheeler Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Alcohol & Drug Counselor. We will be talking about his company Anchored in Wellness Chicago and his mission to empower individuals. Can you give us a little background about yourself?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

I am a Chicago native born and raised. I am the founder of Anchored in Wellness Chicago which is a private practice that provides Resilience Focused Therapy to Black men and youth. I received my Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Chicago State University. I acquired my Master's from the University of Chicago SSA. I am currently in the second year of my Ph.D. program at the UIC School of Jane Adams. I have been in the social work field since 2009 and my first job in the field was mentoring at-risk youth in Englewood's Elementary Schools. I am currently still working with Chicago's gunshot victims providing long-term therapy.

## COBS MAGAZINE:

You started your professional career in 2009 in the Mental Health field. What piqued your interest in this particular field? Did you graduate from college with a degree in Mental Health? What do you enjoy about being a therapist?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

I have been in the social work field since 2009 and my first job was mentoring at-risk youth in Englewood's Elementary Schools. At this time, I was a convicted felon and the only job I could get was in social work providing mentorship and counseling. At the time of my felony, I was in my final year of college as a criminal justice major with aspirations of becoming a lawyer. With a felony, I was unable to find work in my field and my skill set and attributes were most applicable to social work. Before going to the University of Chicago, to acquire my Master's degree in social work, I provided



direct counseling services in social work for Domestic Violence and Substance abuse. I love being a therapist because it facilitates the space for self-actualization which is the ability to reach your truest self and optimize your personal growth.

## COBS MAGAZINE:

Can you please tell us about Anchored in Wellness Chicago Resilience Focused? Where did the name thrive from? What type of issues do you provide therapy for? What is the commitment that you want to achieve?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

Resilience is having the capacity to recover from difficult life events. You can endure adversity and bounce back and grow despite life's traumatic storms and yet still become Anchored in Wellness. I became a social worker because I was resilient. My resilience is responsible for my education, credentials, and humility. In life sometimes people become what they have been through, but sometimes people transform by being committed to choosing who they will be irrespective of life experiences. Anchored in Wellness is committed to providing the highest

quality of resilience-focused therapy to facilitate the intentional transformation of self.

## COBS MAGAZINE:

In your experience, do you feel Black Men and youth are less likely to receive mental health services than any other ethnic group? Do you observe that most men try to self-diagnose themselves to become their "own counselors" rather than seeking professional help?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

I believe that Black men and Black youth are less likely to receive quality and accurate mental health services. Black men are more prone to trauma and that trauma can manifest in ways that mirror diagnoses such as ADHD and other behavior disorders. Those disorders can lead to misdiagnosis and suppress the real issue which is trauma. I think that we underestimate how trauma can impact the individual and lead to self-medicating, negative coping strategies, and behaviors. I think that there is stigma around mental health with Black Men because in many instances mental health is a mandate or result of a problem, which

prompts the response when asked to seek therapy, "I am not crazy and there is nothing wrong with me." There is a stigma that conveys weakness. This stigma contributes to unhealthy coping mechanisms, dissociating from their trauma, and not seeking mental health services.

## COBS MAGAZINE:

The pandemic and the economic recession have negatively affected individuals' mental health, coping with isolation, job loss, and substance abuse. Do you feel that individuals will experience lasting effects if they're not treated correctly? Can you briefly explain?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

The pandemic has caused a spike in anxiety and overall mental health services by exposing the need to prioritize being Anchored in Wellness. Work, outings, and socializing allow the opportunity to dissociate from internal chaos. The pandemic caused many to have to be at home with themselves and their thoughts. The pandemic mandated that you be home with yourself which created a space for time with self, versus chasing capital. There was a significant increase in the demand for mental health that I believe will be long-lasting if unaddressed. When we return to normalcy the issues left unaddressed will go back into suppressed dissociation that they were in before the pandemic.

## COBS MAGAZINE:

What are some of the challenges that you faced when trying to create this haven for men to express their emotions, hurt, or various life traumas that have experienced?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

Stigma is one of the challenges that face men expressing emotions, trauma, and pain. Lack of representation is another challenge that can be a barrier to men especially Black men addressing their mental health and racial issues. In the Black community sometimes, traumatic experiences become normalized when they shouldn't. Our youth should value life and be shocked when someone is killed. We have hardened ourselves to manage the overwhelming feelings of hurt, loss, and injustice. One of the biggest challenges is identifying trauma and educating men on healthy

coping skills and self-care strategies.

## COBS MAGAZINE:

You have counseled perpetrators of domestic violence, anger management, and provided therapy to gunshot victims immediately after injury. These are tough situations to overcome. Is it important for you to make the individual feel that they don't have to be a prisoner of their circumstances? Can you please elaborate?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

Creativity is crucial to resilience because it demands that you imagine a world and see yourself differently than what you were exposed to. Learned experiences are impactful if not more powerful than words. Every human being has their own story. We have to individualize the treatment plan according to the person, understand what has happened to them, and then empower them to live up to their true self.

## COBS MAGAZINE:

What are the Core Values you practice? How relevant are these values towards an individual's therapy process?

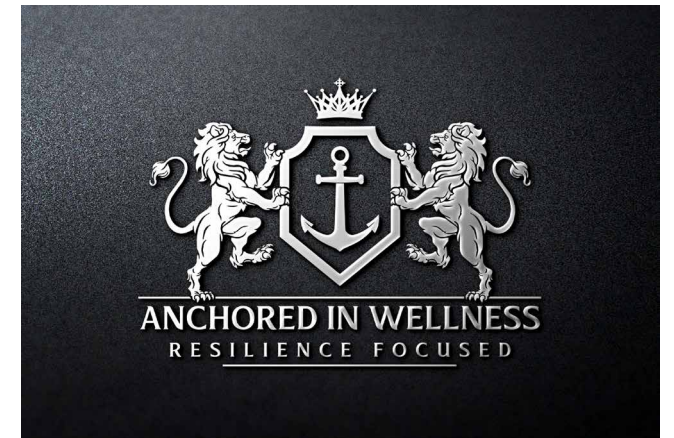
## ANTONIO WHEELER:

## My Core Values are:

- God – God's love and **grace** motivates us to serve
- Trauma-Focused Practice – We prioritize understanding what happened to you
- Excellence – We demand excellence of ourselves by exceptional practices, which lead to uncompromising quality in all that we do.
- Humble – Servant to the people with intentions of empowering the people.
- Resilience – We believe resilience is made up of five pillars: self-awareness, mindfulness, self-care, positive relationships, and purpose. By strengthening these pillars, we, in turn, become more resilient

## COBS MAGAZINE:

What advice can you offer to someone interested in studying in this field?



What advice can you offer to individuals who are looking to seek therapy but unsure of the process? Please provide your website information and your social media platforms for our readers to connect with you?

## ANTONIO WHEELER:

Therapy is beautiful because it facilitates the space for change. Trauma can write the narrative to a person's life that either defines their life or inadvertently destroy them from the inside out. Our people are the most resilient group of people on the face of this earth and therapy can assist in guiding that transition. There is power in our ability to endure and thrive despite what you been through. You do not get a diamond without pressure. When it comes to traumatic experiences the only objective is to survive and now that we have survived the storm it is time to thrive.

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Phone Number: (312)-847-6121

**Website (coming April under construction) [www.anchoredinwellnesschicago.com](http://www.anchoredinwellnesschicago.com)**  
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**LinkedIn - [www.linkedin.com/in/anchoredinwellnesschicago](http://www.linkedin.com/in/anchoredinwellnesschicago)**

## MEET

# ARIANA C. SMITH ESQ.

OWNER AND MANAGING ATTORNEY OF THE A.C. SMITH LAW FIRM PLLC

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to C.O.B.S. Queen's Court. We are having a sit-down interview with the powerhouse attorney Ariana C. Smith Esq. Thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to do this interview with us. Our readers would like to get to know you a bit more. Can you tell us about your journey and what led you to this career path?

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

Thank you for inviting me to be interviewed on your platform! My legal journey has been a bit unconventional, to say the least. After graduating from THE **Howard University School of Law**, I started my legal career at a boutique law firm handling criminal defense cases. After about a year, I took the experience that I gained and I opened my practice handling criminal defense, immigration, and personal injury and contract cases. I ran my practice for about three years until I transitioned to the Bronx District Attorney's Office where I was a prosecutor. From, there I started working at a law firm, and this was the catalyst that catapulted me onto my current path. I hated working at that law firm. I didn't like the area of law; I didn't like the law firm culture; I didn't like the condescension; I was completely miserable, and to be completely honest, I felt a little lost. So, I forced myself to sit in that discomfort to figure out what my next move would be. I knew that I didn't want to work at another law firm and I knew that I didn't want to continue practicing criminal law. I reflected on my own experiences and realized that there was a need for black attorneys in the small business law space so here I am!

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

A.C. Smith Law Firm PLLC was birthed because there was a need for you to control your destiny to work for yourself. That must have taken a huge leap of faith? Can you tell us more about your firm? What is your company's mission? What type of law do you practice? Where are you licensed

to practice? What are the main changes you've helped to bring about that are benefiting your clients?

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

It was a HUGE leap of faith! I would no longer have a bi-weekly paycheck so I had to completely bet on myself. But if I don't bet on myself then who will? A.C. Smith Law provides trademark and copyright registration, contract, and LLC formation services to mostly small businesses. Our mission is "Building Businesses and Brands on a Solid Legal Foundation." A lot of our clients are first-time business owners and we want to ensure that they are starting on the right (legal) foot. I pride myself on always being available to my clients, being completely transparent, and providing quality services – both customer service and legal service. I talk my clients through everything so that they understand the process. Besides, it is their business and their brand, not mine! I am licensed to practice in New York and New Jersey but trademark and copyright law are federal so I can be of service to all 50 states!

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

To become an attorney of your stature has to require a lot of learning and studying. Can you tell us what degrees you have obtained and from what colleges? Were there times of frustration and wanting to throw in the towel? What or whom gave you the strength to continue?

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

I received my Bachelor of Arts degree from Temple University where I majored in journalism. Once upon a time I wanted to write articles for Essence magazine. I received my Juris Doctor degree from Howard University School of Law. I wanted to throw in the towel



most of the law school and especially during the bar exam. I knew what my family had invested in my education and I knew that I would be the first attorney in my family – that was my main motivation to push through. I also made some lifelong friends in law school and we would study together and lean on each other. Of course, the student loan debt was a great motivator!

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You have served as a prosecutor with the Office of the Bronx District Attorney where you handled the prosecutions of numerous cases. Can you share about your time as a prosecutor? What are some of the cases you represented? What made you transition over to helping small business protect their brand?

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

I loved being a prosecutor. Of course,

it wasn't without its frustrations, but I was able to see how I could change the trajectory of someone's life simply by giving them a chance. I handled cases ranging from assault to grand larceny to gun possession to attempted murder. I've presented countless cases to the grand jury, conducted hearings, conducted trials, and negotiated countless cases. I enjoyed representing the people of the Bronx. I practiced criminal law for about 10 years and I was ready for a change of pace. I thought about when I ran my legal practice 7 years ago and how I would have appreciated being able to work with someone like me to help me from my business entity and protect my brand. So, I decided I wanted to be that person for others. I believe there is something to be said about working with someone that looks like you, speaks like you, and represents similar ideologies.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Tsedale Melaku is the author of the book "You Don't Look Like a Lawyer: Black Women and Systematic Gendered Racism." In her book, she asked the question "How can we lean on the table when we are not even in the



room?" With the legal industry being predominantly male, what systematic gendered racism have you experienced? How hard is it to be taken seriously knowing you are not like other law firms out here today? How do you overcome these challenges?

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

This is such an important question! When I practiced criminal defense, in most courthouses, there is an area where only attorneys can wait for their cases to be called. More often than not, I could be stopped from entering the area with an admonition that the area is only for attorneys. Once I showed them my attorney card, I would be allowed to wait/sit in the area. But, I couldn't help but notice that not everyone was automatically stopped from entering. I wanted to believe that it was because I was young, but I knew that it was deeper than that. I have had both opposing counsel and supervisors underestimate me. But you know what I say to that? Underestimate me at your peril! I don't want to be like other buttoned-up, stuffy law firms. I want to create a different standard and I want to stand out on my merit. The black community has always been a bit apprehensive about working with attorneys and I seek to change that.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Have you personally seen attitudes towards women in law change during your years in practice? What do you think needs to be changed in this area, to ensure equality between men and women in the legal industry especially women of color?

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

I think women simply need to be given the same opportunities as men in the workplace. There can sometimes be an implicit bias that we cannot handle the more difficult or complex cases and it is simply not true.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How to balance work life and home life? How important is balancing as an attorney? What do you enjoy doing when you are not practicing law?

A.C. Smith  
Law Firm

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

Work-life balance as an attorney, especially as a solo practitioner, is so so so important. There is ALWAYS something to do so it is important to know when it is time to call it quits for the day. I set boundaries for myself and my clients. I have a calendar for appointments and meetings, and I organize my to-do list based on priority. I also try not to be so hard on myself and to give myself some grace if I cannot complete my entire to-do list for the day. When I am not lawyering, I like to binge-watch Netflix series, listen to Soca music or kick it with friends. Oh, and I love to go on trips!

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Lastly, what advice would give for young women starting in law? What is your next venture for your company? Can you please provide your website resources and social media platforms?

### ARIANA C. SMITH:

I would say to young women starting in the law, be yourself unabashedly. Don't be afraid to outshine others. Be honest about the legal career you want, be bold, and go after it. Period. The next venture for my company is more how-to's. I would like to provide classes to teach business owners how to form their own LLCs. Within the next several years, I would like to start a coaching program to help other young attorneys start their law firms.

### You can find me here:

Website: [www.acsmithlaw.com](http://www.acsmithlaw.com)  
Instagram @acsmithlaw  
Facebook: @acsmithlaw  
LinkedIn: Ariana C. Smith, Esq.

## MEET *Tinika Thomas*

Inside tips for everyday make-up routine – regardless if you are a newbie or have experience in the makeup world.

### DO YOU SUFFER FROM DARK CIRCLES?

Dark circles under the eyes can make a look tired, older, or unhealthy. There are a few methods that can be done to get rid of or lessen the appearance of dark circles under the eyes. Even though the solutions may not be permanent it can help reduce the appearance.

There are a couple of factors why you have dark circles:

1. Allergies
2. Hay fever
3. Eczema
4. Heredity
5. Pigmentation irregularities
6. Constant rubbing of the eyes
7. Too much sun exposure

### HOW TO GET RID OF DARK CIRCLES?

Here are a few natural home remedies that you can try to either eliminate or reduce the appearance. It is important that everyone's skin is different so what might work for one person may not work for you.

**SLEEP:** Fatigue and a lack of sleep can cause dark circles under your eyes. Make sure you're getting at least seven hours of sleep each night as well as practice good sleep hygiene.

**COLD:** Sometimes dilated blood vessels can darken the area under your eyes. A cold compress can cause the blood vessels to constrict, which may result in a lessening of the dark circles.

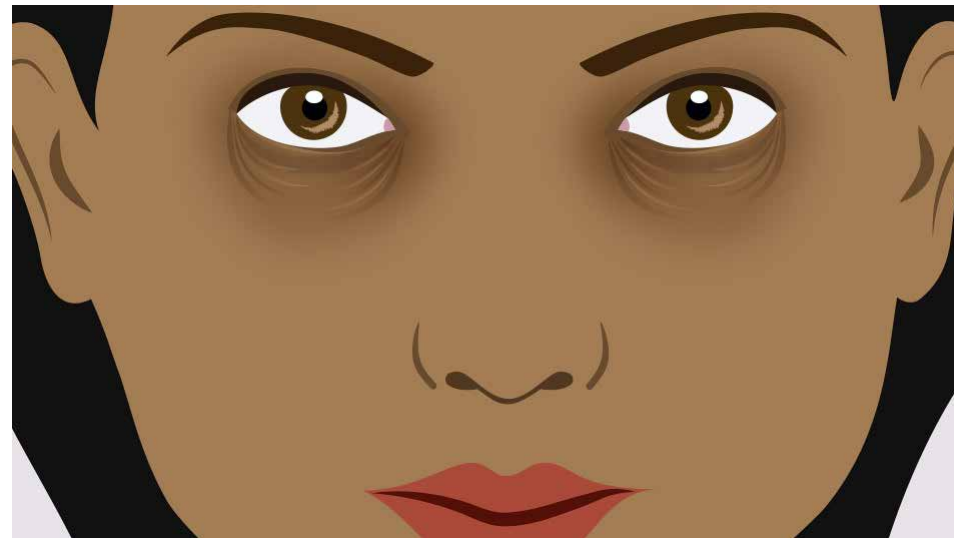
**SUN:** Reduce or eliminate sun exposure to your face.

**MOISTURIZERS:** Several over-the-counter moisturizers might help you with the dark circles under your eyes. Most of these solutions contain caffeine, vitamin E, aloe, hyaluronic acid, or retinol.

**CUCUMBER:** Placing chilled cucumber slices over your dark circles for 10 minutes can be used as a healing agent. Rinse the area with water and repeat this treatment twice a day.

**ALMOND OIL AND VITAMIN E:** Natural healing suggests mixing equal amounts of almond oil and vitamin E then gently massage the mixture into the dark circles. Let sit overnight and wash your face with cold water in the morning. Repeat the process nightly until the dark circles disappear.

**TEABAGS:** Natural healers suggest soaking two caffeinated teabags in warm water and then chilling the bags in the refrigerator for a few minutes. Place a bag on each eye. After five minutes, remove the tea bags and rinse the area with cold water.



www.Healthline.com

[https://www.oprah.com/fashion\\_and\\_beauty/what-causes-dark-circles\\_1-](https://www.oprah.com/fashion_and_beauty/what-causes-dark-circles_1-)



### THE TAKEAWAY

Even though dark circles may not be a health concern you may still want to rid of them for cosmetic reasons. With the number of natural remedies and medical treatments having dark circles can become a thing of the past.

MEET

## *SHE NELL*

AN AUTHOR, BLOGGER, AND CEO OF LIGHT AND SALT PRESS LLC.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** Welcome to C.O.B.S. Author's Corner. We have the pleasure to be talking to She Nell author, blogger, and CEO of Light and Salt Press LLC. Our readers would like to get to know you better. Can you tell us a bit about your background?

**SHE NELL:** I am an avid reader. I absolutely love books and when I began to be more intentional about my faith it became harder to find books to read. Not because books weren't available but, I was feeling convicted about the content I was reading. I stumbled upon Christian fiction and fell in love. I blog and write about that genre.

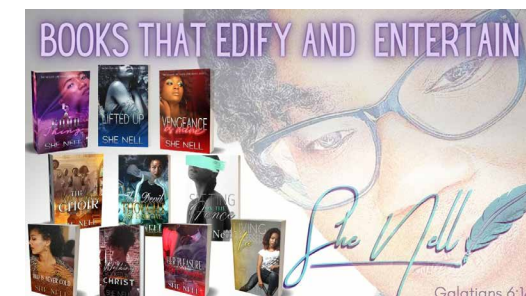
**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** Why did you want to become an author? I know you mentioned in your bio you enjoyed a great read did you equally enjoy writing as well? Did your passion for writing come to you naturally?

**SHE NELL:** One day my mother told me to go read a book. I told her I didn't want to read because none of the characters were like me. I was in sixth grade and had every Sweet Valley Twins book made. I loved the series, but I was frustrated with the characters at that time. Elizabeth and Jessica were arguing over a horse. I didn't have a horse. I don't think I had ever seen a real horse. So, my mother said if you don't have a book to read go write one. That's where it began and I have enjoyed it ever since.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** In 2017 you began to blog on Shenellinc.com. Can you please share why you started blogging? What did you blog about and are you still a blogger?

**SHE NELL:** I started my blog because I wanted everyone to know that you could read Christian Fiction. I was excited about the genre and being able to read without conviction. My blog aims to be the go-to resource for Christians that love to read books. I still post about twice a month although I am praying about switching to a more frequent schedule.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** In the same year you were signed to Anointed Inspirations Publishing. Can you share how that came about? You also released a book after being signed can you tell us the name of the book and what the book was about? Were you nervous about the feedback you were going to receive from your first book?



**SHE NELL:** I did a book review on Denora Boone's book. After the review, I reached out to her, and she offered more insight into the publishing business. She has truly been a blessing to me. After reading a sample she offered me a contract. Some months later A Good Thing was released. A Good Thing is about a woman who is struggling to find her value due to a series of abuse and abandonment issues. I was very nervous about putting the book out.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** Your bio states, it is important for you not to draw away from the Christian Lifestyle. You have written 11 Christian Fiction books- what is it that motivates you? Do you have any influential writers or authors that you have found that have directly influenced you in your writing? Who would say is your biggest encourager?

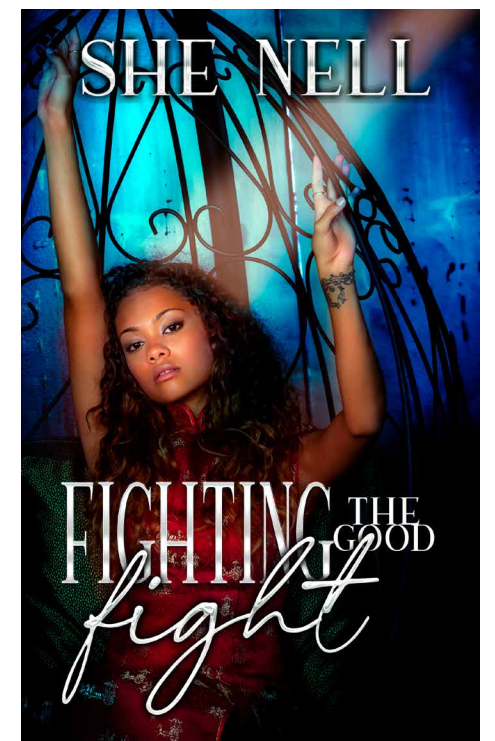
**SHE NELL:** I am motivated by the stories and characters. The beauty of the Christian writing community is the love and friendship that surrounds you. I have been blessed to meet some well-known aspiring authors. Everyone is helpful and kind. My biggest encouragement comes from the readers, their reviews, comments, and questions which keep me going.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** Let's jump to the year 2020 you became the CEO of Light and Salt Press LLC. Can you tell us about your company? What platform did you want to create for other writers like yourself? What is your company's mission statement?

**SHE NELL:** Light and Salt's goal is to be a light to the world and salt to the earth. At this time, I am publishing my content, but I would like to branch out and offer authors services in the future. Currently, I provide free reviews, blog posts, and interviews for Christian Fiction authors.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** Also, in 2020 you published your tenth Amazon bestseller Walking Crooked with Christ. The title alone is intriguing. Can you tell us about the meaning behind this book? What was the message you wanted your readers to walk away with? Was this one of many bestsellers you published? Out of all the books you published which was your favorite and which was the most difficult to write?

**SHE NELL:** Walking Crooked with Christ is about the walk of a new believer. Many people assume that once you become saved you start walking straight and narrow. The truth is that you learn daily which means you walk forward but not always straight. If it were as simple as oh now, I am saved, I am perfect, Jesus wouldn't have had to die. We all stumbled but the goal is to get up and keep going forward. Walking Crooked with Christ was one of many bestsellers because my readers are amazing, and they have stuck with me. My favorite book is The Devil Thought He Had Me, I loved those characters and



their relationship. The most difficult book to write was my last, Fighting the Good Fight. At the time of writing the book, I was struggling with some chronic health problems.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** You have received numerous nominations and awards. Can you share which awards have you won, and which one did you cherish the most?

**SHE NELL:** In 2021 I was named Path to Publishing's Author of the Year. My first awards came from Endie Fiyah radio they are my favorite because they were the first ones. The first year I was named Most Promoted Interview and the next Author of the Year.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:** Can you share a Life Quote that you apply to your daily life? What advice to have for authors nervous about writing their first book? Please share where your books can be purchased and your social media platforms for our readers to follow you.

**SHE NELL:** My Life Quote comes from Galatians 6:14 "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which<sup>[a]</sup> the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Basically, it's not about what I do but what Christ does and did. I would tell authors congratulations first, writing a book isn't easy. It's okay to be nervous in fact I am nervous every time I release a book. If you're not nervous I would worry. My books can be purchased on Amazon. If you like an autographed paperback send a request to authorshenell@gmail.com.

You can find me on social media  
@authorshenell (Instagram)  
@she nell (Facebook)  
or on my website shenellinc.com

## MEET HIP HOP ARTIST MIKA NICOLE AKA FRO\$T

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to C.O.B.S. Magazine Artist's Corner. We are excited for the opportunity to interview emerging Hip Hop Artist Mika Nicole aka Fro\$. Can you tell us about yourself?

### FROST:

First, I want to say thank you for the opportunity. My name is Mika Nicole born and raised in Mobile, Alabama. Although I was born in the south, I moved around quite a bit between New York, Florida, and Atlanta. I gained a huge influence being around different individuals from all different states. The influences from the North, South, East, and West helped my versatility when it comes to rap.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

When did you discover your love for music? How long have you been rapping and writing?

### FROST:

I have been rapping and writing for a long time. Writing is my true love. I discovered my love for music at an early age. I believe I was about 10 years old when I wrote my first book. I would create the book covers out of construction papers. I turned that book into a movie. That influence came from my mom who loved to watch movies all the time and I would watch with her. When I wrote the movie I said it needed a soundtrack. I took an R&B song and wrote a little rap to it. I realized that songs were easier to write than a book or movie. I realized a song is like a mini-movie. I truly fell in love with songwriting and the rest is history.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

New York is considered the hub for hip-hop music. How was your experience living in New York versus your time you lived in the South?

### FROST:

I loved it. New York taught me independence but the south taught me to hustle and grind. New York help me appreciate the words and bars of artists like Lil Kim. We all know that Lil Kim's lyrics can be explicit but she was clever in how she put words together to tell a story.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You have worked with some of the industry's legends. Can you name-drop a few of those artists? How did they respect your gift as a female rapper?

### FROST:

Yes, I have had the opportunity to work with legends from Akon to Wu-Tang's own Ghostface Killah. I believe my gift of penmanship and bars is why I received a high level of respect. I consider myself to be a pot of gumbo talent. My ability to "flow so hard" with guys all while being such a lady has coined me "Da Beauty and Da Beast." It is an honor to have my gifts compared to other elite female artists like Nicki Minaj for her tenacious flow and cadence. Lauryn Hill for her depth and spiritual undertones. Even Missy Elliot for her R&B writing and arrangements.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You went on a brief hiatus from the industry. Can you explain what happened during that time? What makes this come back so important? Can you tell us about your new single?

### FROST:

Yes. I was in two different situations that went wrong and halted my career twice. Now that I am a free agent with no papers I had to restart and restart over again. It takes a lot of fight when you are passionate about what you do and I wasn't manufactured overnight. I love to create and love to write music. During that restart period when situations would go bad, I would lose all that music which was like my babies. I had to fight to rebuild confidence in myself to try it for the third time. Now I am coming back independently and the scariest part is that if something goes wrong the blame falls on you. My new single "Lil Ni\*\*a" is an infectious bop mixing with a West Coast feel along with my native Alabama roots. The song explains that men need to come correct or not at all.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

The community tends to hate on beautiful female rap artists. Have you experienced that type of hate and how do you deal with it? Do you ever



418PRESTIGEFILMZ – SOLO DA SHOOTER

get the wrong type of attention? How do deal with the negative energy that comes with being an artist?

### FROST:

I always say people can hate you privately but still love you publicly. I always give out the same energy I like to receive in return. When you have been in this game for a while you tend to develop a keen sense. I must have a team that has learned to filter out the negativity before it hits me. It's sad because people have labeled female rappers with the stigma of being called hoes but, it goes back to the same thing about hate it is all about how you carry yourself. I can count on one hand the instances that have experienced being a female rapper but I am grateful that is never brought any harm my way throughout my entire career. When I walk into a room I present myself as a Queen and in return that is how I expect to be treated. However, I also know when the vibe does not feel right to remove myself from that situation.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you share with our readers the value of strength as a female artist? Can you please share your social media platforms with our readers so they can stay connected with you on your new journey?

### FROST:

I always say waking up with no goal, is like waking up with no soul. You have to have the determination to fulfill your purpose. I will not stop until the world knows my name Fro\$t! You can follow me on all social media platforms as #AllFro\$Everything.



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- CANDIED YAMS
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- SAUTÉED CABBAGE

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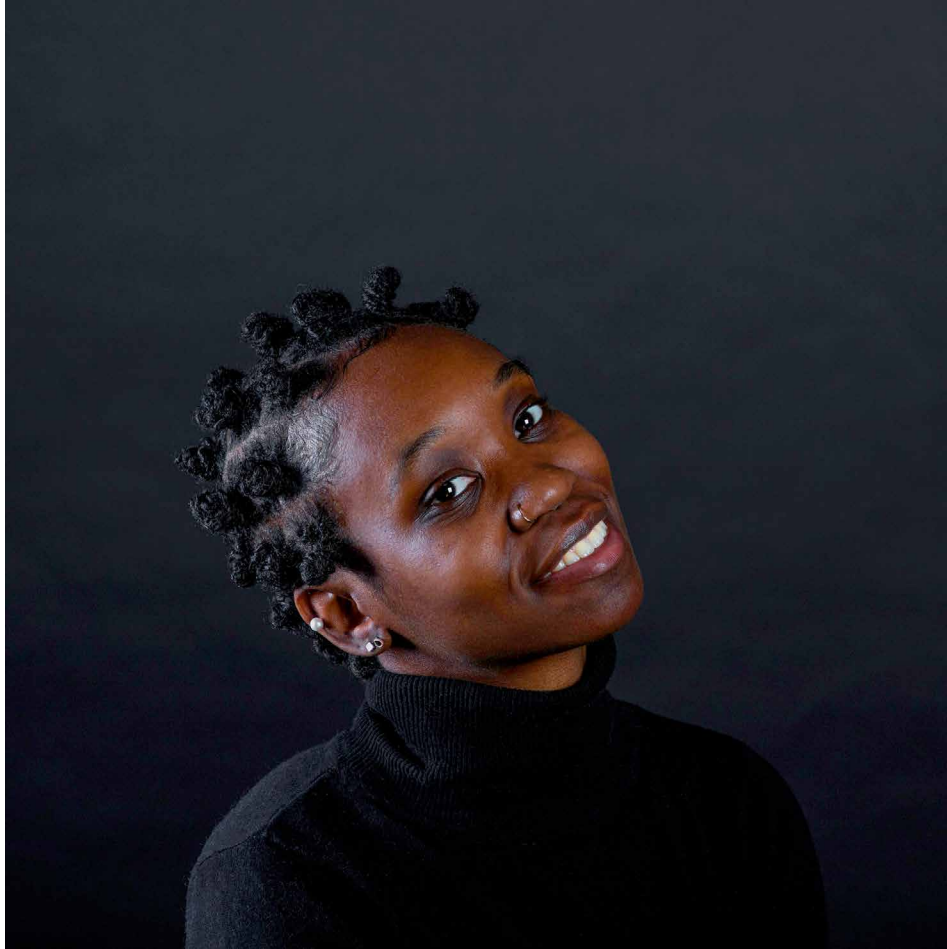
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ZELLE

KAMMARROYALCUISINE@GMAIL.COM

# MEET DANIELLE MURRELL COX

## FOUNDER OF dmcox/ ZURI & DRE



### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to C.O.B.S. Magazine. We are excited to be speaking to Montreal-based illustrator, designer, and author Danielle Murrell Cox. We are excited to hear about the women behind the brand. First, can you give our readers a little introduction about yourself?

### DANIELLE M. COX:

Thanks so much for having me! I'm a minimalistic graphic designer & illustrator (10+ years) from Montreal, best known for my self-published coloring books Black Queens and Black Kings, which are filled with images of powerful people, and positive affirmations. My coloring books went viral on social media and allowed me to have segments on CBC, Global, and CTV (national news platforms here in Canada), amongst many other local & international platforms. The viral post

on social media also allowed me to create a book with publisher HarperCollins. Together we released my board book, "My Hair". My Hair is the perfect introduction to an array of beautiful hairstyles for tiny naturalists'-in-training! In addition, I am the founder, illustrator, and designer of my plush toy brand, "Zuri & Dre." The toy brand officially launched in January 2021 and is based on my coloring books. Along with my work, I am also recognized for being the illustrator and designer for the "Big Dreamers: The Canadian Black History Activity Book for Kids" Series.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What sparked your interest in becoming a designer and illustrator? In your bio, you are described as a minimalist graphic designer. Can you please define what type of designer that is? Were

you self-taught or were you enrolled in graphic design programs?

### DANIELLE M. COX:

Ever since I could pick up a crayon, pencil, or pen, I've been doodling and drawing. My mom has always been a big supporter of me being in the arts so she always bought me the large art kits with pencils and paint for me to create as much as I could. Fast forward to the time when you need to go to college, I had no idea what I wanted to do. My mom made sure I knew that I had to go to school no matter what, but I wasn't sure what to do. In the end, she told me about the Graphic Design program at a local college in Montreal, and I applied! Unfortunately, I didn't get into the program and ended up being in another arts-related program at the same college for a year. Before my second year of college, I re-applied to the same graphic design program and got in! After the 3-year program, I graduated in 2011 and have been designing ever since. I worked in corporate for a few years and officially became a full-time freelancer in 2017. Throughout my years in corporate and even at the beginning of being a freelancer, my design style was whatever I thought I could create based on the current trends. Then after a while, I realized that things just didn't feel right to me anymore. I started to experiment with different styles and realized that "less is best" was my motto. For me, minimal graphic design is all about creating space within your work and only using or adding things if it's really necessary. Sometimes that translates to having a huge amount of white space, and sometimes it doesn't but for me, it's just a matter of using what's needed and not adding everything under the sun just because you can.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you please tell us about your company dmcox? Does the name have a special meaning? What is your company's mission statement?

### DANIELLE M. COX:

dmcox is my company name but also my artist name. It's me. stands for my name. d = Danielle (my first name), m = Murrell my first last name, and Cox is my second last name. I've had a few other



names for my business over the years, but I can finally say that this is the one. This is the first time that my business name is completely based on me, and my name. The name I had before this was DMCMTL, DMC = my initials + MTL = Montreal, where I was born and raised. But I realized that keeping the initials of my city was holding me back, I love my city, but I'm more than that. I didn't want to just leave it as DMC, because it of course reminds us of RUN DMC.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

The toy industry is such a competitive market what made you want to enter the world of toy designs? Please tell us about your series of plush toys Zuri and Dre? Why the name Zuri and Dre? What made you decide to make them plush?

### DANIELLE M. COX:

To be honest, entering the toy industry was never my plan. If you would have asked me 5 years ago, where I thought I'd be in 2021/2022, I would have said in my studio running a small graphic design agency. Toys were never the plan. The coloring books started because I wanted to create avatars of people who looked like me but in my minimal style. Those avatars turned into a coloring book based on people's feedback and support on social media. Those avatars then turned into dolls and now cushions. Years later I am thankful all because I tried to see what would happen. The names "Zuri" & "Dre" are based on suggestions from people on social media. I created posts and asked people what their names should be and got a few options for both dolls. I took a couple of those suggestions that I liked, put them in a poll on Instagram stories, and "Zuri" & "Dre" won. It was a fun way to name the dolls, and then the name grew on me so much that I created a brand based on them.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

In today's society there is a struggle with embracing natural hair. There are so many textures, types, and methods that

can become frustrating. As the author and illustrator of the book entitled My Hair why was writing this book so important? What message did you want to convey to your readers?

### DANIELLE M. COX:

"My Hair" was important for almost a selfish reason. Working on this book was like a letter to my younger self that you ARE beautiful and so is your hair. The main message is to love you for you, no matter the skin tone and no matter the hair/hair color.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You have amazing products nothing that I remember seeing growing up. Do you feel that you are creating visuals and influences that some of the older generations missed out on? Do you ever receive pushback? What keeps you pushing?

### DANIELLE M. COX:

Thank you! I think I'm creating products that are for all generations. For the ones like myself who didn't have this when we were younger, to the older generations who couldn't even imagine someone like me to have a business like this. Overall feedback has been amazing, from all age groups. The curiosity of "how far can I take this" plus the smiling faces and incredible support is what keeps me pushing.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What are your company goals for the next five years? What advice can you offer other entrepreneurs who continue to put their dream on the back burners? Please share your business website where all your product can be purchased as well as, your social media platforms.

### DANIELLE M. COX:

In the next 5 years, I hope my business has more income than it has debt. As a team of one, it's all on me, and it's not always easy, and business credit cards have helped me along the way. So I wish to have more cash flow, more dolls in other hairstyles and complexions. I would like to create a mini animated series on YouTube based on the dolls and their friends. Hopefully, I will be able to offer employment to a few employees (full- & part-time) that can help me on this crazy ride.

My advice? Do the thing and take your time. This is coming from someone who wants it all done NOW, but in reality, it's impossible. If you don't try, you'll always be wondering "what if?" and life is too short to focus so much energy on the "what ifs". If I didn't try and fail, try again, fail again, I wouldn't be where I am today. Trying doesn't mean that you'll have all the answers, but it will give you AN answer, and from there you decide if you continue down that path or pivot, but it all starts with doing the thing and trying. The reason why I say to "take your time", is because there will be setbacks and you'll get to points of burnout if you try to rush it all. But taking breaks is a good thing and it's part of the journey, so don't rush it. What is meant to happen, will happen regardless, whether you rush it or not—hope this makes sense! (ha-ha)

Website: <https://www.dmcox.co/>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/dmcox\\_](https://twitter.com/dmcox_)

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/dmcox\\_](https://www.instagram.com/dmcox_/)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/daniellemurrellcox>

Thanks again for having me! Appreciate what you are doing at C.O.B.S.!



# NISHA PERSHAY

**"DO YOU HAVE DRY ITCHY SCALP? WHEN COMBING YOUR HAIR DO YOU NOTICE A LOT OF FLAKES ALL OVER YOUR CLOTHES? NISHA TIPS ON TREATING DRY AND ITCHY SCALP"**

As for me, I have never had a dry scalp and an itchy scalp until I got older. I notice my scalp was super sensitive and itchy that it became hard for me to maintain certain natural styles and my scalp never bother me. Fast

forward to today, I can barely braid my hair without my scalp becoming itchy and flaky within 24hrs. I have some recommended products that can help you with your dry itchy scalp and flakes.

**1) Shea Moisture Shampoo and Conditioner Set - African Black Soap Bamboo Charcoal Deep Cleansing Shampoo -**

This product soothes itching while revitalizing hair and will leave the scalp rigorously clean. The conditioner helps hair care instantly softens and detangles while conditioning the natural hair hydrating to soothe the scalp without weighing hair down.

**2) ORS HAIR Repair Invigorating Shampoo -**

This product can help cleanses while reparative oils and plant-derived protein which will nourish and help reinforce strands to invigorate and revive damaged hair and dry scalp.

**3) EDEN BodyWorks Peppermint Tea Tree Shampoo -**

A clarifying shampoo to remove product buildup, increases scalp circulation, and promotes healthy hair growth with consistent usage.

**4) Cantu Refresh Root Rinse with Apple Cider Vinegar and Tea Tree Oil -**

Soothes itching & irritation Refreshes scalp without washing. This is great for sew-in weaves, Braids, locs that can deeply cleanse yet nourishing cocktails that replace your shampoo. when you need a deeper scalp detox and extra conditioned strands.

**5) MIZANI Scalp Care Pyrithione Zinc Antidandruff Shampoo -**

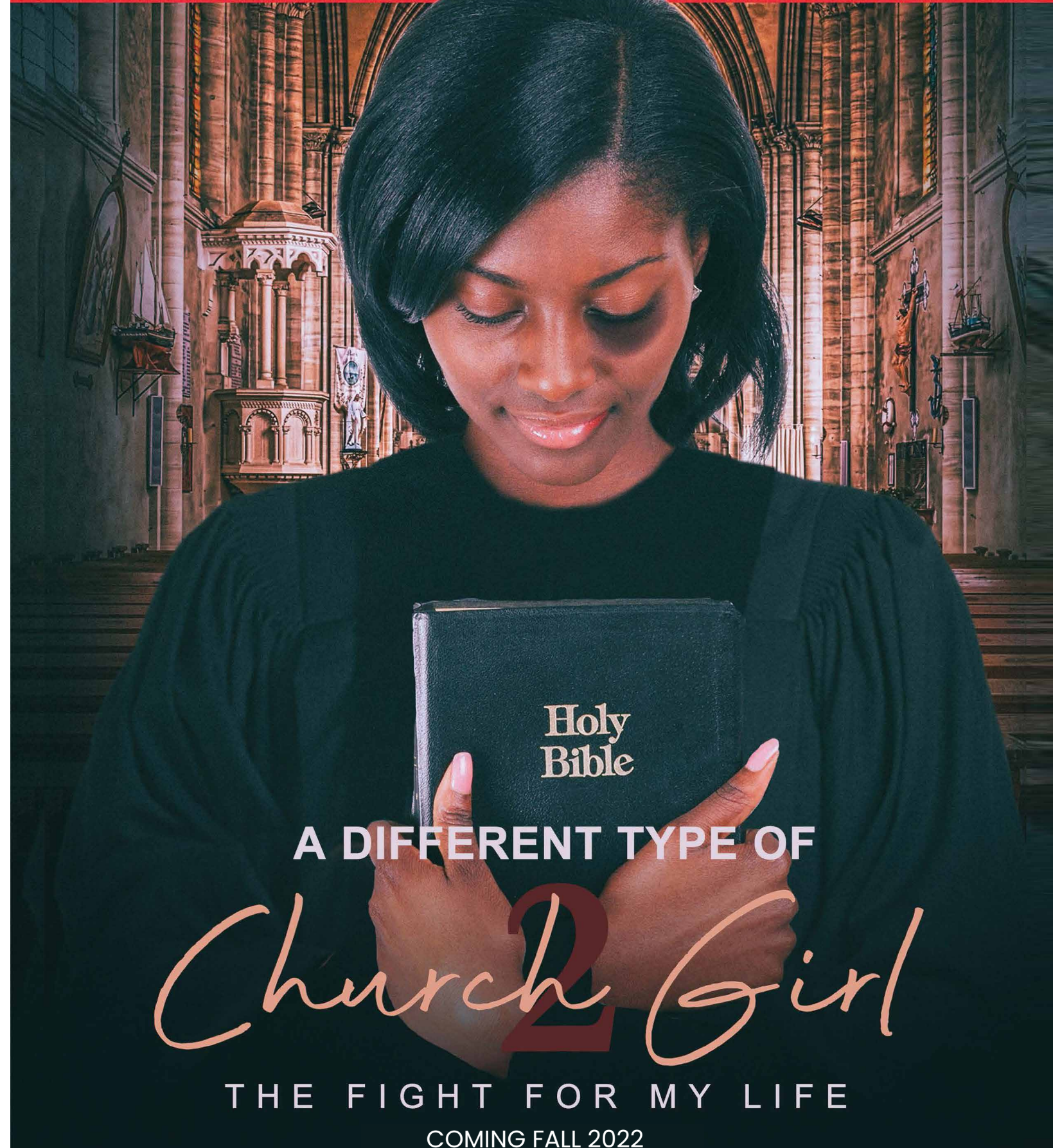
This dandruff shampoo works with every texture and curl type. A dry scalp shampoo that relieves itchiness and dandruff thanks to pyrithione zinc, peppermint oil, and cucumber extract.

**6) As I Am Dry & Itchy Scalp Care Shampoo -**

Balances and restores scalp health, moisturizing formula that hydrates hair. Effectively fights dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis and itchy flakes are no more! Relieves scalp itch, flaking, dryness, redness, and irritation associated with seborrheic dermatitis and dandruff. Cleanses and moisturizes your scalp leaving your curls and coils refreshed. Gently removes product build-up and environmental impurities from the hair and scalp.



TREVI BOOKER PERSHAY



## MEET

# SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY

## OWNER OF FASHION BY D'SHACOURT STUDIO

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

Welcome to C.O.B.S. Magazine. We are excited about the opportunity to interview the talented Sharon Gary-Dill Hackney. From reading your bio you are a very busy woman. Please share with our readers who is the woman behind the brand and how fashion became your calling?

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

Thank you for the opportunity. Most people do not know I started in medical billing. My favorite job was being a concierge for almost 25 years. I worked in five-star hotels in various states like Boston and New York. It was gratifying for me to take care of people. I treated all my guests like VIPs because status didn't mean anything to me. At the time I was being a concierge and honing my craft in designing. My love for fashion came from watching my mother make dresses by hand and I would copy

her designs. I began by making dresses for my dolls and the rest is history

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

You are Executive Producer of An Evening of Fashion & Elegance which highlights perfect and imperfect people per your bio. Can you share with our audience what you mean by perfect and imperfect people?

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

No one is perfect, what I mean is we live by society's definition of perfection. I see beauty everywhere I look. All of us, no matter how imperfect we think we look, can only do the best we can. I portray all ages and sizes because I don't define others by looks, heights, or standards I just want others to see my heart and my passion. This is the reason I decided to go deeper with my Fashion by D'Shacourt Studio Limited models who have special needs of all kinds. As an outsider looking in I wanted them to be treated like everyone else. I wanted to create a platform to give them opportunities to shine.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

Your bio shares your testimony that you're a survivor of breast cancer. Can you share your journey with breast cancer?

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

Currently I am battling stage 4 cancer of the right breast and uterus. The journey is difficult and it is a topic that I chose not to discuss publicly. I come from a big family my mom had 16 children. My mom, my



three sisters, and my brother all lost their battle to cancer. I try my very best to enjoy each day as it comes.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

We applaud your servanthood in the community as an advocate for disabilities. Can you please share why this outreach is so important to you?

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

My involvement with the individually challenged community is challenging. I am the caregiver for Sierra Stanley who has Cerebral Palsy. I've witnessed people react in such negative ways which makes me sick. They have feelings just like any other individual and should be treated in such a way. I try to tell people anything in life can happen like falling down the steps or bring in tragic accident where you can become part of the

disabled community.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

You're both the creative and the business head of your company. How do you balance your time between the two?

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

Balancing my time for me is easy. I work in the wee hours of the morning. I love when the house is quiet and I am working on my sewing machines with my jazz music playing in the background. I use this time as well to handle any appointments that I have but, for the most part, I am usually going to sleep when most of the world is just waking up.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

A graduate from Clark Atlantic University BS degree in Mass Communication and mother of three, volunteering, running a business, and being an advocate for human rights. Is there anything you haven't done yet? What drives you to be an ambassador for mankind?

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

My experience at Clark Atlanta

University was extraordinary. In high school and college, I was a cheerleader which allowed me to travel. The exposure I received was phenomenal. I graduated with two degrees one in Psychology and Mad Communications (I wanted to be an anchorwoman lol). My drive is my children and my passion for people. I have 3 children my first Catherine Ruth Dill, who is an Executive Chef (named after her grandmothers) my son Kyle Randall Dill (teacher and Coach at a private prep-school in North Carolina), Courtney Rea Dill (a designer like me) hence our company is our names combined with our favorite colors purple and green.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

You have received numerous accolades from various organizations. Which one was most rewarding to you and why?

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

All of my awards are wonderful. I have no favorites. I have gratefully received the Presidential Life Time Achievement Award, the Life Time Achievement Award from Atlanta's Hottest, and the Arts in the Parks Award for community service. I am excited to be receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award on June 26 at the ATL Fashion Week.

**C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:**

Can you share with our readers the value of strength and courage from your perspective as a serial CEO? Please share your social media platforms with our readers so that they may connect with one of God's amazing people on this earth.

**SHARON GARY-DILL HACKNEY:**

Don't be afraid because we all have fears. People will tell you what you can't or shouldn't do but always follow your heart and instincts. If you make a mistake it will be yours to make not someone else who



may have chosen to listen to.

You can follow me on my social media platforms:

**Instagram:** fashion\_by\_dshacourt\_studio

**Facebook:** Sharon Gary-Dill Hackney

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sharon-gary-dill-92b7b496>



## MEET AMBERSTAR FARROW CEO OF FARROW SKIN CARE

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Welcome to the C.O.B.S magazine. We are excited to have your organization featured in our Women Innovators section. Please share with us who is Amberstar Farrow the woman behind the brand and your journey to getting it all started?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

First, thank you for considering me. I am a mother, wife, retail manager by day, and a Skincare junkie by night. My obsession with skin and skin products started at a young age. I wouldn't do this today but I remember cleaning my face with alcohol every night when I was younger. With this journey, my ultimate goal was to find ways to help people feel good especially when it comes to their skin. I love when people feel good about their skin after using my products. Skincare makes people feel good and I want my brand to do just that.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

The world took a hard hit when the pandemic shifted our lives. In what way has the pandemic changed your life? Explain?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

The Pandemic was an eye-opener, being affected by it in my household, this hiccup allowed me to shift my mindset on creating different forms of opportunities for my family.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You've shared with our Founder Trevi Pershay the importance of naming your products after family members explain why?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

This is one of my favorite parts of my brand, naming the products after my family members, giving my family their flowers, and keeping their names alive. For example, "Sister's Skin" is named after my mother. The name

came easy because of the vivid memory of her moisturized skin.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How did losing your mother provoked you to start your business? How do you juggle work, business, and family in the equation?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

I'm still working on time management. I found it easy to use a planner and write out my day-to-day. Making a list helps me keep my priorities in check.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Please share with our readership how you come to know Trevi Pershay and in what way did she motivate you to where you are now?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

Trevi Pershay played a major part in my childhood/teenage years and still today. I remembered the day I met her she had so much energy, I had to be a part of whatever she had going on, which was P.D.M (PDM Performing Arts Corporation) at the time. She showed up for me and many of the youth that was active in her organization. The one thing that stayed with me was how persistent she was in pursuing her dream and goals. I saw it with my own eyes. She never let a NO stop the show... Literally.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you share a time when you wanted to quit? How did you find the courage to go on? What was your motivation to press on?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

Farrow Skincare was a five-year-long process, I would sell products randomly and stop, not giving myself a chance to grow the business. The more I worked on Farrow Skin Care the more I realized it was getting better, which kept me more curious about what I can accomplish with this new



adventure. Also, a good friend of mine motivated me to start the e-commerce part of my business and I can't thank her enough.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What makes your products stand out from your competitors? Where do you see your brand going in 5 years?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

What makes my products stand out is the all-natural ingredients. We have a brown sugar scrub called "Tanisha Tahitian" that is edible. Five years from now, I would like to have 3 different collaborations, as well as the opportunity to launch my products in one of my favorite outlets which is Target. I've been very particular on branding just so I can get that contract.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Please share with our readers how they can find you on social media and your website?

### AMBERSTAR FARROW:

You can find Farrow Skincare products on our website Farrow skincare.com Instagram/Facebook/Twitter @farrowsskincare

# FARROW

SKINCARE



C.O.B.S.  
CIRCLE OF  
Boss SISTERS

## C.O.B.S MAGAZINE

speaks to women

**"UpRising Entrepreneurs"**  
in the local Black and Hispanic communities.

Our women went from weeping to winning, from the grind to the get it and from the struggle to their strengths in finding their purpose.

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# MEET FELICIA R. FENCL

## FOUNDER AND SENIOR PUBLICIST FOR THE COLLECTIVE SHINE AGENCY



### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

In this month's section of Women Innovators we are talking to Felicia R. Fencl a retired Air Force Veteran turned serial entrepreneur. Before we dive into her present let's discuss a little bit about her past. Can you please introduce the women behind her brand? Can you share when and why becoming a Publicist pique your interest?

### FELICIA FENCL:

My name is Felicia Fencl. I am originally from Norfolk, Virginia. I currently reside in the Atlanta Metro area where I operate multiple businesses and pursue my passions. As mentioned, I served in the United States Air Force and proudly retired after 20+ years on active duty. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management with a concentration in Human Resource Management; as well as a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. I am a mom on the move and a woman on her grind.

During my military journey, I was fortunate to learn many skills. But it was

during the last 5 years of my service that I started to grasp the skillsets that I knew would prove valuable after I left the military. Out of the many work experiences I had, I really enjoyed the ones that put me on stage in front of people. Interacting with the public and engaging with my audience always motivated me. I didn't know exactly how I would spend my days after I hung up my boots, but I knew I wanted to reach people. I found my passion in helping others tell their stories. I already had the experience and education to match, so it just seemed logical for me to pursue a career in public relations.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Can you tell us about your agency The Collective Shine Agency? What services do you offer to your client? What is your company's mission?

### FELICIA FENCL:

The agency is a full-service boutique public relations, media, and event management firm. As its Senior Publicist, I represent talents and brands in the beauty, entertainment, sports, and lifestyle industries. The mission is to connect our client's brands (or themselves) to their targeted demographic. We do this by telling their brand story in a way that leaves the public wanting to know more. The goal is to help them increase public awareness. Whether it is through a product launch or the preparing of a press release on their behalf; we practice across the discipline to ensure our clients shine. Our mission is to see them win.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Independently owning and operating your own agency requires being a good leader. What three character traits do

you think were most instrumental to your success?

### FELICIA FENCL:

I learned how to be an effective leader while in the military. I watched good leaders lead and I watched bad leaders lose their following. I live by the Air Force's core values which have now become my own. Integrity. Service Before Self. Excellence In All We Do. Operating from a space of integrity while most times putting the needs of my clients ahead of my own is one of the reasons why my agency garners excellent results.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How did you scale your business to profitability? About long did it take? Can you please share a few of the steps that you took?

### FELICIA FENCL:

I was able to grow and scale my business by creating products and services that brought in more disposable revenue and less overhead. After tirelessly working for 3 years, I started to work smarter and not harder. I further plan to scale by creating opportunities in the media space that have the potential to aid me in reaching larger audiences. The goal is to diversify my client roster and increase the agency's profitability. I am capitalizing on what I am an expert in and creating ways to monetize my vast experience.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

You are a jack of all trades. In your bio, it states you are the owner and founder of your own travel agency. Can you tell us about your travel agency? What is your agency's specialty and do you service a particular clientele?

### FELICIA FENCL:

I founded First Choice Travel Group, LLC

in 2004 as an extension of my love for traveling. The agency will be 18 years old in July. Since its inception, my agents and I have helped many travelers create travel memories. We specialize in curating leisure, group, entertainment, sports, and corporate travel experiences. Our clients are those who aren't budget timid and who aren't afraid to see the world. I love introducing our clients to new destinations. They love when I take them outside of their comfort zone.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

How do you build and maintain relationships with brands? What is your process on deciding whom to take under your wing?

### FELICIA FENCL:

Trust is the foundation of building and maintaining relationships. It must be mutually respected. I strive to show brand loyalty through my partnerships. If I have had great results from a brand or a partnership, I am more likely going to seek them out in the future. That is how I show my loyalty; by continuing to see them as a leader in their space and by choosing to work with them exclusively. Before I decide to work with a brand (person or product) I have to first believe in its mission, vision, and purpose. Their business ethics must align with those of my agency. When I connect with potential clients wanting agency representation, I actively listen to them tell their brand stories. I listen for passion. They have to believe in the brand wholeheartedly and show a willingness to do the work that it will take to succeed. If I can hear or see the passion to elevate, I am on board!

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Your agency has served thousands of

individuals and organizations for over 18 years. Staying innovative and new in the PR realm can be a challenge. Where do you find your inspiration, and how do you separate yourself from other firms?

### FELICIA FENCL:

My peers in both the PR and travel industries inspire me to be better than I was yesterday. There are so many dope publicists and travel advisors out there who are leading the way. I learn from them daily. I seek out those I admire and watch them set the standard in their respective industry. I am continuously increasing my knowledge. Self-development is a key part of my success. I learn daily and use what I have mastered to help me increase my agency's reputation and productivity. I am big on creating my own opportunities. That way, I control the narrative and the potential outcome. I separate my agency from other firms by leading from the front and never forgetting to give back to those who have helped me along my path.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

What would you say is the most challenging part of your job, and how to keep yourself from burning out? What advice would you give to people hoping to make it as a Publicist and to make their own name in the PR world?

### FELICIA FENCL:

One of the most challenging parts of being a publicist is staying needed. It has become easy for brands to think they can do the work of a professional themselves. The internet has become my biggest competition. It makes it look easy. This motivates the novice to experiment and attempt to do a job I have years of experience in doing. It is a challenge at times to convince potential clients that they need a skilled publicist on their

team. With my job, there are a lot of long hours, missed meals, and fires to put out. It can at sometimes be a thankless job. My advice for anyone considering a job in public relations is to network and make meaningful connections. The relationships you build at the start of your career will become invaluable as you work to create yourself as a publicist who others want to work with.

### C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE:

Finally, what do you wake up looking forward to? What's next for your career? Can you please share your agency's website and your social media platforms for our readers to connect with you?

### FELICIA FENCL:

I wake up each day looking forward to being the best I can be all while motivating and inspiring along the way. I wake up ready to help someone shine. I am excited to start my day knowing that at the end of it I played a part in making someone's dream come true. I am so excited about the next things I will do in my career. From developing a digital publication to curating in-person and virtual media events over the next several months, I am deeply invested in leaving my mark in an industry I love.

You can visit us online at [www.thecollectiveshine.com](http://www.thecollectiveshine.com). You can connect with me on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/thecollectiveshine> and <https://www.facebook.com/Publicist-Fee>. On Instagram at [https://www.instagram.com/mahagony\\_joy/](https://www.instagram.com/mahagony_joy/).

THE  
COLLECTIVE  
SHINE  
AGENCY

## Tips & Tricks to Stay Fit by **ARIELLE PERSHAY**

Hello beautiful people! I hope that the 30-day challenge worked up an appetite for another 30-day challenge.

Before we get into that, I would like to explain why these challenges are good benefits.

1. Starts you on the right path to get healthy.
2. Makes workouts fun.
3. You can see little results if you stay consistent.



### 30 DAY CLEAN EATING CHALLENGE

|                                      |                                         |                                       |                                        |                                         |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| DAY 1<br>Clean out your fridge       | DAY 2<br>Plan your meals                | DAY 3<br>Reflect on your health goals | DAY 4<br>Find an app that can help you | DAY 5<br>Skip the scale                 |
| DAY 6<br>Try new leafy greens        | DAY 7<br>Try a morning smoothie         | DAY 8<br>Eliminate sugar              | DAY 9<br>Choose whole grains           | DAY 10<br>Cut processed food            |
| DAY 11<br>Eat a nutritious breakfast | DAY 12<br>Mix up your protein           | DAY 13<br>Try fresh new fruits        | DAY 14<br>Eliminate soda               | DAY 15<br>Upgrade your snack game       |
| DAY 16<br>Grab a protein bar         | DAY 17<br>Drink water over juice        | DAY 18<br>Go veggie for the day       | DAY 19<br>Eliminate caffeine           | DAY 20<br>Eat quinoa over rice          |
| DAY 21<br>Eat less, but frequently   | DAY 22<br>Dark chocolate over chocolate | DAY 23<br>Eliminate dairy             | DAY 24<br>Cut out bad carbs            | DAY 25<br>Eat a nutritious dessert      |
| DAY 26<br>5 ingredients or less      | DAY 27<br>Eliminate alcohol             | DAY 28<br>Eat a balanced plate        | DAY 29<br>Stock your fridge            | DAY 30<br>Celebrate how far you've come |

Clean up your diet with the Fabulous app today!



Now that we are informed on the good these challenges can bring to our bodies, let's do another 30-day Challenge. This time we are going to do food. Are you ready? Let's go!

The 30-day food challenge I received information from <https://blog.thefabulous.co/30-day-clean-eating-challenge/>. Please check it out. I think this is the best way to start your health journey.

Okay, ladies and Gentlemen let's start the challenge! See below. Thanks so much for reading my article. I would love to hear some feedback from you.

Remember you are already beautiful/handsome we are just adding some healthy swag to our life.

# YOU JUST DON'T WAKE UP STRONG

ft

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Trevi Pershay Productions Inc.

Created and Written by  
**Trevi Booker Pershay**



# **A SINNER'S PRAYER**

(The Quiet Storm)

AUDITIONS COMING FALL 2022

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