

## ABOUT RACHEL

Rachel is an arts and culture advocate whose career in strategic communications and public relations includes experience in nonprofit leadership, partnerships, policy, and community relations. She has advised or served in mayoral administrations in Philadelphia, Houston, New Orleans, and Baltimore and has managed marketing communications for several economic development organizations across the nation. Specific proficiencies included:

- Community and traditional economic development
- Integrated communications campaign development
- Strategic plan development and implementation
- Qualitative and quantitative reporting
- Political, strategic organizational, and crisis communications
- Culturally competent community engagement
- Stakeholder relations

## CONTACT

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## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

*195 Business 2024 Women of Influence Award Honoree*

*The Baltimore Sun 2024 Woman to Watch*

Finalist - 2016 Women-In-Business Challenge by the Urban League of Greater New Orleans at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

M&T Bank Next Up Community Leadership Accelerator Program – 2023 Cohort

The Executive Alliance Effective Impact Mentoring Program – 2019-20 Cohort

Undoing Racism: People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB) – October 2013 & March 2019

## AFFILIATIONS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Greater Baltimore Section – National Council of Negro Women – Parliamentarian

National Coalition of 100 Black Women – Baltimore Metropolitan Chapter

The Carats, Inc. – Baltimore Chapter

# RACHEL D. GRAHAM

## EDUCATION

### Ducere Global Business School – University of East London Executive MBA

Anticipated Graduation Date – September 2026

### Tulane University School of Continuing Studies

September 2012 – December 2012

### Towson State University

September 1990 – December 1991

## RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

### Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts & Entertainment District

*Operations Director* – March 2025 – Present

Responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization by overseeing the administrative, finance and communications staff, developing and implementing operational procedures and systems, as well as managing budgets and financial reports.

### Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts/Baltimore Festival of the Arts, Inc.

*Chief Executive Officer* – March 2024 – November 2024

Lead an organization with a \$5.2 million budget tasked with attracting support for the City's diverse arts and artists while producing cultural and community events and advancing Baltimore as the regional center of America's creative economy.

### The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture

*Director of External Relations* – November 2021 – February 2024

Led the overall community engagement and communications strategy for this quasi-state institution and the largest African American museum in Maryland, managing a \$685,000 operating budget.

- Led development of Let's SOAR!, the organization's five-year strategic plan
- Increased partnerships with city agencies, peer cultural institutions, and community organizations
- Supported the successful execution of development initiatives included raising more than \$330,000 and \$400,000 through the Museum's 2022 and 2023 annual galas, respectively

### Family League of Baltimore

*Communications Director & Public Information Officer* – August 2018 – November 2021

Led strategic organizational external and internal communications and stakeholder relations for the local management board for Baltimore City, a quasi-city/state entity committed to improving outcomes for children, youth and families.

- Executed organizational brand refresh including development of organizational Website
- Provide counsel to the Board of Directors on Open Meetings Act challenges
- Managed organization's Annual Meeting and Awards Program
- Spearheaded strategic public policy communications during the Legislative Session in 2019 through 2021
- Co-led development of five-year strategic plan
- Served on Baltimore City's COVID-19 Joint Information Center
- Administered the Child Care COVID-19 Relief grant which awarded \$3.7 million to 307 childcare providers in Baltimore City. These funds were allocated by the Mayor's Office using CARES Act dollars. In total, 222 providers were family-based providers.
- Coordinated press conference announcing \$1 million investment in afterschool programming for 43 Baltimore City Recreation and Parks facilities resulting in nearly 200 programs and offerings

# RACHEL D. GRAHAM

## RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE (Cont'd.)

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### **Small Hinges SCE, LLC**

*Principal & Chief Strategist* – August 2014 – December 2018

- Supported Gilbert & Associates in leading strategic and succession planning efforts for Good Work Network and Efforts of Grace, Inc./Ashe Cultural Arts Center
- Developed prospectus for The Ujamaa Economic Development Corporation's work on the Claiborne Corridor Cultural Innovation District (CID), a 19-Block transformation of the elevated I-10 expressway along Claiborne Avenue from Canal Street to St. Bernard Avenue in New Orleans. The plan was awarded a \$820,000 planning grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

### **Neighborhoods Partnership Network, New Orleans, LA**

*Communications Manager & Editor-in-Chief* – August 2013 – April 2015

Responsible for strategically planning, coordinating, and facilitating the exchange of information among NPN staff, NPN Board of Directors, NPN members and all New Orleans citizens by assuming editorial responsibility for all NPN publications.

### **Central City Renaissance Alliance, New Orleans, LA**

*Communications Director* – September 2012 – July 2013

Directed communications and graphic design for this community development organization founded in response to Hurricane Katrina to honor the collective voices of residents by focusing on building assets and opportunities, leadership development and advocacy.

### **New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative/Harmony Neighborhood Development, New Orleans, LA**

*Community & Media Relations Manager* – May 2011 – September 2012

Guided strategic communications policy and ensured message consistency in traditional marketing and media, social media, and community engagement and outreach opportunities for this nonprofit community and real estate development organization. Oversaw a strategic rebrand that included Website development, creation of collateral materials, and branding launch. Additionally, served as organization's liaison on community-led design projects include art installations, community gardens, and home developments.

### **Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC)**

*Director of Communications* – July 2010 – March 2011

Led brand management activities for the regional economic development organization for the Capital Region in Louisiana including development of *The Creative Capital Agenda*, BRAC's five-year strategic plan

### **Greater Houston Partnership**

Rose through the ranks to manage organizational communications for this quasi-city/county entity that served as the primary economic development and advocacy leader for the 12-county region with 80 employees across 5 divisions and a 172-member Board of Directors.

Roles included:

- *Manager, Marketing Communications* – March 2009 – July 2010
- *Coordinator, Marketing Communications* – July 2008 – March 2009
- *Assistant, Communications* – November 2007 – July 2008
- *Project Assistant, Member Services Division* – August 2007 – November 2007

Responsibilities included:

- Managing the CEO and EVP/COO in preparation for media interviews and organizational events developing talking points and speeches
- Staffing Monthly Executive Committee and Quarterly Board meetings, providing updates on the organization's progress on Strategic Plan metrics
- Managed media requests and crisis communications issues

### **Fluid Thought Creative Marketing**

*Consultant* – March 2002 – August 2007

Provided consulting services in public relations, marketing, fundraising, and advertising. Clients included tbk holdings, Inc., parent company of *the breakfast klub* in Houston, TX

- **Ujamaa Marketplace**
  - Developed a three-day outdoor market hosting more than 30 vendors from across the Houston region to serve as an attraction as part of Essence Festival weekend in Houston.
- **Member, Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GHCVB) Ad hoc Multicultural Tourism Committee – 2006**
  - Identified need to develop market awareness in the wake of the Essence Festival's temporary post-Katrina relocation.
  - Assisted the GHCVB in assembling an *ad hoc* committee of African-American cultural interests to strengthen a pitch to *Essence* magazine after the publication initially declined to write a story. Resulted in *Essence* running its first tourism spread on the city in the magazine's history.
- **Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) Four-A Citywide Exhibition**
  - Coordinated the exhibition of 10 local artists in *the breakfast klub* as part of MFAH's celebration of Black creatives through its African-American member affinity group

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## RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE (Cont'd.)

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### **Sunoco Welcome America! Festival**

*Consulting Marketing Director* – May 2002 – September 2002

Served as Consulting Marketing Director for a 10-day celebration of America's 226th birthday - the nation's largest Independence Day celebration - comprised of more than 50 events and enjoyed by more than 3 million in-person guests.

- Developed a comprehensive marketing strategy resulting in more than 20 million total impressions;
- Oversight of the production and distribution of nearly 500,000 pieces of collateral material;
- Administering the department's \$230,000 budget

### **Crawley Haskins & Rodgers Public Relations & Advertising, Philadelphia, PA**

*Account Executive* – December 1998 – March 2001

Assessed public relations and advertising needs of various non-profit and for-profit organizations, providing strategic counsel and shepherding projects through conception to completion. Clients included Marriott International, London Fog, Absolut Vodka, and the Philadelphia Public Library. Practice focused on hospitality, tourism, and arts and cultural institutions. Projects included:

- **Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Company:** Executed a multi-partner activation celebrating the launch of Encyclopedia Africana with the donation for the bottler of more 50 copies of the software to the Philadelphia Public Library System and selected schools within the Philadelphia Public School System. Also executed a sweepstakes that gave away a computer system.
- **Odunde Festival:** Served on the account management team for the oldest African American Cultural Street Festival in US.
- **Mayor John F. Street First Term Election Bid**
  - Supporting account executive on announcements of retirement as City Council President and Campaign for Mayor
  - General election victory celebration Site Coordinator
  - Media relations liaison and arrangements committee member - 2000 Inaugural Ceremony for the City of Philadelphia.

### **The University of Pennsylvania Relay Carnival – The Penn Relays, Philadelphia, PA**

*Coordinator, Track & Field Operations* – March 1995 – December 1998

Coordinated all aspects of the world's largest track & field meet in non-Olympic years, fielding more than 1,500 competitors from elementary school through master's level and attracting more than 150,000 attendees across the events seven days. Responsibilities included:

- Processing all competitor applications
- Securing meet sanctioning from more than 20 state interscholastic athletic associations
- Managing housing accommodations for the meets volunteer officials corps and all collegiate and Olympic development competitors
- Processing competition grants which supported collegiate competitor travel
- Managing international competitor relations with teams from Jamaica, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and Ireland

### **The University of Pennsylvania Department of Development Gifts Administration, Philadelphia, PA**

*Secretary* – March 1994 – March 1995

Responsible for the logging and acknowledgment of all charitable gifts over \$100 across all schools excluding the School of Veterinary Medicine. Administered the University's Matching Gift Program ensuring the accurate processing of all matching gift applications received from alumni employers.