

dr candi dugas

CREATIVE. COMPETENT. CONCERNED.



PROFILE + CONTACT

New York Times award-winning writer, innovative healing artist | cultural collaborator, stakeholder communicator + synthesizer of needs + solutions | deft nonprofit executive | financial, leadership + social impact developer ... achieving top results on time (*or early*), within budget (*or below*).

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@candidugas (*LinkedIn*) | @candigirlfreedom (*Instagram, TikTok*)

@candidugascollective (*YouTube*)

OVERVIEW

PUBLICATIONS + PRESENTATIONS

- Spoken
- Written
- Danced (*cued to 28:12, when dr candi enters to **dance***)
- Edited

ACADEMIC HISTORY

Columbia Theological Seminary

Doctor of Ministry, Christian Spirituality; with honors

Naropa University

Master of Arts, Somatic Counseling: Dance/Movement Therapy; in progress, CO '27

Gammon Seminary/Interdenominational Theological Center

Master of Divinity; Homiletics and Worship, Biblical Studies/Hebrew Bible; with honors

University of Florida

Bachelor of Science; Public Relations, Communication Studies; with honors

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Lead Creative + President

candi dugas collective | June 2007 - Present

Develop + scale programs/ops by collaborating with artists, wellness practitioners + social impact agents.

Pastor of Worship & Arts

Grace United Methodist Church | Sept 2018 - Nov 2019

Catalyze healing, wellness + social impact through curated arts- and community-based programming, revitalizing community at the intersection of faith and arts.

Founding VP, Operations

The Center for Working Families, Inc. | 2005 - 2008

Build organizational infrastructure for families to develop financial success in underserved community.

TESTIMONIALS

Visit [here](#). (*Individual references available upon request.*)

Productions

Next Narrative Monologue Competition

True Colors Theatre; Atlanta, GA

March 2023 + April 2022

Commissioning work from 50 Black playwrights that reflect the rich diversity of the Black community. NNMC serves high school students in 10+ participating regions. Students progress through three rounds of competition with the top two winners from each region competing in the National Finals, with an all-expense paid trip to NYC including workshops with theatre professionals, performance at the Apollo Theater, tickets to a Broadway show, and cash prizes.

Executive Producer: True Colors Theatre. Producer: candi dugas collective. ([Learn more.](#))

Community Conversations Engaging All Voices to Heal from Atlanta's Missing/Murdered Children

Hush Harbor Lab; Atlanta, GA - via Zoom, Global

April - May 2022

An immersive theatrical production of *Cassie's Ballad* by Addae Moon, that focuses on community collective **healing**. The three, virtual conversations highlight the roles that race, class, and sexual orientation played in the investigation and outcomes of the case. *Executive Producers: Hush Harbor Lab + Found Stages. Conversations Producer: candi dugas collective. ([Learn more.](#))*

"My Side of the Story: The Black Father Shares His Truth"

Morehouse School of Medicine Fathers Matter ATL + Compassion Con/Grant Park; Atlanta, GA

May 2022

Short theatrical presentations devised from actual Black fatherhood experiences to engage fathers in **transforming** social and legal spaces to become father-friendly - and to connect fathers with needed resources, Broadway Brunch style. *Executive Producers: Morehouse School of Medicine, Compassion Con. Producer/Dramaturg: candi dugas collective/candi dugas. Playwrights: Dr. Carlton Molette, Sandra Hodge-Hampton. Director: David Koté. ([Learn more.](#))*

"That Day"

Broadway Brunch | Broadway Brunch & Bistro™ - Grace Church; Atlanta, GA

September 2019

That day they became three instead of four friends who'd been together since forever. Nita's unexpected death catalyzes more than grief when Julia, DeeAnne, and Letitia gather at Nita's house to pack up her things the morning of Nita's funeral. "That Day" explores **grief** within the context of women's friendships. *Exec. Producer: Grace Church. Producer: candi dugas. Playwright + Director: candi dugas. [NOTE: Broadway Brunch & Bistro™, LLC produces **healing-focused**, theatre-based community experiences for social impact. Top four re attendance: "Father-Son Campout," The Modern Prometheus, "eye of the storm," {also presented during B Street Theatre's (Sacramento, CA) 2021 New Play Brunch}, and a cappella - all by local ATL playwrights, 2018-2019 pilot season. [Learn more.](#)]*

Jubalani: A Concert of Remembering and Rejoicing!

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; Evanston, IL

October 2016

Organized and managed creative, technical, educational, and administrative teams to produce the launch weekend and celebratory concert for Garrett's new Center for Music and Worship in the Black Church Experience. Jubalani featured dozens of artists: musicians, vocalists, and dancers. *Exec. Producer/Director: Rev. Dr. Cynthia Wilson; Producer: dr candi dugas. ([Learn more.](#))*

"Serenade to Sisters I + II"

Spelman College; Atlanta, GA (1994), Imperial Theater; Augusta, GA (1995/1996)

Co-authored a four-scene skit depicting themes: "Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself;"

"You Can Get a New Man, But You Can't Get a New Life;" "No Glove, No Love."

An annual celebration by the GA Women Preventing AIDS, focusing on educating Black women about HIV/AIDS and **wellness**. *Actors included Dawnn Lewis ("Hangin' with Mr. Cooper" and "A Different World"). Producers: GWPA and Roy Communications. Playwrights: Valetta Anderson and candi dugas. Director: Andrea Frye.*

Staged Readings

Wild + Free

Working Title Playwrights; Zoom, Global

March 2022

Dad's Garage; Atlanta, GA

December 2017 ([Watch](#) highlights from the staged reading. [Visit](#) its Facebook page.)

2021 Winner, Ethel Woolson Lab, Working Title Playwrights, Atlanta, GA; 2021 Semi-finalist, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Playwrights Foundation, San Francisco, CA

Seeking renewed life within relationship triangles and the deep roots of white supremacy take Sydney Augustin by surprise. Will she heal, and find her way back to being open + untethered?

Executive Producers: Working Title Playwrights/candi dugas collective. Playwright: candi dugas.

Directors: Mia Kristin Smith/Suehyla E. Young. Dramaturgs: Rebekah Suellau/Daphne Mintz.

Sponsored project of FracturedAtlas.org.

A Complicated Hope

Theatrical Outfit; Zoom, Global

February 2022

An intricately compelling story about grief and finding family where it exists over time. Michael's death alters his family forever. Through their yearning to **heal**, they all discover a new family of their own. *Executive Producer: Theatrical Outfit (The Graham Martin Unexpected Play Festival) + Working Title Playwrights. Playwright: John E. Mabey. Dramaturg: candi dugas. Dir.: Damian Lockhart.*

"Black sUn"

Out of Hand Theatre; Zoom, Global

November 2020

New York Times Best Theatre 2020 (as part of the *Equitable Dinner Series*). A journey of Black motherhood watching over her son in three movements - birth, childhood + death, at the hands of police brutality/gun violence. *Executive Producer: Out of Hand Theatre. Playwright: candi dugas. Composer: Jhonna Johnson-Page. Director: Lee Osorio.*

Far Away from Home: A Musical

candi dugas collective; Streamyard/YouTube, Global

September - December 2020

Funding by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners + National Black Arts, Atlanta, GA, USA

Gary, a handsomely young, sensitive, chain-smoking DJ who can fix anything ends up preferring time alone instead of constantly feeling like he does not quite measure up. But then he meets Sassy, and he's less and less able to maintain the distance that protected him. Will Gary choose to stay with himself or grow with Sassy - or is it even a choice at all? *Bookwriter: candi dugas. Co-composers/Lyricists: CC Sunchild and Christian Magby. Director: David Koté. Dramaturg: Addae Moon. Sponsored project of FracturedAtlas.org.*

Films

Desire's Kiss

Flight Films | a candi dugas production; Atlanta, GA

Concept Trailers, launched August 2016 ([Watch](#) the latest trailer.)

Best Feature Screenplay - The Urban MediaMakers Film Festival 2013,

Atlanta, GA. *Logline:* A young Christian woman, sexy beyond her years, comes of age in the hands of an older lover, despite objections from her family, her faith - and her fears. Inspired by "Song of Songs," *Desire's Kiss* celebrates healthy **embodied**, feminine, cis-hetero sexuality, changing conversations around the integration of sexuality and spirituality. *Director:* Julie Skzypek. *Writer/Executive Producer:* candi dugas. *Music:* CC Sunchild.

"How to Get Away with Murder: He Lives!"

Impact DCD Short Films | Impact Church; East Point, GA

Easter Season, 2016 ([Watch](#) the film.)

Co-wrote a contemporized take on Jesus' resurrection, inspired by the hit TV show, "How to Get Away with Murder." *Director:* Robert John Connor. *Writers:* candi dugas, Candi Cylar, Raisa Hunter, Candice Wynn. *Producer:* Impact Church.

MANAGEMENT HISTORY

Lead Creative + President

candi dugas collective, Atlanta, GA | June 2007 - Present

Harness the unique + effective power of the arts (**movement/dance, theatre, music, visual**) to help heal, root in spirituality + build freedom (*equity + inclusion*) for social impact in community. Produce + market rich, socially relevant, curated content to change lives, and spark tangible + meaningful action while developing financial resources to help support community organizations, local artists, and producers/providers of food.

- 78 collaborations, 10 full-length scripts for stage + screen, 9 skits, 4 short plays, 4 books
- Ethel Woolson Lab Recipient and Bay Area Playwrights' Festival Semi-finalist for Wild & Free (2021).
- Achieved New York Times award-winning writer status with Out of Hand Theatre - Best Theatre of 2020.
- Increased overall engagement 83.4%, post link clicks 30.1%, and impressions 28.1% across 4 social media platforms for a national nonprofit marcom client (2020).
- Best Screenplay for *Desire's Kiss*, Urban Mediamakers Film Festival (2013).
- Secured \$42K State of Georgia grant for a Metro Atlanta after-school program (2013).

Nonprofit client highlighted achievements:

- Increased centering well-being of staff while repositioning their mission to the center of the work.
- Ambitious financial development to diversify funding, scale programming, and restructure operations to optimize all resources.
- Yielded 30% increase over planned funding from a major funder following the program officer's deep resonance with + appreciation of cdc insights.
- Retained \$20K in funding from a major funder after a necessary operational pivot, a pivot the funder named as possibly groundbreaking and a model for other organizations in the state.
- Unprecedented 59% survey completion rate from catalyzing immediate community engagement with a call to action (*moving from advocacy to action*), inviting responses for the community's number one concern to "fix tomorrow" - top 3 concerns: (*gun/teen*) violence, police brutality, quality of education (*pre-K - 12*).

Pastor of Worship & Arts

Grace United Methodist Church, Atlanta, GA | Sept 2018 – Nov 2019

Catalyze **healing, wellness** + social impact through curated arts - and community-based programming, revitalizing community at the intersection of faith and arts. Integrate meaningful + significant intersectional topics via theatre-based presentations to support inner growth while strategically growing attendance where those metrics were consistently declining. **Results Report.**

- 300 unique new attendees (some repeating) + 89 new community leaders, artists (*dancers, musicians, theatre makers, visual artists*) + guest speakers over just 9 months.
- Increased attendance consistently by 50+% with new programming I designed + curated in just 9 months.
- Secured a \$5K district grant to help support this immediately successful, innovative, new programming.
- Cultivated creative/design, talent, technical, and administrative teams to implement programming designs.
- Connected multiple sectors in the spirit of community with new programming: education, grassroots, business, etc. organizations/groups.

Founding Vice President-Operations

The Center for Working Families, Inc., Atlanta, GA | Mar 2005 – Sept 2008

(Re)Build a community resource for generational, financial sustainability in a community with a rich legacy of Black success thwarted by municipal progress and anti-Black/anti-poor policies. Strategically designed + implemented the full scope of operations, including management of the multi-million dollar budget, evaluation, and organizational sustainability.

- \$1.2M highly aesthetic office space renovation (10,000 sf) to boost human worth + transform social support environments.
- Facilitated 2 major operational shifts: accounting system migration + creation of marketing collaborative (pioneering in the years prior to the gig economy).
- Managed staff of up to 10 people, employees and contractors, deft handling of highly sensitive HR issues.

Administrative/Arts/Communications Director

Ben Hill United Methodist Church, Atlanta, GA | May 2000 – Mar 2005

Directed + supported several initiatives (communications, dance, drama, and overall department) for the community's (10,000+ membership) growth + development.

- Managed staff of up to 30 people, employees and volunteers.
- Trained and coordinated Worship & Arts Pastor's support team of 12 volunteers.
- Stewarded \$.5M budget.
- Led programming design/implementation, long-range planning, ministry visioning, and writing/publishing weekly/monthly bulletins, newsletters, and other publications.

ASSOCIATIONS

- American Dance Therapy Association
- Dramatists Guild
- Working Title Playwrights
- Birmingham Black Repertory Theatre Collective
- National Black Arts Festival
- Alternate ROOTS
- Out of Hand Theatre
- Push Push Theatre
- Morehouse School of Medicine Fatherhood Initiative
- Suzi Bass Awards
- Church Within a Church Movement
- United Way of Metro ATL VIP

Writing the Artist Statement from Within

Producing as a Virtual Class

[In development]

The artist's statement is not our resumes or CVs; its purpose is to convey the essence of the person behind the work. Therefore, it calls to the being within the frame, the intangible parts of ourselves that the world calls art. This multiple-weeklong class helps artists connect inwardly and then express what they discover in a tangible, exhaustive form from which they can draw to various submission requirements.

Self-producing for the Stage

Producing as a Virtual Class

[In development]

A beginner's class for theatre artists whose primary career is not producing and are looking for alternative/additional pathways for putting their work out in the world.

Parents/Youth Roundtable: Navigating Social Crises with Judge Penny Brown Reynolds

Virtual Event produced by Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential

June 2020

Panelist, contributing spiritual insight and guidance to young people and their parents to help them survive + thrive during challenging times, specifically COVID-19 and persisting racial injustice.

Edge-Leaders Conference

Centerform, Atlanta, GA

January 2020

Panelist for Texas clergy of the United Methodist Church who identify as pioneers, learning how to acquire/sustain confidence in their visions and how to shift with changing times.

Teen Love, Sex, & Dating Summit for Parents

Fellowship of Love Church, Fayetteville, GA

February 2018

"Journeying with Our Children" - Using personal experiences with my daughter as a backdrop, sharing with parents positive and practical approaches and strategies for navigating today's culture with their teens as they become all that G~d designed them to be.

RECENT CONFERENCES, CLASSES + WORKSHOPS HIGHLIGHTS

- SOCAP Global, focusing on systemic change, *October 2024*
- **Tap, African, Hip-Hop, Yoga, Ballet**; New Orleans Dance Collective + Dancing Grounds; *January-August 2023*
- Undoing Racism, People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, *March 2023*
- Institute for Equity Activism, *January - May 2022*
- Spiritual Writing for the Stage, Rebekah Suellau, *August-September 2021*
- How to Start a Podcast, Artist Relief Project, *May 2021*
- Blueprint for Ending White Supremacist Violence, Center for American Progress, *April 2021*
- Art as Activism Webinars, VolunteerMatch, *April 2021*
- **Other dance/movement classes/groups** (*prophetic, salsa, ballroom, yoga, pilates, tai chi, qi gong, aikido, liturgical*) over the years of 1998 - 2019.

LEARN MORE:

[Artist Statement](#) | [Artist Portfolio](#)