

# dr candi dugas



CREATING. HEALING. BUILDING.

## PRACTICE FOCUS + CONTACT

New York Times award-winning storyteller + innovative cultural architect/organizer building safer rooms for all people to heal, and for better futures. Engaging **storytelling as strategy + community connections as bridges** to interrupt systemic oppression, recalibrate ecosystems, and bring forth a just world for all – with outcomes delivered on time (or early), within budget (or below).

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## OVERVIEW

### PUBLICATIONS + PRESENTATIONS

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

### LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

#### Lead Creative + President

[candi dugas collective](#) | June 2007 – Present

Develop + scale programs thru collaborations: 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. (Seeded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation)

### ACADEMIC HISTORY

#### Columbia Theological Seminary

Doctor of Ministry, Christian Spirituality; with honors

#### Independent Scholarly Research

Embodied Pastoral Care via Therapeutic Theatrical Technologies w/ Dance/Movement; in progress, Completion: 2029

#### 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

### TESTIMONIALS

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

# MANAGEMENT / LEADERSHIP 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 Theater – 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.

## **Pastor of Worship & Arts, ctd.**

- 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*

*(Seeded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation)*

(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*

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

- Manage staff of up to 30 people, employees and volunteers.
- Train + coordinate Worship & Arts Pastor's support team of 12 volunteers.
- Steward \$.5M budget.
- Lead programming design/implementation, long-range planning, ministry visioning, and writing/publishing weekly/monthly bulletins, newsletters, and other publications.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Insight Timer

*On-demand spiritual/meditative facilitation/instruction*

2023 to Present

#### Top 3 Tracks (meditations + talks) + Testimonials

1. Melanated Meditation | Morning's Heartbeat (RT: 5:42 min)
2. Melanated Talk + Meditation | Clarity For Direction (RT: 38:29 min)
3. Relationship With Debt Series: Legacy Of Inequity (RT: 26:20 min)

“That was one of the most effective & powerful guided meditations around debt I have ever done. I cried. And I don't cry.

And instead of a cord I saw a black shackle from slavery times, y'all.

No joke -- do this if you hail from ANY ethnicity that was enslaved or disenfranchised -- black, indigenous -- your ancestor will explain why you're in debt.

Also key for me: ‘You're too afraid of the disappointment of telling [yourself] no, we can't afford that,’ and the disappointment connection.”

~Roxie R. re “*Relationship with Debt Series: Legacy of Inequity*”

### Embodying Liberation: History, Story, and Wellness in Motion

*Producing as an on-demand/online offering*

[In development]

In three modules of three recorded videos each (RT: ~15 min each), providing historical + foundational education to support liberatory transformation (*healing*) through embodied approaches + technologies that engage storytelling (*theatre/film/television*) and dance/movement.

### 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.

# ARTISTIC HISTORY

## 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, + cash prizes. *Exec. 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

Immersive theatrical production of *Cassie's Ballad* by Addae Moon, focusing 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: rev 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.)

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

Creole Shop Owner Sydney Augustine is slow to calculate the ancestral economics of being Black + successful in the tiny southwest GA town of Prairie Hills. Will she recall + reclaim her power before she loses more than her business? 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: Johnetta 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 ("[Can't Stop This](#)" also appearing on their LP, AIR).

### *"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.

## ASSOCIATIONS

- Dramatists Guild
- Association of Black Psychologists
- Birmingham Black Repertory Theatre Collective
- National Black Arts Festival
- Out of Hand Theater
- Push Push Theatre
- Suzi Bass Awards
- Morehouse School of Medicine Fatherhood Initiative
- Church Within a Church Movement
- United Way of Metro ATL VIP

# RECENT CONFERENCES, CLASSES + WORKSHOPS

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Certification in African/Black Psychology, Association of Black Psychologists, *Expected 2029*
- Dagara Mentoring with Dr. Velma Love, *June–October 2026*
- Mini Counseling as Social Justice Training, SPAN, *October 2025*
- Elevate Film Class with Nicki Micheaux, *January–September 2025*
- SOCAP Global, Focus: Systemic Change, *October 2024*
- Tap, African, Hip–Hop, Yoga, Ballet; NO Dance Collective + Dancing Grounds; *Jan–Aug 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*
- 7 Steps to Creating a Profitable Online Course, Teachable, *March 2021*
- The Franciscan Way, Center for Action and Contemplation, *February–April 2021*
- Digital Rights Webinar, Dramatists Guild, *February 2021*
- Art of Storytelling: Pitch to Page, Atlanta Film Society, *February 2021*
- Racism in the Black Church, Eddie Glaude, *January 2021*
- Dramaturgy Training Intensive, Working Title Playwrights, *2020–2022*
- Equitable Dinner Series, Out of Hand Theater, *September–November 2020*
- GirlTrek Black History Bootcamp, *2020 – 2022*
- BIPOC Racial Reckoning Town Hall, I.D.E.A./CREAT of Atlanta, *June–July 2020*
- Financial Future for Artists, C4 Atlanta, *June 2020*
- Equitable Dinners: Setting the Table for Racial Equity, Out of Hand Theater, *May–Nov 2020*
- Grown Woman Convo: Matters of Faith, Feminism, and Friendship; Women's Circle, *May 2020*
- How to Build a Global Community Online, Falcon Webinars, *May 2020*
- Global Interfaith Prayer for Healing, Satyana Institute, *May 2020*
- Future of Playwriting, HowlRound Theatre Commons, *May 2020*
- Public Benefits Webinar for Artists, C4 Atlanta, *May 2020*
- End of Life Doula Training – Level 1, Suzanne B. O'Brien RN, *April 2020*
- Artists Financial Webinar, Atlanta Artist Relief Fund, *April 2020*
- One G~d, Meaningful Conversations – Decatur, *April 2020*
- Journaling as Creative Writing, Decatur Healing Arts, *April 2020*
- Stage Management OJT w/ *Pipeline*, Marietta's New Theatre in the Square, *January–March 2019*
- Artists in Community Intensive Training, C4 Hatch, *August–December 2019*
- Ministry as BIPOC Clergy in Predominantly White Congregations, Black Clergywomen of the United Methodist Church, *August 2019*
- Form and Function: Structure, Angela Farr Schiller & Freddie Ashley, Working Title Playwrights, *April 2018*
- **Other dance/movement classes/groups** (*prophetic, salsa, ballroom, yoga, pilates, tai chi, qi gong, aikido, liturgical*) over the years of *1998 – 2019*.

## LEARN MORE :

Social Impact thru the Arts Case Study | Social Impact Statement | [Website](#)