



Keynote Panel

Visionary Women: Shaping Tomorrow Together



Senator **Angela Alsobrooks**

Angela Alsobrooks is a lifelong Marylander who was elected to the United States Senate in 2024. Her north star has always been the lesson her great grandmother taught her – that we all have a responsibility to get off the sidelines, to go farther and do better.

She has spent most of her life in public service, championing working families and fighting for safer communities. She believes that children shouldn't have to live on the margins but instead, be able to pursue their wildest dreams. That means centering policies that elevate working families and provide every Marylander with economic pathways to wealth.

After graduating from Duke University and the University of Maryland School of Law, she worked as a law clerk in the Howard County Circuit Court, and later the Baltimore City Circuit Court. She went on to become the first full-time Assistant State's Attorney to handle domestic violence cases in Prince George's County. After holding roles in county government, Angela made history as the youngest and first woman to be elected Prince George's County State's Attorney.

As the Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Angela fought every day to create safer communities. During her tenure, violent crime fell by 50 percent.

In 2018, Angela was elected Prince George's County Executive. She honed in on driving up economic opportunity in the County, and within 2 years, she became one of the top job creators in the entire state.



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Lt. Governor Aruna K. Miller

Aruna Miller is the 10th Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, the second woman to serve in this role, and the first woman of color and immigrant elected to statewide office in Maryland.

Born in India, Lieutenant Governor Miller and her family immigrated to the United States when she was 7 years old. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology.

Lieutenant Governor Miller has devoted her life to public service by removing barriers to opportunity as a transportation engineer and as a Maryland State Delegate where she served the people of Montgomery County from 2010-2018.

Her broad ranging policy portfolio includes Maryland's overdose response effort, mental health wellness, Interfaith outreach, all Maryland transportation efforts, and promoting the Life Sciences and STEM equity in Maryland where no one is left behind.

She and her husband have three daughters and live in Montgomery County with her mom and two dogs, Poe and Hachi.



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Marissa Mitchell

Marissa Mitchell is a three-time Emmy award-winning journalist.

Most recently, she worked as an anchor/reporter at our sister station, FOX 5 Atlanta. Mitchell reported during the day and co-anchored the station's "News Edge at 11" on weeknights.

Prior to that, she spent a few months solo anchoring "Good Day Atlanta" on weekends. Within her first year of anchoring in her hometown of Atlanta, Mitchell was nominated

for "Best Anchor" by the Regional Southeast EMMY Chapter.

Away from the anchor desk, Mitchell covered several major events, including Hurricane Irma, Super Bowl LIII week, and multiple days of protests in Atlanta and Charlotte, North Carolina following high-profile, officer-involved shootings in 2016. Mitchell also field-anchored the inauguration of Georgia Republican Governor Brian Kemp, who faced a contentious race against Democrat Stacey Abrams that gained national attention.

Mitchell was also no stranger to the city's red carpet scene, most notably, chatting with some of Hollywood's biggest stars at the grand opening of Tyler Perry Studios. She has interviewed several newsmakers throughout her career, from media mogul Oprah Winfrey and screen legend Clint Eastwood to actress Halle Berry and world-renowned wellness guru Deepak Chopra. Her story with celebrity tributes to the late "Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin earned her a "Salute to Excellence Award" from the National Association of Black Journalists.

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Marissa Mitchell

Prior to Atlanta, Mitchell worked as an anchor/reporter in Birmingham, Alabama at WBMA-TV. During her tenure at WBMA, she was part of the station's launch team for its "Focus @ 4" program. She also served as an anchor for its "Midday News." Mitchell covered city hall and often broke exclusive reports regarding government funding. She helped lead the station's coverage of the 50th Anniversary of the "Selma to Montgomery March", which was attended by Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush as well as the late U.S. congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis.

Mitchell's television career began in Chattanooga, Tennessee as a multimedia journalist for WTVC-TV. There, she reported breaking news, including the deadly April 27, 2011, tornado outbreak across the Southeast. Mitchell also worked as a writer for Rolling Out and Crossroads News.

She earned her master's degree in broadcast journalism from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in Evanston, Illinois, where she received a full-tuition scholarship from the McCormick Foundation. She was also a Knight Foundation and Carnegie Corporation News 21 Fellow. She obtained her bachelor's degree in political science and journalism from Emory University in Atlanta, where she also received a full-tuition scholarship. Mitchell was one of six graduates in her class named to the school's Hall of Fame for her dedication to Emory and the surrounding community.

Mitchell is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and the National Association of Black Journalists. She also mentors many budding journalists and speaks at various schools, churches and conferences. Mitchell has received numerous honors for her community involvement with youth and women. She's a sought-after motivational speaker.

Mitchell has been known for what she's done professionally. But her love for journalism didn't start in adulthood. From the age of nine, she wanted to become a journalist. As a teenager, Mitchell co-hosted the morning announcements television show at Dunwoody High School, where fellow Atlanta native and host Ryan Seacrest graduated and had the same role.

In her free time, she loves to spend time with her family, travel, dance and go to concerts and festivals.

Mitchell has many relatives and friends in the DMV. She's looking forward to meeting more people and making the area her home.

**Keynote Panel****Visionary Women: Shaping Tomorrow Together****Joseline
Peña-Melnyk**

Joseline Peña-Melnyk has represented Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties as state delegate for ten years. She feels privileged to work on behalf of her constituents and a passion for public service is at the core of her character. As a child Joseline emigrated from the Dominican Republic to the U.S.

with her single mother and sister. Her mom worked in New York's garment industry, often struggled to make ends meet, and there was a time when the family was on welfare because Joseline's father did not pay child support. But despite tough circumstances, Joseline succeeded in school and learned English. She was an Equal Opportunity Program scholar and the first in her family to attend college. "When I look back on it now, I see how much I benefited from programs that open doors for minority students." Joseline feels an obligation to fight for people on society's margins – the ones who are often overlooked.

One summer during law school she worked in Alabama to represent prisoners on death row. Another summer she was in Ohio farm country visiting migrant farm workers and fighting for basic living conditions, a safe work environment, and fair wages. After Joseline got her law degree, she took court appointments to represent abused and neglected children, and to provide criminal defense for the poor. Later she joined Eric Holder's U.S. Attorney's Office and prosecuted criminals; building cases by working closely with police officers, witnesses and victims in the community. And she took time to be a mom, having a son in 1998 and twin daughters in 2000. But the urge to stay involved in the community would not go away. Joseline

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Joseline Peña-Melnyk

has served on the board of Casa de Maryland, a community social service organization focused on immigrant issues, and she ran for, and won, a seat on the College Park City Council. In 2006 she ran a long-shot, grass roots campaign for Maryland's General Assembly, and with dedicated volunteers and modest contributions from ordinary people she won.

Joseline is committed to making Maryland stronger, fairer, and more inclusive. For example, she co-sponsored a bill to prohibit discrimination based on "gender identity" in public accommodations, employment, and housing (HB1265 (2014)). As the "floor leader", she defended the bill from challengers during a vigorous four-hour floor debate. From her own experience, Joseline understands that many working families, despite their best efforts, still need help to make ends meet. She co-sponsored legislation to increase the minimum wage, expand opportunities for minority businesses, broaden the Maryland Consumer Protection Act, crack down on mortgage fraud, and create state apprenticeship and workforce development programs in our secondary schools and community colleges. (See, e.g., HB 1370; HB 128, 2011; HB 456, 2011; HB 644, 2009; HB 360, 2008.).