

# Blair Imani



She/Her

Blair Imani is a writer and educator who centers on women and girls, global Black communities, and LGBTQ+ communities in her activism. As a Black bisexual Muslim woman, her work uniquely focuses on intersectionality. She often features other educators and creators from marginalized communities in her viral educational web series *Smarter in Seconds*. This series has covered a wide range of topics aligned with her expertise, such as cisnormativity, fatphobia and fitness, food waste, labor unions, and tone policing, to name a few. Blair's most recent book, *Read This to Get Smarter*, was featured on the LA Times Best Seller list. The New York Times praises Blair Imani's unique ability to create "progressive lessons with vibrant visuals and a perky, quirky delivery."

# M Joycelyn Elders, MD



She/Her

Dr. M Joycelyn Elders was born in Arkansas in 1933. Growing up in a segregated, impoverished, and rural area of Arkansas, Jocelyn and her family worked in a cotton field to get by. Earning a scholarship to attend the all-Black liberal arts Philander Smith College, Jocelyn thrived in her biology and chemistry classes, inspiring an ambition to become a lab technician. It was not until she listened to a lecture from Edith Irby Jones, the first Black person to attend the University of Arkansas Medical School, that she decided that becoming a physician was possible. After serving in the United States Army following college, Jocelyn used her G.I. Bill to attend the University of Arkansas Medical School.

She later completed an internship in pediatrics at the University of Minnesota and returned to the University of Arkansas to complete her residency. She became the chief resident leading an all-White and all-male group of residents and interns. In 1967, she became an assistant professor of pediatrics at her institution and earned the title of full professor in 1976. In the next two decades, Jocelyn published hundreds of scientific articles focused on pediatric endocrinology, issues with growth, prenatal care, and the sexual behaviors of adolescents. In 1987, Jocelyn became the director of the Arkansas

Department of Health, where she was the catalyst for legislation mandating K-12 sex education and substance abuse prevention programming in public schools. Jocelyn was also the first to become board certified in pediatric endocrinology in Arkansas, the fifteenth United States Surgeon General, and the first Black and second woman to lead the United States Public Health Service.

# Cacsmy Brutus “Mama Cax”



She/Her

Mama Cax was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1989. She was a Haitian American model and advocated for people with disabilities. At 14, she was diagnosed with osteosarcoma and lung cancer, leading to a failed hip replacement and amputation of her right leg two years later. Several years passed before she regained her confidence and embraced her prosthetic leg. As she began to accept and love her new body, Mama Cax began wearing artistic prosthetic covers to express her love for art and fashion.

During these years, she also learned wheelchair basketball and hand cycling and went on to compete in the New York City Marathon. With the rise of the body-positive movement, Mama Cax became increasingly aware of the underrepresentation of Black women and women with disabilities in the fashion industry, leading her to use her social media platforms to advocate for inclusivity through her posts. In 2018, she walked the runway in New York Fashion Week, and later that year, she made the cover of Teen Vogue. Due to medical complications, Mama Cax sadly passed away in 2019.

# Kehinde Wiley



He/Him

Kehinde Wiley is a contemporary American artist born in 1977 in south-central Los Angeles, California. Noticing his artistic abilities, Kehinde's mother used income from her thrift store to enroll Kehinde and his twin brother in after-school and weekend art classes. Their involvement in art also simultaneously kept Kehinde and his brother away from gang culture, which was prominent in the streets of Los Angeles at the time. After graduating high school, Kehinde earned his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1999. He later received a scholarship to attend the School of Art at Yale University, where he earned his MFA.

His experiences growing up as a young, gay, Black man in the United States greatly influenced his art. Kehinde is most known for his ornate and decorative portraits of Black individuals and other people of color. Through his work, he focuses on themes such as race, power, femininity, and masculinity, while highlighting the rife absence of representation of BIPOC in the world of fine art. His paintings disrupt the traditional sense of portrait painting, blending the boundaries between traditional and contemporary modes.

In 2011, Kehinde received the Artist of the Year Award from the New York City Art Teachers Association/United Federation of Teachers. In 2017, Kehinde was commissioned to paint a portrait of the former United States President Barack Obama, which now hangs in the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. His work has been featured in many of the world's most prestigious museums and art galleries.

# Mikaela Loach



She/They

Mikaela Loach was born in 1998 in Kingston, Jamaica. They are climate activists, bloggers, and podcasters based in Edinburgh, Scotland. In addition to these roles, they are also currently studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh. She works toward making the climate justice movement more inclusive through her social media platforms, often discussing the intersection between climate, racial justice, and human rights issues. They are also a contributing writer at Eco-Age, an organization that works globally to drive meaningful climate change. Mikaela's first book, *It's Not That Radical: Climate Action to Transform Our World*, is in the press and will be available for purchase soon.

Mikaela was listed on the BBC's Woman's Hour Power List to recognize her accomplishments. More recently, she and other European climate activists and campaigners have taken the United Kingdom's government to the High Court, citing that the tax breaks given to large oil and gas conglomerates are in direct conflict with

the country's Build Back Green strategy – a set of policies that aim to decarbonize all sectors of the United Kingdom's economy.

# Frankie Knuckles



He/Him

Frankie Knuckles was born in 1955 in The Bronx, New York. He was an American DJ, record producer, and remixer. Frankie is best known for his role in developing and popularizing the electronic music genre House Music in the city of Chicago in the 1980s. Influenced by soul, disco, and R&B, Frankie became a regular DJ at a friend's nightclub named the Warehouse in the late 1970s. Playing at the club regularly, Frankie experimented with music that included disco classics, indie soul, rock, and European synth-disco. His style of music would later be referred to as House Music, which was named after a shortened version of the name of the nightclub that he played at: the Warehouse.

In 1982, he opened his club in Chicago named The Power Plant. In 1997, Frankie received the Grammy Award for Remixer of the Year in the Non-Classical category. With the help of the Illinois state senator, Barack Obama, the city of Chicago named the street where the Warehouse nightclub once stood "Frankie Knuckles Way" in



2004. One year later, Frankie was inducted into the Dance Music Hall of Fame. More than 40 years later, House Music continues to be one of the most dominant electronic music genres.

# Maxwell Frost



He/Him

Maxwell Alejandro Frost was born in Orlando, Florida in 1997. He is an American politician, justice activist, and percussionist of Black and Latino descent. As an infant, Maxwell was adopted by a special education teacher who immigrated from Cuba and a jazz musician from Topeka, Kansas. The Frost family always had an interest in politics, with the topic often being a major discussion point during family dinners. His interest in politics led him to earn a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Central Florida. The Columbine High School Massacre, the Orlando nightclub shooting, and the killing of Trayvon Martin are events that further motivated Maxwell to get involved in politics to address gun violence. These events also led him to take on the role of the National Organizing Director for March for Our Lives in 2018.

At age 25, Maxwell was elected to the United States House of Representatives for Florida's 10th congressional district. He also serves as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and as the Vice Chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force. To fund his political campaign, Maxwell has openly shared that he took on significant debt as well as several "side hustles" such as driving for Uber. Recently, Maxwell has taken to social media to discuss the costs of assuming public office, noting that the average net worth of many Florida representatives is around \$6 million. As the first Gen Z

congress member, Maxwell represents approximately 68 million other Gen Z Americans, many of whom share similar concerns about the growing gun violence in the United States.