

Building Health and Resilience Research Capacity in the U.S. Gulf Coast: Elevating Partnership

Workshop 2

Panelist Bio-sketches

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Shamarial Roberson, Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Shamarial Roberson is the Chief Executive Officer of the DSR Public Health Foundation, Incorporated, and President of Health and Human Services for Indelible Business Solutions. She previously served as Deputy Secretary of Health for the Florida Department of Health during Covid19, overseeing statewide public health and health equity efforts. Dr. Roberson specializes in public health strategy, epidemiology, and biostatistics, with a strong focus on improving health outcomes in communities. Her leadership and expertise have been instrumental in advancing public health initiatives in Florida by partnering with community partners including Historically Black Colleges and Universities. She has been recognized with numerous awards for her contributions to public health and is a member of several professional organizations dedicated to health and human services. Dr. Roberson earned a Doctor of Public Health in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, a Master of Public Health in Health Promotion and Health Policy from Florida State University, and dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Biological Science and Family and Child Science from Florida State University.

Dr. Bernece Herbert, Committee Co-Chair

Dr. Bernece Herbert is the chair of the Department of Urban & Regional Planning at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi. She has a doctoral degree in natural resource management and a master's in urban & Regional Planning. Dr. Herbert is a results-oriented and people-centered professional with over 20 years of practice, academic, and research experience in higher education and training, community development, strategic planning and management, public sector investment planning, and policy formulation. Her research areas include urban health indicators, sustainable development, and social equity, with a specific focus on food security, poverty and hunger, climate change, energy, and public perception. Her technical skills include spatial analysis, vulnerability analyses, and resiliency mapping. Her recent grants have focused on advancing solar energy, green infrastructure, heat mitigation, energy burdens, and community empowerment in underserved and under-represented communities. She has led projects sponsored by agencies such as FEMA, USDS, INROADS, Clean Energy States Alliance, and Jobs to Move America. Her ultimate goal at JSU is to educate and train students to be highly knowledgeable, competent, and innovative thinkers and leaders who will utilize and leverage their knowledge and skills to build healthy, resilient, and sustainable communities.

Keynote Presentation

Moderator:

Dr. Erin Lynch

Dr. Erin Lynch, CRA currently serves as President of Quality Education for Minorities (QEM) Network, an educational research non-profit that serves Minority Serving Institutions through technical assistance and capacity development support as well as research. Prior to QEM, she served as Associate Provost of Research, Scholarship, and Innovation/Dean of Graduate School/ Endowed Professor of Education at Winston-Salem State University, a public HBCU in North Carolina. She is a trained social scientist in intervention and organizational development with expertise in strategic planning, program evaluation, and equity-centered research design. She serves as a speaker on MSI and HBCU Research & Development ecosystem development. She was recently selected as the Alumni Innovator of the Year for the Higher Education Leadership Foundation (H.E.L.F), the leading leadership program for the placement of HBCU presidents. She has also served as Co-Chair to the NASEM committee for the Development of a Plan to Promote Defense Research at HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, & Other Minority Institutions; Governance Board Member to the EDUCAUSE CourseGateway Platform program in digital learning equity; member of the American Council of Education, Social & Economic Mobility Index Development Technical Review Panel; and former member of the Complete College America HBCU Digital Learning Advisory Board.

Speaker:

Dr. Deanna Wathington

Deanna Wathington, MD, MPH serves as president of the American Public Health Association (APHA). She is clinical director at REACHUP, Inc., professor (collaborative appointment) at the University of South Florida (USF) College of Public Health and executive director of the Consortium of African American Public Health Programs. She previously served as founding dean of the Bethune-Cookman University College of Health Sciences, associate dean for Academic and Student Affairs at the USF College of Public Health, associate dean for Academic Enrichment at the USF College of Medicine and as director of the Office of Minority Health at the Florida Department of Health.

Dr. Wathington serves on the APHA Executive Board and ASPPH Workforce Advisory Committee. Previous service includes the Council on Education for Public Health, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on Health and Resilience in the Gulf of Mexico, the National Partnership for Women and Families Listening to Mothers Advisory Group, Community Catalyst's Hospital Equity and Accountability project and the HHS OMH Southeastern Health Equity Council. Dr. Wathington earned her medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey – New Jersey Medical School, now known as Rutgers University – New Jersey Medical School; her master of public health from Temple University; and her baccalaureate in zoology and physiology from Rutgers University. She completed residency training in family medicine at JFK Medical Center, New Jersey, and Bayfront Medical Center, Florida.

Dr. Wathington's work and scholarly efforts have centered on health equity, clinical-community linkages, maternal and child health, equitable community development, and expanding diversity within the health professions. She is co-editor of *Black Women and Public Health: Strategies to Name, Locate, and Change Systems of Power* and, more recently, co-author of a chapter on perinatal safety and public health in *Black Women's Reproductive Health and Sexuality - A Holistic Public Health Approach*. Dr. Wathington has received the distinction of Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, Temple University Gallery of Success Inductee, Association of American Medical Colleges Shoestring Award of Excellence, the APHA Black Caucus of Health Workers Hildrus A. Poindexter Award, and the Florida Outstanding Woman in Public Health Award.

Panel: Interdisciplinary Partnerships among MSIs and HBCUs

Moderator

Dr. Bernece Herbert, Committee Co-Chair (*see Welcoming Remarks*)

Speakers

Dr. Robert Bullard

Dr. Robert D. Bullard is a distinguished professor of urban planning and environmental policy and founding director of the Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice at Texas Southern University. He is also co-founder of the HBCU Climate Change Consortium and the National Black Environmental Justice Network. He received his Ph.D. degree from Iowa State University. Professor Bullard is often called the “father of environmental justice.” Bullard is a proud Viet Nam Era U.S. Marine Corps Veteran. He has written 18 books. His latest book is *The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities* (2023). In 2008, *Newsweek* named him one of “13 Environmental Leaders of the Century.” In 2019, *Apolitical* named him one of the world’s 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy, and *Climate One* presented him the Stephen H. Schneider Award for Outstanding Climate Science Communication. In 2020, *WebMD* gave him its Health Heroes Trailblazer Award and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) honored him with its Champions of the Earth Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2021, he was appointed by President Biden to serve on the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council. In 2022, he was awarded honorary doctorate degrees from Georgetown University and the University of Johannesburg. That same year he received the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2023, he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, California Arts and Sciences, and he received Harvard Law School Environmental Law Society’s Horizon Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to environmental law and policy, and the John E. Gould Medal from the American Geographical Society. And in 2024, he received the TIME Earth Award, Museum of Science (Boston) Bradford Washburn Award, Urban Land Institute Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development, and he was elected to the National Academy of Medicine.

Dr. Omolola E. Adepoju

Dr. Omolola Adepoju is a Clinical Professor at the University of Houston College of Medicine and the Director of the Humana Institute. As a health services researcher, she specializes in the intersection of successive disasters, healthcare utilization, and health disparities. Her research examines how compounded crises—such as climate-related disasters, pandemics, and systemic challenges—exacerbate barriers to care for underserved populations. Dr. Adepoju is particularly committed to addressing disparities in access to care, continuity of treatment, and health outcomes among vulnerable communities. Through her research and leadership, she aims to inform equitable policy solutions and strengthen the resilience of healthcare systems in the face of recurring and overlapping crises. Over the past decade, she has published more than 70 papers in leading journals and received funding from prestigious organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, American Board of Family Medicine, Walmart Foundation, RWJF, and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Dr. Babatunde “Kay” Oyajobi

Dr. Babatunde “Kay” Oyajobi is a professor of Cell Systems & Anatomy in the Long School of Medicine at University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UT Health SA). He has over 30 years of research experience in academia and over 12 years of inter-institutional collaborations. His formal training includes medical training in Nigeria and training in Clinical Biochemistry at the University of Leeds (M.S.) and University of Sheffield (Ph.D.), both in the United Kingdom as well as a M.B.A. from UT Austin. After postdoctoral training in Sheffield, Paris and San Antonio, he commenced his professional research and teaching career on the faculty at UT Health SA. Kay, an expert in Advising & Mentorship as well as Educational Administration & Leadership, is an outstanding educator. He has been recipient of multiple honors for his teaching and mentorship including the UT Health SA Presidential Award for Teaching Excellence in 2018 and induction into the University of Texas Kenneth I. Shine, M.D., Academy of Health Science Education in 2021. He has held several leadership positions at UT Health SA and he currently serves as Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. Kay is one of the founding Program Directors of an IRACDA postdoctoral training program at UT Health SA that involve external partnership with three local minority serving primarily undergraduate institutions (all Hispanic-Serving Institutions as defined by Federal statute). Kay also leads several other workforce development training programs that are funded by grants from extramural agencies. Externally, he has served and continues to serve as full member on various NIH panels reviewing various types of applications directly and indirectly related to workforce development.

Panel: Cracking the Ivory Tower: Partnering with External Organizations

Moderator

Dr. Shamari Roberson, Committee Co-Chair (*see Welcoming Remarks*)

Speakers

Dr. Ashwith Chilvery

Dr. Ashwith Chilvery is FUEL’s Director of Use-Inspired Research & Development, bringing over 12 years of experience as a faculty and higher education administrator in leading research consortia to drive innovative, community, and industry-focused research at higher education institutions. Prior to FUEL, Dr. Chilvery served as the Assistant Vice President of Research and Sponsored Programs and an Associate Professor in the Department of Physics at the Xavier University of Louisiana, where he led various capacity-building initiatives in research and innovation. Dr. Chilvery has deep roots in innovation and technology transfer, where he has worked extensively with industry partners, SBIR/STTRs, and federal agencies to foster synergistic partnerships. Dr. Chilvery has also had research fellowships at various Department of Energy (DOE) federal labs such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), and Department of Defense (DoD) facilities such as Wright Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB). He has also served on various local and national boards/committees in STEM education and research. Dr. Chilvery has a Ph.D. in Applied Physics from Alabama A&M University, an MBA from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, and an MS in Electrical Engineering from the University of South Alabama.

Dr. Joan Hendrix

Joan Hendrix, DNP, RN, is a dedicated academic leader and seasoned nursing professional with a distinguished career in higher education, nursing leadership, and healthcare program development. She currently serves as the Associate Vice President for the School of Nursing and Health Professions at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC), where she has been a transformative force in advancing nursing and health sciences education.

Dr. Hendrix earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, with a focus on administrative leadership and education. Her capstone project, which aimed to develop, implement, and evaluate a communication training program in long-term care settings, reflects her commitment to improving healthcare outcomes and communication in clinical environments. She also holds a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) with a specialization in Adult Health Nurse Education from Mobile College, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from the same institution.

In her current position at MGCCC, Dr. Hendrix provides leadership over a wide range of nursing and health profession programs, managing nearly 800 students across various disciplines. Her efforts have been instrumental in securing accreditation for the School of Nursing and Health Professions, including the reaccreditation of several health-related programs, the establishment of a state-of-the-art simulation center, and certification from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). She has also played a key role in expanding high school dual enrollment options and developing several workforce-focused, non-credit health-related programs. Additionally, Dr. Hendrix was pivotal in the creation of Mississippi's first LPN Apprenticeship Program. Under her leadership, MGCCC's nursing programs have earned exceptional recognition, including being ranked as the #1 community college nursing program in Mississippi and among the top programs in the Southeast region.

Dr. Hendrix's professional experience extends beyond the classroom and administration. She has held various faculty and leadership positions at MGCCC, including Associate Degree Nursing Department Chair, and College Dean of Health Sciences. She has also contributed to numerous committees and initiatives aimed at advancing nursing education, including the Strategic Plan 2030 Committee and the SACSCOC Committee. Her expertise in accreditation and program development has been a driving force in the success and growth of MGCCC's nursing and allied health programs.

A passionate advocate for nursing education and leadership, Dr. Hendrix is an active member of several professional organizations, including the Mississippi Nurses Foundation, Mississippi Council of Deans and Directors of Schools of Nursing, the Mississippi Council of Associate Degree Nursing Programs, the Mississippi Council of Directors of Practical Nursing Programs, and the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), where she serves as a peer evaluator, team chair, and as an ERP committee member. Her professional achievements have earned her numerous accolades, including the Administrator Difference Maker Award at MGCCC and recognition as a leader in nursing education.

Dr. Hendrix is deeply committed to her community, having served in various leadership roles such as Vice Chair of a community development corporation board and Chair of a child development center board. She also actively supports marriage ministry and homeowner associations in her local community.

With a career marked by a passion for nursing, education, and leadership, Joan Hendrix continues to shape the future of nursing and healthcare education, ensuring that students are well-prepared to meet the challenges of a dynamic healthcare landscape.

Dr. Victor Sutton

Victor D. Sutton currently oversees MSDH's Office of Preventive Health and Health Equity, Office of Health Services, Office of Field Services, and the Jackson Heart Study Community Engagement Center, after having served as the director of the Office of Preventive Health and Health Equity for many years. The Office of Preventive Health and Health Equity works to promote evidence-based programs that focus on policy and environmental change, and works with schools, faith-based organizations, health care systems, worksites, municipalities and communities. Dr. Sutton manages the programmatic planning, implementation, and evaluation of federal and state grants. Dr. Sutton also provides operational and fiscal oversight to the Bureau of Community and School Health, the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention, the Delta Health Collaborative, and the Injury and Violence Prevention program. Dr. Sutton's career in public health extends over a decade in professional roles with the Mississippi Department of Human Services' Office of Children and Youth, the New York Department of Labor, and non-profit organizations, including the Community Organization for Health Awareness (COHA). As Director of COHA, Dr. Sutton developed a mentoring network that addressed health and education among at-risk youth in the juvenile system. His research interests are varied and include leadership, cardiovascular health, obesity, health disparities, physical activity, community-based corrections, and community and economic development.

Panel: Engaging in and Sustaining Community-based Partnerships for Research and Collaboration

Moderator

Dr. Lance Hallberg, Committee Member

Dr. Hallberg is the Program Director for Environmental & Public Health Education & Engagement (UTMB) and Deputy Director of the Community Engagement Core (Baylor-Rice Superfund program) and member of the Gulf Coast Center Precision Environmental Health. He has been a biomedical researcher for over 30 years serving as a PI and manages the UTMB Inhalation Toxicology Core. Dr. Hallberg's research interest includes the impact of the environment on human health, DNA repair mechanisms, and use of animal models for inhaled toxicants. His recent contributions include investigating the effects of diesel exhaust from new technology diesel engines and working with a Houston community superfund site to assess exposure to perchloroethylene in groundwater. Dr. Hallberg is active in Disaster Research Response sponsored by NIEHS. Dr. Hallberg is a current member of the Society of Toxicology and the Lone Star Society of Toxicology. He was awarded the Elias Hochman Research Award and Interviewed for his work with the Jones Road Superfund community on groundwater contamination. Dr. Hallberg entered the University of Texas at El Paso earning a B.S. in 1986, an M.S. in 1990 in biology. He earned a Ph.D. at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Division of Environmental Toxicology in 1997.

Speakers

Mr. Hilton Kelley

Hilton Kelley is an environmental justice leader on the Texas Gulf Coast. He is founder and director of Community In-Power and Development Association, a nonprofit that collects scientific data about pollution, educates residents and fights for the right to clean air in his native Port Arthur, Texas, a refinery and chemical manufacturing town whose residents are overwhelmingly low-income people of color. Kelley is a former screen actor, youth activist, electrician, and officer in the U.S. Navy. He has testified before the Texas Legislature and U.S. Senate, addressed UNESCO and met with President Obama. He served on the EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council and the Southwest Regional Health Equity Council. Kelley received the Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter's Environmental Justice Award, the Ben & Jerry Award for Environmental Activism and the Goldman Environmental Prize.

Dr. Ayodeji Iyanda

Dr. Ayodeji Iyanda is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Social Sciences at Prairie View A&M University. With a Ph.D. in Geographic Information Science from Texas State University, Dr. Iyanda's interdisciplinary research focuses on the intersection of public health, environmental exposure, and social determinants of health. He has led transformative community-based projects, including initiatives to enhance public health data systems and evaluate mental health disparities among minority youth in the United States.

A prolific scholar with over 40 published journal articles, Dr. Iyanda's expertise bridges geography, public health, and advanced data systems, positioning him as a key voice in advancing innovative, data-driven health solutions. His work emphasizes the value of Citizen Science and Community Participatory approaches, fostering collaboration with local communities to address complex health challenges. Dr. Iyanda firmly believes that community members possess the power, knowledge, and skills necessary to create healthier environments and drive sustainable change. His commitment to integrating academic insights with grassroots action underscores his impactful contributions to public health research and practice.

Mr. Arthur Johnson

Born in the Nation's Capital with roots in New Orleans that date back to visits with his grandmother in the Lower Ninth Ward on Fostall Street. Mr. Johnson earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees from George Washington University and the University of District of Columbia, respectively. He relocated to New Orleans in 1999 and established himself as an accomplished fundraising professional and non-profit leader – serving as Regional Vice President for Major Gifts with the American Heart Association, Director for the Office of Development for Episcopal Community Services of Louisiana, and Chief Development Officer for Operation Reach. As a board member for New Harmony High School, he supported the school's mission to focus on environmental resilience, providing opportunities to develop future environmental leaders. In 2019, Mr. Johnson received the Paul and Joyce Aicher Leadership in Democracy Award, for combining citizen engagement with environmental science to create equitable development and policy on climate resilience. As Chief Executive Officer for CSED, he is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization, working closely with staff and volunteers to advance key initiatives focused on food security as well as stewardship of the natural and built urban environment.

Dr. Faye Grimsley

L. Faye Grimsley, Ph.D., MSPH, CIH, is Associate Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences, Xavier University of Louisiana. Dr. Grimsley is also the Founding Director of Xavier's Master of Public Health

(MPH) Health Equity degree program. Dr. Grimsley is a public health research scientist and teacher with more than 25 years of experience with expertise in developing and implementing safe workplace policies and practices for chemical, biological, and physical hazards; conducting environmental qualitative and quantitative surveys and evaluations in occupational and community settings, and community outreach in minority populations and communities of color. She has a strong track record in facilitating training opportunities for underrepresented and disadvantaged students and mentoring young faculty. She has also served on NIH, CDC, and state research investigations, study sections, taskforce work groups, and advisory boards in the areas of children's health, community exposures, disaster response, biomarkers of mold exposures, occupational health and safety, chemical and hazardous waste management, and COVID-19. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology, University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa, MSPH degree in Industrial Hygiene, University of Alabama-Birmingham and Ph.D. degree in Environmental and Industrial Hygiene University of Cincinnati. She is a comprehensive practice Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH).

Mr. Joshua Cox

Joshua Cox completed his undergraduate studies at Yale University, where he was a four-year letterman on the varsity baseball team and won the coveted William Neely Mallory Award, which is the most prestigious athletic honor given to a senior male. Upon graduation, Josh taught middle school English at New Orleans College Prep Charter School in New Orleans' third ward. After two years in the classroom, Josh realized that poverty - and the problems that accompany it - are the biggest barriers to reducing inequality, and he left to attend the University of Pennsylvania Law School and the Fels Institute of Government to better understand how the law influences politics, finance and government.

In 2014, Josh returned to New Orleans after law school and worked for three years as a commercial litigator before serving as the Director of Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Orleans Parish School Board. Soon after, he accepted an offer to serve as Senior Advisor and Director of Strategic Initiatives to the first black female Mayor of New Orleans, LaToya Cantrell.

While in the Mayor's Office, Josh led a diverse body of work. He's managed philanthropic relationships on behalf of the City of New Orleans and appointments for the City's 100+ boards and commissions. He also was deeply involved in initiatives related to the City's relief and recovery from COVID-19, including the workforce development program that pivoted out-of-work folks in hospitality into the community health workers we needed to stop the spread in communities of color.

From 2022 to 2025, Josh ran Resilience Works, a national labor brokerage dedicated to building the workforce America needs to adapt and respond to climate change. Resilience Works connects workers to disaster restoration companies after natural disasters in the Gulf South and organizations in Sonoma County preventing wildfires through vegetation management.

Now, Josh is the CEO of Community Power South (CPS), a non-profit solar development corporation in New Orleans. Using federal and state incentives, CPS helps churches, schools, and other community institutions become resilience hubs installing solar and battery systems that decarbonize the grid and ensure those buildings do not lose power after a hurricane.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Daniel Blackman

Recognized as a Statesman, and dedicated to environmental leadership, human rights advocacy, and global diplomacy, Daniel Blackman stands as an influential figure in the intersection of these critical spheres. As the visionary founder of IMBAZA, he is pioneering a global platform with the mission of uniting leaders committed to advancing cultural diplomacy and ensuring the environmental well-being all people.

A trailblazer, Daniel made history as the first Black man appointed as a Regional Administrator to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. His impactful journey includes roles as the former Director of Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships at The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, author of 'Nationalism without Compassion,' writer/ producer at Conscious Animal, working on two U.S. Presidential campaigns, and playing a critical role as the U.S. EPA's inaugural Senior Advisor for STEM Recruitment and Diversity.

The son of immigrants from Barbados, Daniel is dedicated to advancing economic opportunities for marginalized communities, cultural diplomacy, and the environmental wellbeing of all people.

Blackman's passion for public service and activism was shaped by his upbringing in a family with a strong tradition of service and diplomacy. His mother, an Army wife, instilled in him the values of sacrifice and community, while his father, a United States Army Ranger, exemplified honor and dedication. He draws inspiration from his grandfather, who served as a diplomat to the United Nations.

Blackman's journey in activism and community empowerment began during his college years, where he gained diverse experiences through internships at Walt Disney World, Arista Records, and Universal Music Group. However, it was his encounters with Civil Rights leaders like Congressman John Lewis and Reverend C.T. Vivian who ignited his commitment to the modern civil rights movement. Motivated by their courage and determination, he sought to find his place in reshaping democracy and fighting for justice.

Throughout his career, Blackman has made significant contributions to sustainable development, environmental protection, and social equality. His work includes advocating for equitable economic opportunities, addressing education disparities, combating food and broadband deserts, championing public health and transportation accessibility, and supporting innovative clean energy solutions.

In the political arena, Blackman has been actively engaged in shaping policy and advising policymakers. He was appointed by former Chief Justice Leah Sears to serve on the Georgia Commission on Children, Marriage, and Family Law, and served as a trusted advisor to Georgia state legislators, advocating for energy-related matters before Georgia's Public Service Commission. He has also held leadership roles in prominent organizations such as Chair of the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Chairman of Georgia's 7th Congressional District, and Board Member to the Georgia Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

In 2020, Blackman ran as the Democratic nominee for Georgia's Public Service Commission, receiving widespread support and garnering over 2.2 million votes. His dedication to the public interest and his commitment to fighting for the rights of Georgia ratepayers and small businesses earned him recognition and respect across the state.

In recognition of his expertise, leadership, and unwavering commitment to environmental justice, President Biden appointed Blackman as the Regional Administrator for EPA's Southeast Region (Region

4) on November 29, 2021. In this influential role, he led efforts to protect public health and the environment in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and six federally recognized tribes.

Blackman holds a deep sense of pride in his alma mater, Clark Atlanta University, where he gained valuable knowledge and skills that have propelled him to his current leadership position. His work continues to make a lasting impact, inspiring individuals as well as communities to strive for a more sustainable and equitable future.