



Frank Leon Roberts

Recently referred to by Dr. Cornel West as one of the “powerhouse intellectuals” of his generation, Frank Leon Roberts is an educator and political organizer on the frontlines of the contemporary movement for black lives. He is the Creator of Black Lives Matter Syllabus, the nationally acclaimed, public educational curriculum that provides resources for teaching BLM in classroom and community settings. Frank’s pioneering work as the “Black Lives Matter Professor” has been featured in Fader Magazine, NPR, CNN, The San Francisco Gate, CBS and an extensive variety of other national media outlets.

He is currently on the faculty at New York University, where his course on the black lives matter movement has been widely acknowledged as the first college course of its kind. Committed to the idea of teaching as a form of community organizing, his courses continue to make headlines as national interventions. He has previously held teaching appointments at The New School for Public Engagement, The City University of New York (at both Hunter College and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice) and the W.E.B. DuBois Scholars Institute at Princeton University.

Educated at New York University and Yale University, Frank is the winner of NYU's 2015 Michael Parkes Distinguished Alumni Award; the 2015 MLK Trailblazer Award (given in honor of the legacy of Martin Luther King), and a past recipient Ford Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from the National Research Academies. His areas of scholarly expertise include 20th century African American literature, race and ethnicity studies, U.S. social movements, and the history of black art, media, and expressive culture. His forthcoming book, *Black Lives Matter Syllabus: Key Writings from the Movement for Black Lives* is currently under review at The University of California Press.

Outside of academia, Frank's career as a grassroots political organizer has spanned nearly two decades. He began his career as a teenager; mobilizing disenfranchised voters in the wake of the 2000 Bush/Gore Election. Later, in 2004 Frank co-founded the National Black Justice Coalition with Barack Obama's Harvard Law School classmate Keith Boykin. He then went on to serve as the special assistant to legendary civil rights attorney Johnnie Cochran, whom he worked with on the early legal movement for racial reparations. Frank then spent a decade on the frontlines of the struggle against HIV/AIDS in black communities—working as a prevention organizer in some of New York City's most at-risk communities. In 2015, for his career long commitment to doing racial justice activist work in an intersectional paradigm, he received the 2015 Bayard Rustin Award at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Frank's expansive history as an organizer and thought-leader has landed him in *The New York Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Ebony*, BBC Radio, *The Huffington Post* and at hundreds of institutions and colleges around the globe. Rooted in a commitment to teaching as a form of community organizing, his work inspires audiences to use the energy of today and the teachings of yesterday—to create a world that works for everyone.



LUIS ORTEGA

Storyteller & Social Entrepreneur

Founder of Storytellers for Change

Preferred Pronouns he/him/his

Luis Ortega is a professional storyteller, social impact consultant, author, facilitator, and the founder and director of Storytellers for Change.

For the last eleven years, Luis has worked with school districts, foundations, and institutions of higher education to help them harness the power of narrative for positive social change.

Luis consulting work focuses on implementing storytelling as a human centered strategy to build more inclusive environment, close inequity gaps, guide organizational change, and serve as a culturally responsive community outreach and engagement strategy. In addition, Luis also has an extensive background in experiential learning education, youth development and

engagement, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Some of Luis's clients include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the University of Washington, the Washington Dental Service Foundation, the Bellevue School District, and the School-Based Health Alliance. Luis is also a TEDx speaker and has delivered over 1000 keynotes and presentations on the topics of counter narratives, inclusion, empathy, resilience, and story-based strategy.

Luis also serves as a the Organizational Leadership partner of SAYA, an environmental consulting group in Mexico, as Co-Chair of the City of Seattle's Immigrant and Refugee Commission, and as a member of Freedom Writer Foundation's Teacher Network.

Luis will be publishing his first book this year titled *You Are My Other Me: Reflections of a Storyteller for Change*, where he narrates his 11-year journey as a storyteller across Washington and this country to highlight why story-listening and empathy are essential to building more equitable and inclusive communities.

To learn more about Luis' work you can visit us at www.storytellersforchange.org

Your Story Can Make A Difference



Rohina Malik

Rohina Malik is a critically acclaimed playwright and solo performance artist. She was born and raised in London, England, of South Asian heritage. Her one-woman play UNVEILED had its world premiere at the 16th Street Theater, where it received critical acclaim. Rohina's second play THE MECCA TALES was produced by Chicago Dramatists in 2015 and nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Work. Her new play, YASMINA'S NECKLACE, had its world premiere at the 16th Street Theater in January 2016, and was recently nominated for a Jeff Award for Best New Work.

She is a Resident Playwright at Chicago Dramatists, an Artistic Associate at the 16th Street Theater and Voyage Theater Company in NYC. Recently, Rohina became an Artistic Affiliate at American Blues theater. Her plays have been produced at the 16th Street Theater, Victory Gardens Theater, Crossroads Theater, Next Theater, Brava Theater, Voyage Theater Company, Silk Road Rising, Theater Project Baltimore and Mustard Seed Theater. UNVEILED was

recently presented in two South African Theater festivals: The Grahamstown Arts Festival and the 969 Festival in Johannesburg. Rohina is a proud member of the Dramatists Guild of America.



Black by Popular Demand

Portland, OR has a relatively small, but powerful, black community compared to other cities.

Improv Comedy, also has a very small, but powerful, black community. So what happens when brothers and sisters from across Portland get together and improvise? You'll just have to come check it out, if you want an answer to that one.

Black by Popular Demand is a long form improv comedy group that is made up of members, whom identify as black. We are a family doing what families do, tell stories. Join us on our adventures as we take a central character and expand their boundaries to see how they impact their world and their world impacts them.

In 2013 the Black-identifying improv community in Portland Oregon emerged when three Black improvisers came together and created Black By Popular Demand. Over three years the group grew, performing both locally and at improv festivals throughout the country. Several members of BBPD went on to create Broke Gravy. Their signature format "James Earl Jones" has made Broke Gravy a favorite in the national and international improv scene.

The performers are honored to bring their united effort to the SOCC in a multi-genre showcase that will include several styles of improv and the oral tradition and art of storytelling.