

SPMG Media

# PEOPLE

MAGAZINE

Supreme  
Court Justice  
Ketanji

BROWN  
Jackson

The Rough  
Road  
to the  
SUPREME COURT

10  
WOMEN  
TO WATCH

Celebrating

# WOMEN

MAY 2022



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## A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

**T**hank you for joining us for the May 2022 issue of *SPMG Media PEOPLE Magazine*.

In this issue we are Celebrating Women in honor of our first Black Supreme Court Justice, Ketanji Brown Jackson. Women have come a long way over the last century. We have taken a stand on things that are important to us and our families. We have pushed through and broken the ceiling into millions of pieces! Our current Vice President is a women—Kamala Harris.. Now we are witnessing history as the first Black woman is headed to sit on the Supreme Court. Now, that's progress. The road there hasn't been easy, but Ketanji Brown Jackson has major credentials and support and has made history!

We have also identified **10 Women to Watch**. These women are making a difference in the spaces they are in and have come someone to reckon! These women include Supreme Court Justice **Ketanji Brown Jackson**, Actress and Oscar award winner **Jessica Chastain**, Actress and Producer **Jada Pinkett Smith**, Singer/ Songwriter **Myshel Wilkins**, who is also host of a new podcast 'Embracing Freedom Today', Philanthropist and Marriage and Family therapist Rakeshia Breaux Morgan and more!

So much in this issue! But we trust you'll be inspired, informed and you'll enjoy!

All the best!

**Gina Johnson Smith, Publisher**

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# Celebrating Women



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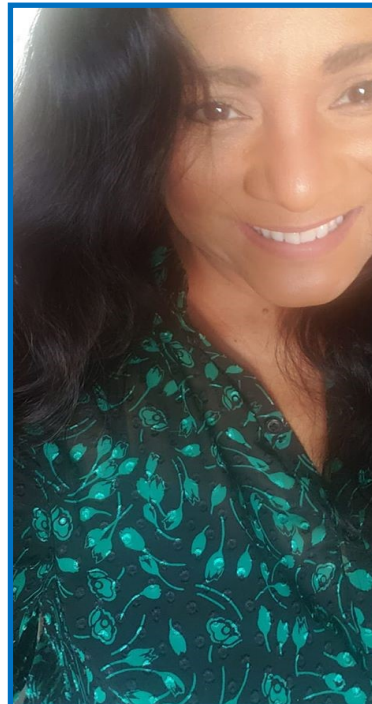
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*Gina Johnson Smith, Publisher SPMG Media People Magazine*



# Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson

## *The Rough Road to the Supreme Court*

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*Selina Gomez McKern*

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, 51, appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee this month after being nominated by President Biden to replace Justice Stephen Breyer, who announced his retirement earlier this year.

Much of Judge Jackson's early career was informed by experiences as a student at Harvard University and Harvard Law School, where she confronted questions of race and identity within the most elite circles of higher education. She earned her law degree in 1996.

After graduation, she held three clerkships with federal judges, including in 1999 as a clerk to Justice Breyer, who she is now under consideration to succeed more than 20 years later.

From 2005-2007 she also worked as a federal public defender, a role in which she helped Khi Ali Gul, an Afghan detainee held at Guantánamo Bay, petition for his release. If confirmed, Judge Jackson would be the modern court's first justice with experience as a public defender.

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson has spent much of her career in Washington, serving as a judge in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Circuit from 2013 to 2021, and currently the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. She replaced Merrick B. Garland, who joined the Justice Department as Attorney General, on the Court of Appeals last year, and was confirmed by a vote of 53-44.



As a federal judge in Washington, Judge Jackson has presided over several politically charged cases. In 2017, she sentenced the gunman who stormed a Washington pizzeria targeted by “Pizzagate” conspiracy theorists to four years in prison. She also ruled in 2019 that Donald F. McGahn II, the former White House counsel, would be required to testify before House impeachment investigators considering articles of impeachment against President Donald J. Trump.

Judge Jackson is married to Dr. Patrick Graves Jackson, a surgeon who she met while studying at Harvard. They have two daughters.

She is also related by marriage to a former House Speaker and Republican vice-presidential nominee, Paul Ryan. His sister-in-law, Dana Little Jackson, is married to Dr. Jackson’s twin brother, William Jackson.

## 5 Facts About Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson

1. Upon confirmation, Judge Jackson would replace former Justice Stephen Breyer, the justice for whom she clerked from 1999 to 2000. Judge Jackson’s clerkship experience provided her with an insider’s view of the operations of the court, as well as de knowledge of Justice Breyer’s consensus-building approach to the role of justice.
2. The Senate has confirmed Judge Jackson three times. She was confirmed to the U.S. Sentencing Commission in 2009. She received bipartisan support for her appointment to the District of Columbia Circuit Court in 2013 and unanimous support for her appointment to the District of Columbia District Court in 2021.



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson at the Senate Confirmation Hearings with her daughter Leila in the background smiling proudly.

3. Judge Jackson currently sits on the District of Columbia Circuit Court, which is widely considered the second-most-important court in the United States. Multiple Supreme Court justices, including former Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Chief Justice John Roberts, served on the circuit court prior to their appointments to the Supreme Court.

4. Upon confirmation, Judge Jackson would not only have more experience than four of the current justices combined, but she would also be the first and only justice with experience as a public defender. Judge Jackson served as an assistant public defender from February 2005 to June 2007, before returning to work in corporate law. As a 2020 report from the Center for American Progress outlined, judges with more diverse professional experience improve jurisprudence so that it better acknowledges people's unique lived experiences. Judge Jackson's experience as a public defender deepens her understanding of the U.S. justice system and how it touches people's lives.

5. Justice Jackson has received numerous awards throughout her career. In 2021, Columbia University's Law School awarded her its **Constance Baker Motley Award** for empowering women of color, "advancing the rights of people," and demonstrating a "legacy of giving back to the community." In her acceptance speech, Judge Jackson stated that "the responsibility" of being a

judge means "doing the work that is necessary to protect the rule of law and to promote equality and justice for all."

It is vital that the United States has fair-minded justices who are deeply committed to its principles of equality and justice for all. Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's eminent qualifications represent her dedication to protecting and advancing human and civil rights. By confirming her to the U.S. Supreme Court, Congress would help ensure the court works for everyone.

## ABOUT Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson's Nomination

1. Her confirmation is nearly ensured. After a bruising set of hearings, Democrats are united behind Judge Jackson. The backing of Senator Joe Manchin III signaled that all 50 Senate Democrats would support her nomination, which Republicans would be unable to stop.
2. Republicans show deep—but not total—opposition. G.O.P. senators attacked Judge Jackson for her record and grilled her on a host of divisive issues during the contentious hearings. Senator Susan Collins said she would support the Judge's nomination. It is unclear if other Republicans will join her.
3. The upcoming vote. With the confirmation hearings complete, the Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to vote on Judge Jackson's nomination on April 4th. Democrats plan to move it quickly to the Senate floor for a final vote before the start of the two-week recess.

Judge Jackson and her husband Dr. Patrick Graves







# Myshel Wilkins

Singer | Songwriter | God-Woman

## Host of Embracing Freedom Today!

**W**e originally interviewed Myshel for the October 2015. Since then her life has evolved and her faith has grown stronger.

**SPMG:** So much is going on in your life since we last interviewed you, which I believe was the feature cover story for our October 2010 issue of **Authors & Artists Magazine**. Since then, you and your husband Michael now have two wonderful boys. How has family life changed your world?

**MYSHEL:** Wow, yes, life has changed, and I have changed dramatically! My experience with having children was a long hard road. After a total of 8 miscarriages, I learned so much about myself, my body, my God and my strength. This subject could take up a whole interview in itself, and I enjoy sharing the powerful lessons learned from this experience. . I don't think it is talked about enough and it can become a silent faith killer in the hearts of many women and men. Going through such loss can make you afraid to believe again, try again, and put your faith out there to dream again for fear of experiencing the pain of disappointment.

It can lockup you up if you let it. I wanted to emerge from this experience better than when I went in. That took a trusting in God above my emotions like never before. It literally meant worshipping and declaring that He is STILL good in the middle of a dark moment that made no sense to me. I don't have the words to explain how powerful it is to dance in the dark with the Lord but trust me. It transformed my life and gave me the strength to believe until I saw the manifestation of my beautiful two boys! It was an experience that changed me for the better and I long to help other women land in a healthy mental, emotional, spiritual place after going through something like this.

Today, I and my husband look at our boys and are overwhelmed with gratitude and joy! Its' been quite a journey, and perhaps one day I can unpack the details but I am so so thankful for my family and deeply cherish them with all my heart!





**SPMG:** *Wow, that an amazing testimony! I'd love to have you share of more this experience in our Christian Community Magazine interview. Let's schedule that next! I was set to travel to visit you in Texas prior to the pandemic. That was two years ago! With your move, you have continued to sing, minister, engage in mission trips and have started a podcast "Embracing Freedom Today". Tell us about the podcast?*

**MYSHEL:** I was so bummed when you were not able to come to Texas. I was looking forward to putting my arms around a sister who has supported me like no other on social media! I am so grateful for you and looked forward to meeting you in person. But hopefully, that will happen in the near future. I started the **Embracing Freedom Today** podcast and show because I knew that so many people were hurting during the pandemic. There was a lot of fear, loss and uncertainty and I was compelled to start the podcast to encourage and help those who were struggling mentally and emotionally from all that was transpiring around us.

I teach on some of the shows and other times I do interviews with some amazing guests that have powerful stories that have deeply impacted many of the listeners. It is only just beginning and I look forward to expanding. I'm currently looking for advertisers for my podcast so we can continue to inspire listeners from around the world. If interested in partnering with me and our podcast, feel free to contact [michael@myshelmusic.com](mailto:michael@myshelmusic.com).

**SPMG:** *You are currently serving on the worship team at Embassy City Church in Dallas, Texas under the leadership of Pastors Tim and Juliette Ross. What lead you to their ministry?*

**MYSHEL:** It was sort of a miracle. We had just moved from Nashville, TN, and was on staff at a brand new church called Nashville Life church, where the pastors were Alvin and CeCe (Winans) Love. When you are dealing with helping to birth a ministry from the ground up, it means all hands on deck and it's A LOT of work. I learned so much and the experience was extremely valuable to my life. God gave me the grace to do all I was doing at the time and the mentorship was a precious gift! To have a wise woman of God who was also a world-renown gospel artist mentor me, was special. Shortly after we moved to TX, we began looking for a place of worship and a friend told us about Embassy City church. That same weekend, my mom was watching Christian television and saw a pastor sharing on one of the shows and told me how much she enjoyed him and to look him up. Come to find out, he was the pastor of the same church my friend had highly recommended. On Sunday, we visited and fell in love with the pastors and the ministry as a whole. I planned on taking a break from church work and not jumping in to serve right away. I just wanted to receive for a time. After a few months, I decided to join the worship and prayer team and it has been a joy to attend and serve this wonderful ministry.

**SPMG:** *In May of 2020, you released 'Rescue' a 19-Country Tribute #IMASUPERHERO Movement, produced and co-written by Mr. TALKBOX, featuring collaborative efforts by other Grammy and Emmy award-winning artists as well as everyday superheroes like medical workers, police officers, service workers and more. What was the inspiration for that project and how was it received?*





MYSHEL



ALVARO  
RO



Jessica  
Ambuehl

**MYSHEL:** It was an amazing project! I think all artists could not help but express themselves in some way to offer inspiration and encouragement during 2020! If you were a dancer, you wanted to express your hope through dance, if you were a poet, you began to write, a musician, you composed a piece that encouraged others. I am a singer so I could not help but release a song that spoke of unity, strength and resilience. We were able to get 19 countries involved by displaying the many modern-day superheroes that were now sacrificing so much to take care of the sick, hungry, and displaced from around the world. Rescue is a song that I hoped inspired unity. I offered the song for free and the video can be found on my website [www.myshelwilkins.com](http://www.myshelwilkins.com).

**SPMG:** *You are absolutely correct! We all desired to use our gifting to serve during these challenging times. Your plate s very full—you are also Director of Outreach for Grace & Obedience Overflow Ministries. This is a powerful organization. You've done mission trips to Uganda and Paris (that's quite a contrast!). Tell us more about it and your activities with them.*

**MYSHEL:** Go-Overflow is a beautiful organization that loves deeply. My father was a missionary and I was blessed to be able to serve several different countries with him as a young girl. The seed was planted then and remains in me. I find extreme joy in empowering those who need a hand up. Effective mission work is when you go to an impoverished area and show them how to no longer need your help in the future. They have started their own business, gone to school, learned a trade to be able to rise out of poverty and build a strong legacy for their families and communities.

THAT is the only kind of mission work I will support. The poor should not remain poor after you have gone to "help" them. We take teams to Uganda to serve there each summer. If you are interested in going or would like to make a donation in good ground, you can send me a message on my website or go to [www.go-overflow.org](http://www.go-overflow.org). My husband and I will eventually begin our own mission organization in a few years, also serving in various places in Africa. My mom is a native of Ghana so you know I will find a way to aid my homeland.

**SPMG:** *We're looking forward to partnering with you in your organization and will add Go-Overflow to our list of contributors. You have such a contagious spirit! The pandemic has been life-altering for many people! How has it impacted your life and your ministry to others?*

**MYSHEL:** *Clarity is the word I use to sum up what 2020 brought to me and my family. Through so much change a determination rose in me to be more efficient and prepared for the future. Tomorrow is not promised so taking care of your business and not putting it off as if you have a million years to get it done became one of my goals. 2020 made me want to tighten up and build a strong legacy for my family and serve my community and the world with love and encouragement through my gifts. 2020 definitely gave me 2020 vision and although many of the things revealed were hard to see, the clarity was a gift that I am so grateful for.*





**"Be as David in the face  
of your 'Goliath'."**

**SPMG:** What's on the horizon for you?

**MYSHEL:** I am currently in school! I am getting my masters in Organizational Leadership with an emphasis in women's leadership/ministry from a seminary here in TX. I absolutely love what I'm learning. I am set to graduate at the end of 2023. I am also preparing to release a new album next year! I'm working with super talented writers and producers and can't wait to release this project!!! I plan on incorporating an artist from Ghana. I've wanted to do that for some time now so I'm really excited about all the great things set to take place next year! There are a few other awesome opportunities coming up but I cannot speak on them at the moment but know that God is doing something beautiful and I am so so grateful! Can't wait to share soon!

**SPMG:** What words of encouragement can you offer to others that are still struggling with all the overwhelming changes in the past few years?

**MYSHEL:** You are not meant to break, fall or give up. You are stronger than you think. God, the One who loves you more than you could comprehend stands ready to escort you through the highs and lows of this life to ensure you will come out of everything you'll go through, better, stronger, braver, wiser, more beautiful than you could imagine. Be as David in the face of your "Goliath" and say, "the audacity of you to come up against a child of God. Today you will be defeated because I WILL overcome you"! With God, you will overcome. I promise. It may not look like what you thought, but baby, this life is an adventure with twists and turns, suspense, drama, highs and lows. Emerge powerful anyway!

**Stay tuned for upcoming updates on Myshel**

WEBSITE: [www.myshelwilkins.com](http://www.myshelwilkins.com)

INSTAGRAM: [myshelmusic](https://www.instagram.com/myshelmusic).

FACEBOOK: <https://www.youtube.com/c/Myshelwilkins/videos>



# SANTANA



MIRACLES

S U P E R N A T

2021 T

# EARTH WIND & FIRE



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**A · T · U · R · A · L**

**TOUR**

**Oscar Award Winning**

**Actress**

**Adrian DeBose**





# Ariana DeBose Makes Oscars History

**A**riana DeBose won best actress in a supporting role for "West Side Story" at the Academy Awards on Sunday and made history as the first openly queer woman of color to win in the category.

This is her first Oscar nomination and win. DeBose has received acclaim for her role as Anita in the musical film.

When DeBose took the stage she emotionally said, "Even in this weird world we live in, dreams do come true."

She also thanked her mother, who came as her guest and was in the audience. DeBose spoke movingly about her experience as a queer Afro-Latina woman.

"For anyone who has ever questioned their identity, there is indeed a place for us," she said, quoting her film.

In 1962, Rita Moreno won the same award for the same role. Moreno starred as Anita in the original "West Side Story" film and made history herself as the first Hispanic actress to win in the best supporting actress category.

Moreno played drugstore owner Valentina in the remake.

DeBose also paid tribute to Moreno in her acceptance speech on Sunday, thanking her for paving the way for other "Anitas" in Hollywood.

"Ariana DeBose is an immensely talented actress and a tremendous advocate for LGBTQ people and people of color," GLAAD's President & CEO, Sarah Kate Ellis said in a statement Sunday. "She not only made history tonight as the first queer woman of color to win an Oscar, but she sent a beautiful and timely message to LGBTQ young people. I hope LGBTQ youth around the world saw her win, heard her speak and recognize that they too should dream big."





DeBose, 31, is a triple threat performer as an actor, singer and dancer hailing from North Carolina. The actor grew up in Raleigh where she began to dance competitively when she was seven-years-old, the New York Times reported. In 2009, she was even a top 20 finalist on season six of “So You Think You Can Dance.”

In high school, DeBose attended Triple Arts, Broadway veterans Charlotte d’Amboise and Terrence Mann’s musical theater summer intensive. The couple helped coach the young performer for auditions, suggesting she skip college and go right to Broadway instead. Though she started college at Western Carolina University in spring 2010 as part of the musical theater program there, the actor ultimately dropped out to pursue her career.

Before she was a Golden Globe winner for her on-screen work, DeBose found her footing on Broadway. Throughout her career, spanning over a decade, she has starred in countless productions. She made her debut in 2011 in the original production of “Bring It On” as Nautica and starred as the role of Mary Wilson of the Supreme in “Motown” (2013) and as the Leading Player in the 2014 revival of “Pippin.”

Most notably, DeBose appeared alongside Lin-Manuel Miranda in “Hamilton” from 2015 to 2016 as a member of the original cast in the Broadway and off-Broadway productions. After departing from the Tony-winning musical, she portrayed Jane in “A Bronx Tale” from 2016 to 2017.

The following year, she took on the role of Disco Donna in “Summer: The Donna Summer Musical.” This role earned her a nomination for best featured actress in a musical at the 72nd Annual Tony Awards.

### **Making the transition from on-stage to on-screen**

In recent years, DeBose has found herself starring in multiple on-screen roles both in television and film. At the end of 2020, she portrayed the character Alyssa in Ryan Murphy’s Netflix movie “The Prom,” which starred Hollywood legend Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman, Andrew Rannells and Keegan-Michael Key.

In 2021, she reunited with Key when she starred in the AppleTV+ hit “Schmigadoon!” alongside “SNL” star Cecily Strong. DeBose was in great company with fellow Broadway stars Kristin Chenoweth, Aaron Tveit and Jane Krakowski, who also played roles in the musical satire.

Most recently, DeBose struck gold in Steven Spielberg’s reimagining of “West Side Story,” which premiered at the end of 2021. DeBose followed in Rita Moreno’s footsteps by portraying Anita, a role which helped earn the now 90-year-old actor an Oscar back in 1962.

DeBose opened up about the audition process for “West Side Story” during her appearance “The Tonight Show” on Friday, Jan. 14. She admitted to host Jimmy Fallon that she told Spielberg “no” when he asked if she would read for the part after she danced and sang for him and Tony Kushner.

“I had said the night before, ‘Look, these scenes, these are Tony Kushner expanded scenes. They can be wordy and they’re important,’” she told Fallon. “You gotta nail it and quite frankly, I’m not in the business of going in a room as a Black woman and not getting it right. You gotta come in prepared and I was just like, ‘I’m gonna tell them no but I’d love to come back.’”

Everything obviously worked out for DeBose in the long run. Weeks later, DeBose got a call from Spielberg when she was at a nail salon where he told her she had gotten the part of Anita.

During the whittled down Golden Globes — DeBose snatched the trophy for best performance by a supporting actress in any film, following in Moreno's footsteps who also won that prize back in 1962. They both won Academy Awards.

DeBose identifies as queer, and she has been open and honest about her sexuality throughout her esteemed career. With her Oscar win, she made history as the first Afro Latina and openly queer actor of color to win an award.

"The fact that we both identify as queer just made the work more deep and vulnerable, and you can see it on screen," she told Popsugar of her role in "The Prom" alongside Jo Ellen Pellman. "It's been said that we have great chemistry and I think that helps as well, and that's how we normalize (having queer actors tell our stories)."

"It shows that we can tell a story like this and do it so beautifully, and I'm just so proud of what we were able to accomplish. I think you end up falling in love with Alyssa and Emma, because we loved each other, and I think that's really cool."

Last year, her and Pellman founded the Unruly Hearts Initiative, connecting the film's young audience with vital resource for the LGBTQ community that tackle housing insecurity, mental health and education accessibility.

"I was blessed to have a family that accepted my sexuality, which I am painfully aware is not the norm," she says on the initiative's website. "Through my work with Covenant House I have seen the correlation between homelessness and LGBTQ+ youth. Helping young people find resources in the face of adversity and directing families towards tools for acceptance and understanding is something I'm extremely passionate about. It's my hope that the Unruly Hearts Initiative is an accessible resource for young people and parents alike."

For booking contact - AC Management 212-624-5866

CESD NY Theatrical 212-477-1666





**Oscar**

**Winner**

**Jessica Chastain**

**Reaches New Heights**

# The actress opens up about her film, *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, and television series, *Scenes from a Marriage*

**I**n 2012, not long after Jessica Chastain wrapped *Zero Dark Thirty*, a ripped-from-the-headlines thriller about the search for Osama Bin Laden that garnered the 44-year-old actress her second Academy Award nomination, she took a serious look at the Hollywood around her.

"I immediately saw there weren't a lot of options for women, at least in terms of great characters that are different. Actresses were regulated to a single type," says Chastain, talking via Zoom while on vacation with friends and family in Italy. Studying acting and repertory theater at Juilliard in New York had given her a wide breadth of choice roles, but, suddenly, she opened her eyes to see that the film world might be "a tad limiting in terms of what people were offering."

It was around that time that Chastain stumbled on the 2000 documentary *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*. Narrated by RuPaul, it's about the life of the late Tammy Faye Messner, a Christian TV personality, singer and evangelist often parodied for her marriage to Jim Bakker (who was later imprisoned for fraud and conspiracy), not to mention her over-the-top style, which included heavy makeup and a perpetual tan. Messner died in 2007 of colon cancer.

"I knew about Tammy from what I'd seen on *Saturday Night Live*, but I actually had never seen her give an interview until I watched the documen-

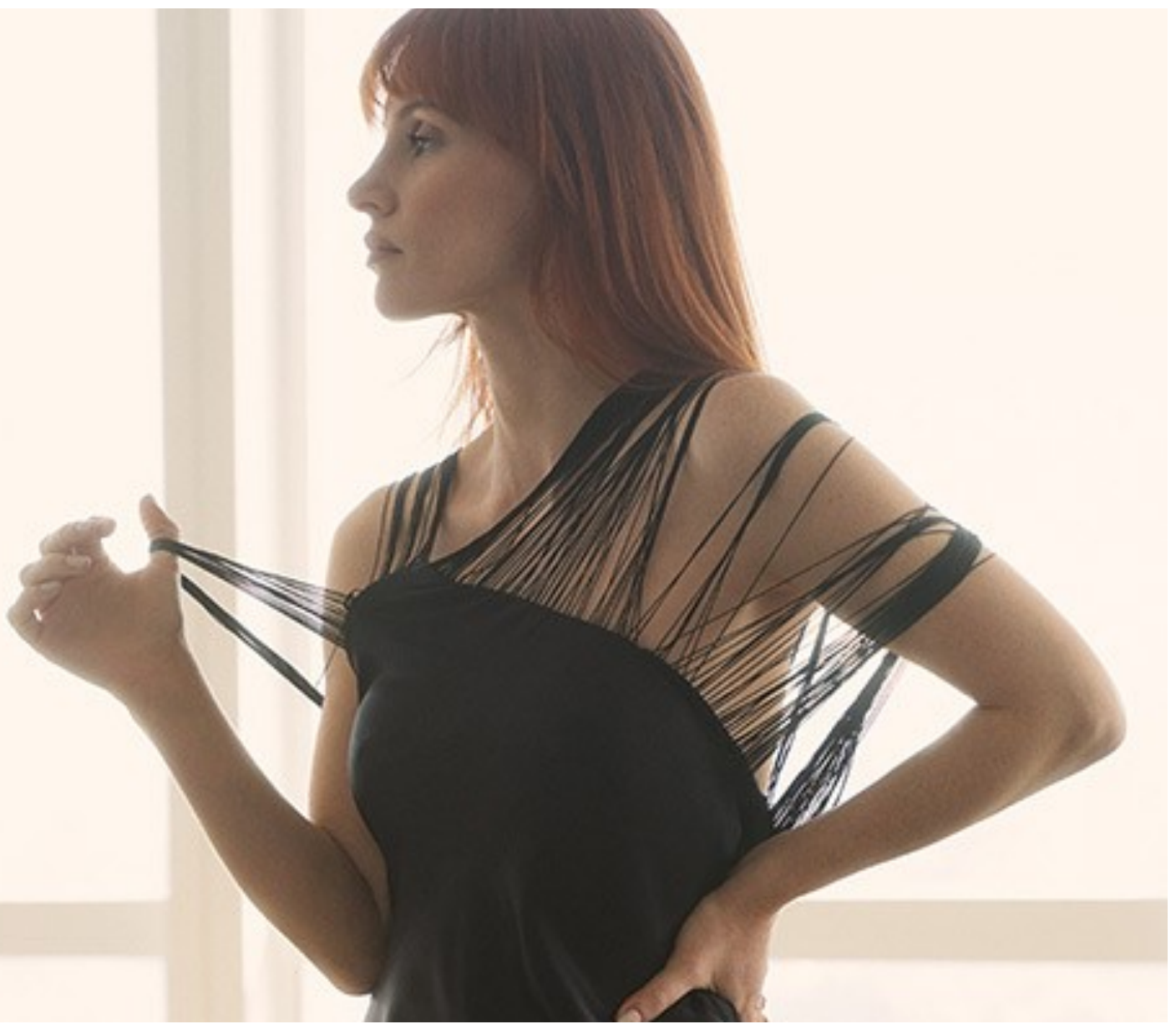
"My impression from sketch television was that she cried all the time, she was a crook and always had mascara running down her face."

But Chastain found herself particularly moved by the film and Messner's message that "everyone is deserving of love," she explains. So she called her agent and manager and bought the narrative feature film rights to the documentary herself.

Go ahead. Call it one of Chastain's "crazy ideas," she says. "But I have these ideas that we have to push against an old-fashioned way the film industry has worked."

Another "crazy idea" Chastain had was a female-driven espionage thriller, a subject she'd learned about while working on *Zero Dark Thirty*. "Where's the female version that isn't a comedy?" Chastain asked herself. She assembled a team of actresses (including Lupita Nyong'o and Penelope Cruz), found a screenwriter (playwright Theresa Rebeck, whose *Spike Heels* Chastain had done scenes from at Juilliard) and *The 355* will be released in early 2022.

"I was stoked," Chastain says. "The actresses own the movie. How incredible."



The truth, the flame-haired Chastain explains, is that “creating [film and television] is a lot of work. There are so many headaches on the producing side. It’s so much easier when someone sends you a script. But I’ve never been the person who says to go with the status quo. I’d studied the industry for a long time. If I’ve been given this golden ticket, I understand how lucky I am to do what I do. For me not to use my platform to do something positive for others just feels irresponsible.”

Flash-forward nine years to this September, and the fruits of Chastain’s labor of love, a narrative film also called *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, will hit movie theaters. If Chastain’s career has encompassed a series of chameleon-like performances in *X-Men: Dark Phoe-*

*nix*, *The Help*, *Molly’s Game*, *The Martian* and *Interstellar*, among others, *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* provides a full-on transformation. Adds Chastain, “I look so different in every movie.”

“She disappeared completely into this character,” says Michael Showalter (*The Big Sick*), the film’s director.

“This is a character that Jess has lived with for so long and a true passion project for her to honor this real person,” says Andrew Garfield, who co-stars as Jim Bakker. “We would also go to church together on our Sundays off, trying to commune with God and Jim and Tammy and do them justice.”

“People might really make fun of me. But Tammy Faye probably thought that every day, and she did it anyway.”

- Jessica Chastain

There were days when it would take Chastain seven and a half hours to get into makeup as Tammy Faye, especially for a final musical number that will no doubt have award season prognosticators buzzing. “I just wanted to cry,” Chastain says. “People don’t understand that [that kind of makeup] takes a lot of energy, but I used that time to listen to her voice. I just rewatched and rewatched her on video. I’ve seen every video she’s ever done.”

For the first time, Chastain must also sing multiple times on-screen. She’d done it before, a little bit in *Crimson Peak* and in *Tree of Life*, “but I’ve never sung like Tammy Faye. To be honest, I was supposed to pre-record [a few tracks] and I was so scared,” Chastain says. “I drank whiskey and Throat Coat [tea]. With Tammy Faye, it always sounds like she’s hollering to heaven.”

In fact, recalls Chastain, “there were so many parts of making this movie that terrified me. On the first day of shooting, I started shaking before the first take. That’s never happened to me on a movie, and it was so embarrassing. But I thought, If I’m going to throw myself off this cliff, I’m going to jump off the deep end. People might really make fun of me. But Tammy Faye probably thought that every day, and she did it anyway.”

Chastain’s ability to feel the fear and do it anyway certainly wouldn’t surprise Anne Hathaway, who became close friends with Chastain when they filmed *Interstellar*. Hathaway calls Chastain “this irresistible mix of traits,” two of which are “fearless

and discerning. She’s a gifted and tuned-in listener in life and on-screen. Jess is one of the most generous and sensitive—but tough as nails—people that I know.”

Also this fall, Chastain appears in far less makeup and in more natural light in HBO’s new *Scenes From a Marriage*, based on Ingmar Bergman’s 1973 Swedish miniseries. Chastain plays opposite Oscar Isaac, her old Juilliard pal of 20 years, who texted her last-minute to jump in as the show was going into production during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“She’s one of the greats,” says Isaac. “She’s someone that has always inspired me and brought the best out of me, both as an actor and a person. Acting with her is effortless. Nothing needs to be planned in advance. As long as I’m present, I know anything can happen because there is total trust.”

“I’m not very good at toeing the line and keeping the status quo. I’ve never been good at that.”

– Jessica Chastain

Adds Chastain, “Because Oscar and I are so comfortable, we didn’t have to be polite. In some sense, we could read each other’s minds.”

Says *Scenes From a Marriage* creator Hagai Levi, known for his work on the original *Israeli In Treatment*, “Their old-time chemistry made their married dynamic appear very real and close on-screen.”

Of course, Chastain has her own dashing husband at home, fashion executive Gian Luca Passi de Preposulo. She promises that though both *Scenes From a Marriage* and *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* show relationships crumbling (as does Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, which Chastain hopes to do on the West End soon, after a production was cancelled because of the pandemic), her husband is “great.”

Usually, because there are so many people working on set, you have a lot of visitors and “there are just people everywhere,” Chastain says. But because of protocols, Preposulo wasn’t allowed to visit Chastain on *Scenes From a Marriage*. “There was never a break. I wanted to be reminded of my great husband, but it was so intense and so intimate. Takes were 25 minutes long. We were just fully invested in our characters.”

Which is, of course, the whole reason Chastain got into acting in the beginning. And if she can push Hollywood along in the process, all the better. Making *Tammy Faye*, she explains, was “the most difficult thing I’ve ever done and the scariest thing I’ve ever done. But I did it because it needed to be told. I’m not very good at toeing the line and keeping the status quo. I’ve never been good at that.”









# Simone Ashley

## Meet The Leading Lady Of 'Bridgerton' Season 2

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*Selina Gomez McKern*

Shonda Rhimes's *Bridgerton*, a romantic period drama about high society, has become one of Netflix's biggest series ever. It follows various families as they search for suitable mates for their children. The *Bridgerton* family is at the center of the series. During Season 1, *Bridgerton* fans watched The Duke of Hastings, Simon (Regé-Jean Page) and Daphne (Phoebe Dynevor) find love. For *Bridgerton* Season 2, fans will watch the eldest *Bridgerton* Anthony (Jonathan Bailey) find love with Kate Sharma (Simone Ashley).

Many *Bridgerton* fans are excited to see how Simone Ashley brings Kate Sharma (Kate Sheffield in the books) to life. Everyone wants to know if Kate and Anthony will be able to bring as much chemistry and passion to the screen as Daphne and Simon. Before Kate enters the world of *Bridgerton*, let's get to know Simone Ashley, the actress behind this highly anticipated character.

Born on March 30, 1995, Simone Ashley is a British actress of Indian heritage with a Tamil background. Ashley developed her acting chops at the ArtsEd School in Chiswick. While she has been acting for a few years, Ashley has previously opened up about how her traditional Indian family were hesitant about her pursuing the unconventional career.

"They still find it quite scary and unsettling. There is no crystal ball, no security, no guarantee. Which can be a parent's worst nightmare. But they know I'm a smart lady. You can't spend your life going with what your parents want, or your friends, teachers, lovers, want," she told *Veylex*.

In the same interview, she also spoke about how, despite her parents' concerns about her livelihood, she still forged ahead to create her own path.

"You have to be your own hero and just go with your gut. My parents are incredibly protective over me, and sometimes I found it quite stifling.



### **She has some sage advice for young Indians who want to pursue acting**

Speaking frankly about empowering the next generation of Desi actors, Ashley told Veylex the advice she would give young Indians wanting to pursue an onscreen career in film and TV.

"Do it! Get out of your head and just do it. Stop worrying about if people will 'want' you, and just do it. We can be blinded by the commercialized side of the industry and think they only want a certain look or a certain type of person," she said.

"But someone has to change the game sometime! Look at all the incredible movies, TV shows and artist out there of Desi heritage. And they are being celebrated big time. We need to celebrate each other and not guard ourselves by being competitive. Indian girls are so beautiful, and I am so happy to see more and more projects being made that involve all of us!"

### **Her father inspired her acting career**

While Ashley admits her parents are traditional, it was actually her father and his love of music, film and photography that inspired her to go after a creative career.

"I've just always wanted to create, and anything that allows me to do that has got my attention! It allows me to be spontaneous and play - I guess it's something I've always wanted to pursue, and didn't think twice about it," she said.

"Growing up the record player was always playing rock n roll tunes, or Bob Marley, and the TV always had epic movies on, like Kill Bill. It's a bit ironic, I grew up in a household full of Indian academics, you know, the doctors, the engineers, the accountants—it's pretty cliché! I was never a budding academic, and always thrived in creative fields.

### **She has a deep love of music**

Growing up, Ashley loved a lot of the music her father listened to, and it fostered her great appreciation for music today.

"I have such a deep love for music. I listen to everything and anything! But I grew up listening to a lot of rock n roll, that's due to my father. Fleetwood Mac have always been my number one. The Doors, The Rolling Stones, Steely Dan. My Mother would always play Phil Collins too," she told Veylex.

She continued: "I still listen to the same rock artists, but now I'm discovering more genres like Trip Hop, I've been listening to Morcheeba on repeat. I love Alicia Keys, Nina Simone, Rihanna, Maggie Rogers. The list goes on and on."





### **WHAT MOVIES OR TV SHOWS HAS SIMONE ASHLEY ACTED IN?**

As we said earlier, you've probably caught Simone Ashley in the hit series *Sex Education*, playing the role of Olivia Hanan, one of "The Untouchables".

While discussing her favourite part about playing the complicated teen, Ashley revealed that she really got to mould Olivia's character from the ground up.

"Creating and exploring this character during the initial stages of filming season one was so much fun," she told Veylex.

"Olivia was written as a blank canvas almost, there was no character description, so I got out my paint brushes and starting painting. I sat down with the writers, and we discussed her story, questioning her choices and journey throughout high school. I did a lot of research, I made Spotify playlists, mood boards, I watched a variety of John Hughe style movies. I watched 'Boogie Nights' and was inspired by *Roller Girl*."



She also spoke about how she formed one of Olivia's signature motifs, namely: bubble gum.

"On the way to set one day, I asked our driver if we could stop by a corner shop on the way, I bought 10 pounds worth of bubble gum, popped a huge piece in my mouth and showed our head director and exec producer of the show (Ben Taylor) how big of a bubble I could blow. It looked really cool, so we decided to make it a part of the character," she continued.

Besides *Sex Education*, Ashley has also appeared in *Pokémon Detective Pikachu* (2019) and *Broadchurch* (2013).

In June 2020, Ashley appeared on the cover of Harper's *BAZAAR* India, and spoke out against colourism, saying:

"The more we let in, the more we can understand and be proactive. Being proactive is helping. Donate, sign petitions, protest, speak up. And hey, it's 2020, a message to all dark skinned Desi girls, put down that fairness cream, you don't need it."

In her interview with *Veylex*, she opened up about how "colourism" is an ongoing challenge in her career, but she's here to break barriers (yes!).

"I try to be as positive as I can day to day, and I've tried to channel that into how I approached the industry. Yes, colourism is an ongoing issue. As is being type cast, being looked over because of the colour of your skin, losing roles to girls that are more 'relatable' to target audiences and markets. But if I surrender to all of that, where would I be going? Nowhere! Fuck that," she said.





Actor | Producer | Writer | Singer

# Jada Pinkett Smith

## Talks Alopecia

*“Considering all that has happened in the last few weeks, the Smith family has been focusing on deep healing. The ‘slap heard around the world’ has brought the focus to the condition called Alopecia.*

*We decided to explore the condition and its impact.*

Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith have been in the spotlight a lot lately, and it’s not always been in a good way. The latest news involves Will storming the Oscars stage at the 2022 94th Oscar Awards and slapping Chris Rock making a joke about his wife. That moment is the one everyone is talking about from Sunday’s Oscars, and not the winners.

Rock made a comment about Jada’s bald head referencing the movie G.I. Jane, where actress Demi Moore shaved her head for the role.

### **But who is Jada Pinkett Smith?**

No matter how you feel about the joke, many did not know that Jada has had issues with losing her hair for years.

“I’ve been getting a lot of questions about why I’ve been wearing this turban,” said the beautiful 50-year-old actress.

“Well, I’ve been having issues with hair loss. And it was terrifying when it first started.”

Back in 2018, Jada Pinkett Smith had been wearing headwraps and not showing her hair for months at a time. It turns out the beautiful Girl’s Trip star has been struggling with the hair loss condition, possibly linked to alopecia. She took to social media to explain it.

She also says she’s currently receiving steroid injections to help with her loss. “I’m getting steroid injections, which seem to be helping but not curing. But I’m open to other ideas,” she posted on her Instagram.



One type of steroid injection Pinkett Smith may be using is called Corticosteroid Injections. This method of treatment — the most common form of treatment for alopecia areata — uses corticosteroids that are injected into bare patches of skin with a tiny needle. These injections are repeated about every four to six weeks and are usually given by a dermatologist.

If new hair growth occurs from corticosteroid injections it is usually visible within four weeks. There are few known side effects related to this kind of treatment. But a drawback of corticosteroid injections, like all treatments for alopecia areata, is that they do not prevent new hair loss from developing.

Alopecia is defined as loss of hair from the body. Hair loss is often a cause of great concern to the patient for cosmetic and psychological reasons, but it can also be an important sign of systemic disease.

Alopecia areata, also known as spot baldness, is a condition in which hair is lost from some or all areas of the body. Often it results in a few bald spots on the scalp, each about the size of a coin. Psychological stress may result. People are generally otherwise healthy. In some, all the hair on the scalp or all body hair is lost and loss can be permanent.

Alopecia areata is believed to be an autoimmune disease. Risk factors include a family history of the condition. The underlying mechanism involves failure by the body to recognize its own cells with subsequent immune-mediated destruction of the hair follicle.

The actress recalled the “terrifying” moment she first noticed she was losing “handfuls of hair” in the shower.

“It was one of those times in my life where I was literally shaking with fear,” she said. “That’s why I cut my hair and continued to cut it.”

This revelation was featured in the third episode of her Facebook mini-series, Red Table Talk, co-hosted by her mother Adrienne Canfield Norris, and teenage daughter Willow Smith.

Other topics discussed have included coping with loss, motherhood and body image – with Willow previously disclosing she self-harmed as a child following the release of her debut single Whip My Hair.

Despite having many medical tests, Pinkett Smith said she has not been able to find the cause of her alopecia. She suspects it might be stress.

### **Other main factors for alopecia are: Genes and Hormones**

Androgenic alopecia, also known as male pattern baldness or female pattern baldness, is the most common type of alopecia. In men, it causes balding and a receding hairline, while women may experience general hair thinning or a widening of their part. Androgenic alopecia can be genetic, and it’s also hormonal.

Dihydrotestosterone (DHT) is a hormone derived from testosterone, the male sex hormone.

DHT binds to testosterone in hair follicles and weakens them. Women also have testosterone. When testosterone and estrogen, the female sex hormone, are unbalanced in women, DHT can trigger androgenic alopecia. This can happen before menopause or with other hormonal conditions, Beverly Hills-based dermatologist Tsippora Shainhouse, MD, FAAD, tells WebMD Connect to Care.

“Some women have a condition called polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), in which they make so much estrogen, that some gets converted to testosterone, which can contribute to thinning and loss of hair,” Shainhouse says.

Alopecia areata is a condition where the immune system attacks hair follicles. It could also be genetic in some cases, says the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD).

## Stress

Telogen effluvium is a type of alopecia where hair sheds in excess. It can happen suddenly, or hair can thin over time. Causes of telogen effluvium include:

- **Medications**
- **Stress**
- **Childbirth**
- **Physical trauma**
- **Restrictive dieting**
- **Life changes**

Women are more likely to report telogen effluvium. A 2019 study in the journal *Clinical, Cosmetic, and Investigational Dermatology* found men might not notice telogen effluvium because of shorter haircuts or lack of attention to hair.

“For some women, this hair loss unmasks an underlying female-pattern hair loss, and the hair may never look as thick as it once did. If you are otherwise healthy, then treatment is mostly a watch-and-wait game,” Shainhouse says.

## Alopecia areata can also be triggered by:

- **Asthma**
- **Hay fever**
- **Stress**
- **Nutrition**

Nutritional deficiencies, including low iron or vitamin D, could cause alopecia, says Shainhouse. But when it comes to vitamin D and hair loss, more research is needed, according to the AAD.

“See your primary care physician to treat these, in order to give your hair the best chance of growing back,” Shainhouse says. “Develop a healthy eating schedule that includes food-derived vitamins and nutrients, and ... enough protein.”

## Thyroid Issues

The thyroid is a neck gland that controls metabolism-related hormones. Both low and overactive thyroid can trigger alopecia. Ask

your doctor about a thyroid test if your hair loss is accompanied by:

- **Unexplained weight changes**
- **High or low energy**
- **Menstruation changes**



**For more information and support on alopecia, visit <http://alopeciasupportgroup.org/>**



## Cofounding Partner, Acrew Capital

# Theresia Gouw

*“I, like thousands of others who are called to the Valley everyday, have my parents to thank for showing me how to be an American dreamer.”*

*Theresia Gouw*

**Theresia Gouw**, 46, began forging a path that led her to become a top American venture capitalist decades ago. She was the first person in her high school in a small town outside of Buffalo, New York, to go to Brown University. In the 1990s, she was the first female investor at Palo Alto-based venture capital firm Accel Partners. She then became the firm's first female partner and first female managing partner before leaving Accel four years ago to cofound Aspect Ventures, one of the first female-led venture investing firms in Silicon Valley.

A woman of many firsts, she makes her debut this year on Forbes' Self-Made Women list with an estimated net worth of \$500 million. Much of her wealth is linked to Accel's early investment in Facebook. At Aspect, she recently oversaw the firm's first billion-dollar IPO with cybersecurity firm ForeScout.

Born in Indonesia to parents of Chinese descent, Gouw immigrated to America in the early 1970s with her family when she was 3 years old. “We left in the end of the [Suharto] political revolution when ethnic Chinese people were being targeted,” she says. Her dad was a dentist and her mother was a nurse in Indonesia, but they were both forced to start their careers over again when they came to the United States. “My dad got a job as a dishwasher and went back to school at SUNY Buffalo in order to get his dental certification to work in America,” she says.

Bucking the trend in her high school, where only 40% of her class went on to higher education after graduation, Gouw enrolled at Brown University in 1986 and majored in engineering. During summer internships at General Motors and British Petroleum, she found her passion for business development.

*"I was working in a building with a thousand engineers, and I realized what I liked most was product management,"* she says. "But the people who moved out of frontline engineering and into [product management] roles all had M.B.A.s." So after graduating from Brown in 1990, Gouw studied for the GMAT and took a management consulting position at Bain & Company in Boston. Then she got an M.B.A. at Stanford University.

Shortly after graduating from Stanford in 1996, she teamed up with several other classmates and raised \$1 million in venture funding to cofound Release Software, a software-as-a-service company that enabled payment technologies in the software industry. "We grew into a reasonable size around 1998 to 1999 and we were getting ready to file an S-1 and go public," she says. "But at the same time, we were at our third CEO change in 12 months, so I thought that was probably not a good sign for my stock."

While searching for her next role, a Release board member pushed her towards the venture capital world. "He introduced me to three other startups in his portfolio but he also introduced me to three venture funds," Gouw says. "He said to me, 'You've been part of an engineering startup, you have an engineering degree. Jump over to the dark side.'"

Jump she did. Gouw joined Accel as an investment associate in 1999. During her 15 years at Accel she led a series of highly successful investments, including real estate listing site Trulia and cybersecurity firm Imperva, both of which are now public. But the bulk of her fortune comes from her involvement in an investment that one of her Accel partners, Jim Breyer, took the lead on in 2005: a then fledgling social network called Facebook.

"We had looked at a lot of other social media platforms before and some of them actually had a larger number of users," Gouw says. "But we'd never seen anything like Facebook's daily active usage at the time. Two thirds of users were using it every day, and half of them were using it two hours a day. That's a really meaningful service and platform, and that was the thing that really stood out at the time."

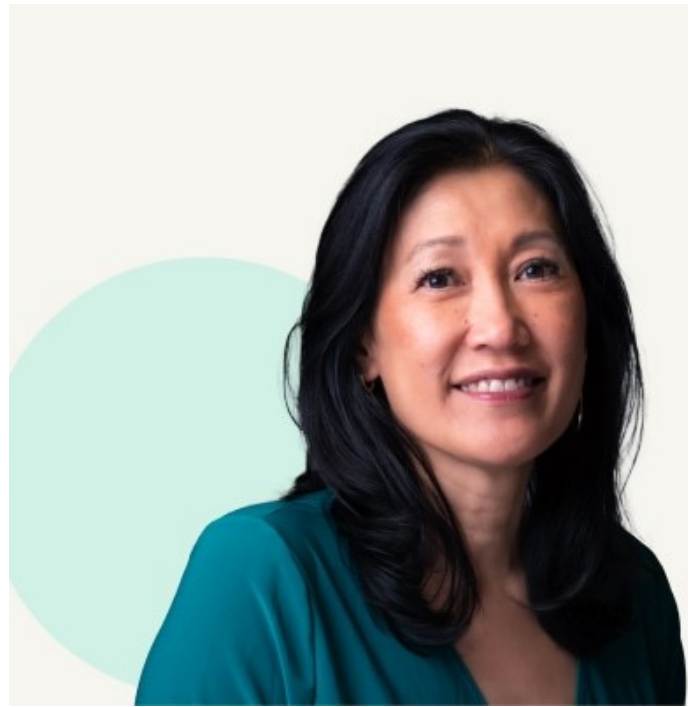
Less than two years after Facebook's monster IPO in May 2012, still one of the most successful tech public listings in history, Gouw left Accel to start her own venture capital firm, Aspect Ventures. Cofounded with fellow veteran investor Jennifer Fongstad with their own money, Aspect is an early-stage venture firm that focuses on cybersecurity, the future of work processes, digital health and wellness software.

*"I cofounded Aspect with the idea to create venture the way it was in the late 1990s, by creating a fund that was just laser-focused on the early stage,"* Gouw says. "On the one hand, we wanted to be large enough to lead those rounds, but on the other hand, we also want to be small and nimble enough so that we could syndicate with other firms on investments."

Aspect has raised around \$350 million since its founding in February 2014. The second fund, announced earlier this year at \$181 million, includes Melinda Gates and Cisco CEO Chuck Robbins as investors. The firm scored its first billion-dollar exit when cybersecurity firm ForeScout listed in October last year. For Gouw, it was the fourth IPO investment of her career. "Going public is kind of like when kids graduate from college and enter the real world," she explains. "It's always really exciting." Other early bets that Gouw counts as Aspect's most notable investments include security intelligence solutions startup Exabeam and enterprise networking and security company Cato Networks.


Gouw is also a founding member of All Raise, an organization that supports the success of female founders and investors in Silicon Valley, so it should come as no surprise that in Aspect's portfolio, 40% include a female cofounder. (Read the Forbes magazine cover story about the creation of All Raise here.)

Among the many initiatives of All Raise, it stealthily created Founders for Change, a pledge by 600 startup founders to increase diversity in both their teams and cap tables that has gotten signatures from heavyweights like billionaires Instagram founder Kevin Systrom and Dropbox CEO Drew Houston. "There is really a lot of excitement and enthusiasm for diversity," Gouw says. "I am just super excited to be a part of it."



***A former figure skater who once perfected the double flip jump, Theresa's passion for sports has evolved to cheering on her favorite teams alongside her children & watching their events. Coming into venture when she had very few female peers, she has dedicated her 20-year career to changing the ratio.***

An advertisement for The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel. It features the hotel's crest and name at the top, followed by a photograph of a family (a man, a woman, and a child) walking on a sandy beach. Below the photo is the text: "Escape to Southern California" and "The best beach days are enjoyed together."

  
**THE RITZ-CARLTON**  
LAGUNA NIGUEL

Escape to Southern California  
The best beach days are enjoyed together.

An advertisement for a birthday celebration. It features a photograph of a man in a suit playing a double bass. The text reads: "RON CARTER & FRIENDS", "85th Birthday Celebration", "AT CARNEGIE HALL", and "May 10th".

**RON CARTER & FRIENDS**  
*85th Birthday Celebration*  
**AT CARNEGIE HALL**  
*May 10th*





# Marriage & Family Therapist

## Rakeshia Breaux Morgan

*Mrs. Morgan earned a Master of Science from Fuller Seminary School of Psychology in 2000. Post licensure, Mrs. Morgan went on to be an active leader of The Boeing Company's Threat Management Team, Clinical Supervisor for Fuller Psychological and Family Services, adjunct faculty for Fuller School of Psychology, Director of Psychology for Synergy Performance in El Segundo, CA and featured therapist on reality TV's R&B Divas of LA. Today, she runs her own group practice (now located in Rancho Cucamonga, CA), chosen Best of Pasadena and Best of Ontario for 9 consecutive years.*

**SPMG PEOPLE:** *It was great meeting you a few months ago. I'm excited that we are finally interviewing you. Your business is Ideal Living Psychology Center. Tell us what inspired you to move into this field?*

**BREAUX MORGAN:** *The circumstances that inspired me to move into this field are varied. My own heart's desire to live from a sense of purpose is first among them. I often prayed to know my calling. This was not a one-time prayer; this was a question I contemplated deeply for months—maybe years—before I had an epiphany. It finally came to me one day while reading through the newspaper. I noticed an announcement that Pepperdine University was hosting an informational meeting about degrees in Psychology for interested parties. I, immediately, felt compelled to go. Reading the ad felt surreal, as though it had been printed just for me. I, therefore, wasted no time arranging to attend the assembly later that week.*

I sat through that informational meeting convinced that a degree in Psychology was the first step of my purposed path. So, you might imagine how disheartened I felt when the informant announced that enrollment the following year would be my first opportunity to start their program. Correctly reading the disappointment on my face, the speaker offered me a plan to begin right away. "If you really want to begin coursework now, you can enroll at Santa Monica College for these classes", she said as she wrote three course titles on a piece of paper for me. "Pepperdine will require you to take these classes during your first semester, or you can transfer only the credits from these classes for a head start," she further explained. With renewed hope, I drove straight to SMC, registered for the classes, and completed the courses over the next two semesters.

In addition my own heart's desire and the woman that pointed me to SMC, Bishop Kenneth C. Ulmer of Faithful Central Bible Church also inspired me to move into this field. Dr. Ulmer was like a father to me, and he opened my eyes to the fact that a graduate degree was attainable for me. He was the first example I had of a "doctor in the family", so to speak. Therefore, if he could do it, I could do it, I told myself. My close proximity to him, his scholastic example, and what I sometimes refer to as "The Call", motivated me to gain the level of education required to be a professional in this field.

"The Call" from Bishop went something like this:

While I was preparing for work one morning, the phone rang. ...Now before I continue, let me say that an early morning call from Bishop (who, again, was like a father to me) was not out of the ordinary. He called many times before to invite me to brunch, holiday gatherings, and amusement park outings with the rest of the Ulmer family. What was out of the ordinary, this time, was the fact that he called early on a weekday.

"What are you doing?" he asked casually.

"Getting ready for work," I answered, matter-of-factly". I also threw in that I'd been invited to Fuller Seminary's Prospective Student Day happening that morning.

Without hesitation, he said, "Whatever you do, don't miss that event."

"But, I have to go to work," I said.

"Whatever you do, don't miss that event," he repeated.

In the end, I went to Fuller's Prospective Student Day. More importantly, I applied and was soon accepted because Bishop helped me think past my undergraduate degree. And he, like the woman from Pepperdine, also pointed me to the next academic institution on my journey into this field. More importantly, he probably helped opened the door that gave me access to Fuller's Master's program.

Finally, comes the last person that inspired me to venture into this field. I met him the morning of

Prospective Student Day as pitches to apply for enrollment at Fuller were underway. As I sat outside alone in the lobby, a man I didn't know approached to ask why I wasn't inside with the other prospectives. "I'm not sure I belong here", I said. "These kids went to MIT, Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, to name a few of the Alma maters I've heard boasted," I told him. "I didn't attend a school like that, nor did I study psychology in undergrad", I added, feeling defeated.

"Well..." the stranger began, "...to be accepted to one of our psychology programs, you only need to have taken..." I couldn't believe my ears when he listed the titles of the courses I had recently completed at Santa Monica College. "I just completed those classes!" I said, seemingly in shock. "Then you belong here", he replied, matter-of-factly. That guy was Dr. Jim Guy, the Dean of Fuller's School of Psychology at the time. He is the fourth person I credit for inspiring me to move into this field because he pushed me to courageously forge ahead when I was so close to backing down from moving into this field.

**SPMG PEOPLE:** That's a powerful story. Thanks for sharing that.



**SPMG PEOPLE:** Your company tag line "Promoting Power, Love and Sound Mind for Adults, Couples and Families" is powerful. How does your work help transform someone's life?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** Psychotherapists, like myself, are specialists of mental, emotional, behavioral, relational, and familial health. In general, we help clients transform their lives by facilitating a process of relieving distress and dysfunction brought on by trauma, chaos, and stress in any of these areas. We accomplish this through a process of gathering history, evaluating symptoms, assessing problems, and intervening with strategic planning, psycho-education, tools, and safe holding environments to work through the issues clients present for treatment.

My own innovative method of therapy, coined Incorporably Conscious Therapy or ICT, has been described, by clients and colleagues alike, as the most trans theoretical model they've ever experienced. ICT is based on the premise that we are not the physical images we see when we look into mirrors. We are, instead, the nonmaterial beings inhabiting the body reflected back at us.

The strategy behind ICT is to raise clients' awareness of nonmaterial facets of self that have a tendency to interfere with inner peace and the ability to function when those elements of self lack proper framework. Additionally, an important operation of ICT is to help clients integrate tangible infrastructures that reveal unseen contributors to problems and to offer clear solutions for fixing them. When applied properly, these infrastructures help safeguard against past, present, and impending threats to wellbeing in all realms of life.

Perceptions, thoughts, and feelings are just a few examples of what I mean by nonmaterial facets of self. ICT's methods of intervening on nonmaterial phenomena like these help transform clients and their lives by fostering symptom relief as well as the positive outcomes that result from ideal living. Ultimately, ICT helps clients realize that they are not helpless victims of

fate, but rather, phenomenal vessels of power, love, and sound mind with ability to overcome whatever dares to sabotage their experience of wellbeing.

**SPMG PEOPLE:** The pandemic has been traumatic in many ways for many people. From isolation at home, fear of food shortage, lack of funds to take care of basic needs. What have you found to be one of the most common challenges people are faced with during the pandemic and how has your work helped people?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** As a treatment provider of personal and interpersonal issues, the most common challenges I've heard about during this pandemic are marital discord and infidelity. Frustrations run high in times of stress, so many people look for someone to blame for how they're feeling. Often the one blamed for the other's unpleasant emotions is the spouse. Displaced blame on a spouse makes it easy for the blaming spouse to seek relief from their negative feelings by finding someone else to project pleasant feelings onto.

My work has helped people see the problems as the problem instead of seeing each other as the problem. Once the real problems are understood; which in this case include things like cognitive distortion, projection, a lack of personal insight, and a lack of useful communication skills; the individual or couple and I can focus energy on solving the problem—not attacking, abusing, or cheating on the people they love.

On the other hand, if an individual finds that their partner is not willing to collaborate on working through the problem, my challenge has been to help the abused and/or abandoned partner grieve loss, recover from pain, revive inner strength, learn from experience, and emerge triumphant on the other side.



**SPMG PEOPLE:** What are some tips you've offered clients to endure isolation and the fear of COVID-19?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** The following five points are a few helpful ideas to keep in mind while coping with COVID-19 or any life stressor:

“Inherent to the apple seed is the apple tree.” In other words, even though we look and feel small in the face of a pandemic, there is remarkable strength and growth potential inside us.

It will produce what we need when we are discerning of our own power, love, and sound mind.

Adults are what my ICT model calls Independent/Free Agents. This means that regardless of what the problem is, adults have the capacity to solve it—even if he or she hasn't identified how yet.

Problems, by definition, have solutions. Therefore, if there is no solution for what an adult perceives to be a problem, it's not really a problem. Furthermore, the proper strategy in the absence of a solution is coping because people also have the capacity for resiliency when no solution yet exists.

Contact a safe friend, supportive family member, licensed therapist, or urgent hotline if you need assistance solving a problem or coping with a stressor.

**SPMG PEOPLE:** Marriage therapy is a big part of your business. From my own experience I've found the pandemic has had a huge impact on marriages - either the couple becomes closer or it has highlighted areas that have cause couples to go their separate ways. What has your experience shown and why do you think that is?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** If you are the best hairstylist in all of California, but you show up to the salon without tools and supplies, you can't create what you otherwise have the potential to create. Likewise, if you're the best homebuilder in the country, but you show up to the construction site without tools, equipment, or supplies, you won't produce what you otherwise have the potential to produce. As straightforward as this logic seems, many of us don't think this way about being an adult. An adult, like a professional, is an evolved status that comes with a dutiful role. So, when we show up to adulthood without tools like self-awareness, boundaries, autonomy, self-efficacy, assertive communication, and the will to collaborate without violating the rights of others, we won't produce the outcomes mature, high-functioning, intellectuals (i.e., adults) actually have the potential to produce.

**SPMG PEOPLE:** Your offices are located in Rancho Cucamonga, CA and are gorgeous, comfortable and non-intimidating. You not only have therapy clients, you assist other therapists by mentoring, providing affordable office space and leads. Tell us about this program?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** Professionals of any industry can tell you how difficult it is to launch and run a business. It is no different for a psychotherapist in private practice. While academic institutions do a great job of teaching future therapists how to administer therapy services, most institutions don't do a great job of teaching future therapists how to start and run a practice. That's where Ideal Living Psychology Centers come in. Ideal Living Psychology Centers offer everything a therapist needs in an environment ideal for clients and therapists, alike. Also, there are two business collaboration options to choose from.

The first option is to use the space as a virtual office. When a therapist takes the virtual office option, she runs and operates her own practice onsite or virtually as needed. With this option, the therapist pays a small hourly rate for a minimum of only four hours per week. If the therapist decides she needs more than four hours per week, she can easily add another block of 4 hours on the same day or on another day whenever she chooses.

The second option is for the therapist that would like to launch or continue a professional brand of practice without the stress of marketing, operating, or financing the practice himself or herself. This option allows a therapist to join the roster of ILPC therapists as an employee in exchange for W-2 compensation that amounts, in essence, to a 60/40 split. Since operating a private practice with all the bells and whistles could otherwise cost 60% or more of earnings, this option is a no-brainer for those wanting to have a private practice without the hassles of marketing, administration, and sunken costs that usually come with it.

When I first began private practice, I had a difficult time finding an office that provided every-

thing I wanted and needed without countless mistakes and large amounts of sunken costs. ILPC is the premier psychotherapy office that finally offers a mental health professional everything she could want or need at an affordable cost. Those that are interested can contact the office to schedule a tour and learn more.

**SPMG PEOPLE:** Most people are resistant to therapy. Why and when should someone seek therapy - especially those in the African American community?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** The straightforward answer is every mature, high-functioning, intellectual (i.e., adult) should seek psychotherapy because every mature adult is responsible for his own wellbeing. Psychotherapy is the process of evaluating and treating the affects of life's stressors on adults, couples, and their families. When our bodies suffer from injury, disease, or distress, we consider it wise to seek treatment from a medical or physical professional. Therefore, we should also consider it wise to seek treatment from a mental health professional when our perceptions, memories thoughts, emotions, behaviors, relationships, or families suffer from injury, disease, or distress.

With regard to whether or not I think African-American's, especially, should seek therapeutic services, my answer is "no and yes". I first say, "no" because I believe singling out African-Americans in this regard perpetuates the toxic message that genes—especially African-American genes—are indicators of mental, emotional, behavioral, marital, and familial unwellness. That's non-sense.

On the other hand, I say "yes", because race rhetoric has effectively warped many minds (including African-American minds) to believe that our genes (the inherent determining factor for skin color) are pestilence to us. Because African-Americans, in particular, are the targets of this egregious false rhetoric to one degree and another, African-Americans, in particular, have a high probability of experiencing extraordinary amounts of toxic trauma, chaos, and stress.

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**As seen on "R&B Divas of LA"**



While thinking of the question from that perspective, I'd say "yes" African-Americans, especially, should get therapy—not because those with darker skin are inherently flawed (skin color is determined by genes), but because we live under constant torment of this ridiculous gaslight.

**SPMG PEOPLE:** Many people will be restarting their lives - work and personal - as the pandemic tapers off and we move into our new reality. What are some ways you can assist people into confidently moving forward?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** One way I assist clients confidently move forward through their therapy process is with an ICT intervention I call "Shame and Contempt Abatement". Though I've not said it this way during a therapy session, I venture to say now that shame and contempt are psychological weaponry—viruses, if you will—that corrupt or interfere with a person's ability to live from their own heart. If another's projections of shame, guilt, and contempt interfere with your pursuit of health and wellbeing, it's time to see shame, guilt, and contempt for what they are--sabotage. If you are an adult, it is appropriate and congruous to differentiate from controlling attachment figures of childhood in order to take ownership and responsibility for your own health, wellness, and prosperity.

**SPMG PEOPLE:** What advice would you give someone considering therapy, but might be afraid of what to expect or what others they love might think?

**BREAUX MORGAN:** Putting off dealing with the effects of trauma and stress to avoid feeling hurt and pain is like putting off taking out the trash to avoid smelling unpleasant odors. You can deny or ignore the source all you want, but the evidence of suppressed things still rise to the surface. Better to identify the source of the irritant before it turns into disease.

**SPMG MEDIA;** How would our readers reach out to you?

**BREAUX MORGAN;** I invite anyone who would like more information to contact at or follow me on the following platforms:

**Instagram**--@ideallivingpsychology

**Facebook**--@ideallivingpsychologycenter

**LinkedIn**—www.linkedin.com/pub/Rakeshia-breux-m.s.lmft/a/949/33b/

**Twitter**--@RakeshiaBreux [or @RakeshiaMorgan]

**Website**—  
www.idealliving.org, www.rakeshiabreux.com [or www.rakeshiamorgan.com]

**Psychology Today**—  
www.therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/144340







# Founder & CEO

## The ActOne Group of Companies

# Janice Bryant Howroyd

*“Never compromise who you are personally to become who you wish to be professionally.”*

— *Janice Bryant Howroyd*

Businesswoman, entrepreneur, educator, ambassador, author, mentor and Presidential Special Appointee, Janice Bryant Howroyd is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of **The ActOne Group**, a global leader providing customized cutting edge solutions in the human resources industry. **The ActOne Group** is a multi-billion dollar (USD) award-winning, international Talent and Talent Technology enterprise with multiple divisions that each service unique areas of employment and provide talent management solutions.

JBH has invested millions of dollars in creating the industry’s most advanced technology and talent platform serving the ever-changing utility, energy and broadband communication space. Her vision, as an industry leader, is fostering connectivity between these sectors giving competitive advantage to clients engaged in cyclical markets. Her understanding of global market demographics and trends has made her a highly sought after ambassador, speaker and commentator on global business issues.

In the hallway of her headquarters hangs a painting inspired by the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, which outlawed school segregation, because, she says, “I’m a product of that energy.”

She is currently listed as #39 in Forbes list of America’s Richest Self-Made Women. In 2014, she was recognized by Black Enterprise as the first black woman to own and operate a billion-dollar company. JBH was BET’s first ever BET Honors Entrepreneur of the Year and has received Black Enterprise’s Business of the Year award. In 2013, she was appointed a USA Ambassador of Energy at the White House.

In May of 2016 JBH received a key Presidential appointment by President Barack Obama as a member of the President’s Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. As a community leader and advocate for education, she lends her guidance to select organizations that include the International Trade Advisory Commission Board, Los Angeles Economic Development Corporate Board, and the Women’s Leadership Board of the Kennedy School of Government/Harvard University.

JBH has traveled to over fifty countries promoting education and the powerful impact it has on communities around the world. Her accomplishments, both personal and professional, are inspired by her deep faith and her love for her family. She says, “One cannot effectively lead without passionately serving.”



# President & Chief Executive Officer

## Alvarado Construction, Inc.

# Linda Alvarado

*“You don’t look for excuses to quit.*

*You just get better at the game.”*

*Linda Alvarado*

Linda G. Alvarado has changed the “male only” image of construction contractors across the United States and opened doors for women to enter construction and non-traditional fields of endeavor. Alvarado is founder and sole owner of Alvarado Construction, a commercial general contractor, construction management and design/build firm in Denver, Colorado; President of Palo Alto Inc., and co-owner of the Colorado Rockies Baseball Club.

Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Alvarado grew up poor in a family with six children. Working her way through college she earned money as a laborer for a landscape firm, later taking courses in estimating and computerized scheduling and began as a contract administrator on a construction project. Undaunted by construction site harassment she experienced being a woman, in 1976 she started her own company.

There were no programs to include women or minority-owned businesses and banks viewed this “woman contractor” as a high risk. Her parents mortgaged their small home and lent her \$2,500 to start one of the most successful construction firms in the country; starting with concrete sidewalks to bus-stop shelters, schools, stadiums, convention centers, aquariums, hotels, and high-rise buildings.





In 1992 Alvarado made history as the first Latino owner of a Major League Baseball team, the Colorado Rockies. This also marked the first time a woman was in a bid for ownership of a major league franchise. Alvarado and her husband, Robert, founded Palo Alto Inc. which operates 150 franchise restaurants.

At the young age of 27 Alvarado was invited to join the board of United Bank and today serves on the board of five public companies. She sets high standards as a successful business owner and her accomplishments have created opportunity for women. Alvarado has given numerous speeches at business conferences and at schools, motivating youth to excel and achieve their dreams.

Alvarado has been honored as one of the "100 Most Influential Hispanics in America" by Hispanic Business Magazine. She is a recipient of the Horatio Alger Award, the Sara Lee Front Runner Award and was voted American Latino T.V. Network's "Most Inspiring American Latino".



# THE THREE MOTHERS



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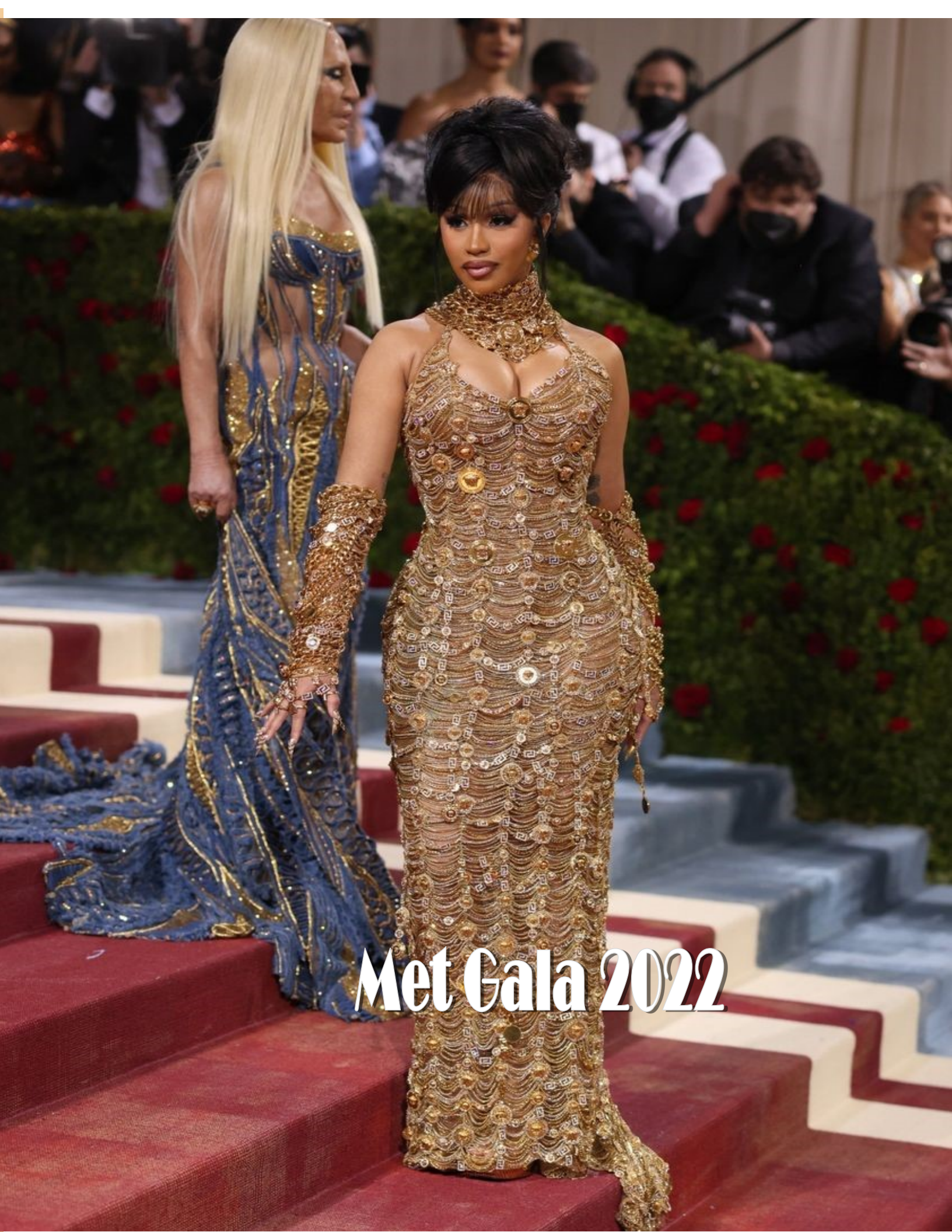
Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture

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