



Hooking kids on fishing and fellowship

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Since August 2021, Ebony Anglers has been hosting Flagship Camp: Fishing Fundamentals, a free one-day camp for children ages 8 to 12. Photo by Whitsitt Photography



The Ebony Anglers team consists of Lesleigh Mausi, left, Glenda Turner, Gia Wilkerson Peebles and Tiana Ives Davis. Photo courtesy of Ebony Anglers

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In June 2020, while in Morehead City, North Carolina, Gia Wilkerson Peebles and her husband watched as women in boats returned to the docks from a day of competing in [The Big Rock Tournament](#). The first day of the annual event is the [Keli Wagner Lady Angler Tournament](#), where only women compete and money is raised for local charities.

Peebles' competitive spirit got the best of her: She quickly started thinking about how to get a boat and recruit anglers for the next Big Rock Tournament, one of the largest sport fishing events in the U.S. It didn't take long to convince Tiana Ives Davis, Lesleigh Mausi and Glenda Turner, all from North Carolina's Triangle region near Chapel Hill, Durham and Raleigh, to join [Ebony Anglers](#), a competitive fishing team consisting of Black women.

Of the four women, only Peebles fished on a regular basis. Ebony Anglers decided to practice by entering Morehead City's [Carteret Community College Spanish & King Mackerel Tournament](#) in July 2020, just weeks after forming the group. They won first prize in the species category for a 48-pound king mackerel.

"That was really our first time fishing together," Mausi says. "We made magic that day."

The win landed Ebony Anglers coverage in media outlets such as BBC Sports, The New York Times and the "Today" show. It gave the members a global platform to discuss how fishing can be used to spend time in nature, be calm and peaceful, and disconnect from technology. They launched a nonprofit, Ebony Anglers Foundation, to help share this message.

"At that moment, we knew we had something pretty special," Peebles says. "What do we do with this platform that is in front of women, children and men? We decided to put some programming together for young people."

Since August 2021, Ebony Anglers has been hosting [Flagship Camp: Fishing Fundamentals](#), a free one-day camp for children ages 8 to 12. At Falls Lake State Recreation Area in Durham, the students learn about the parts of a rod, how to bait and cast, and how to make certain knots. Then they fish for three hours and leave with a fishing rod.

"We've chosen to make this a priority, not only for ourselves but to give back to our community," Peebles says. "It's through fishing that we provide mentorship and shared experiences for the children. It's not only enriching and rewarding for them, it's also very beneficial for us because it's a form of self-care."

The National Park Foundation contacted Ebony Anglers about expanding the camp. Each October, a legacy camp, for graduates of the Fishing Fundamentals program, is offered at Cape Lookout National Seashore on Harker's Island, North Carolina. They've also partnered with the Boys & Girls Club in Florida and the National Park Foundation for one-day camps. In 2025, Ebony Anglers worked with the Barbados Fishery Division to coordinate a camp for 25 local children.

"It's been an honor to do it," Peebles says. "To be able to do this at the National Parks and grow the program has made the work we do even more important because we're able to reach more kids."

Ebony Anglers' members enter four to five tournaments each year. They fish together three to four times between tournaments and meet weekly over Zoom to discuss the camps, what they need for the next outing and which fish will be biting.

"I feel like it's been life changing," Peebles says. "We spend quite a bit of time together. Our families are intertwined. We support each other in all that we do."

Grit, determination and a Pulitzer



Edda Fields-Black, Pulitzer Prize winner and professor, has never lost her childhood fascination with history. Photo by J. Henry Fair

In 2025, Edda Fields-Black's "COMBEE: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid and Black Freedom During the Civil War" was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in History, Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize and the Tom Watson Book Award. The book delves into the history of the Civil War, specifically about Tubman's time in Beaufort, South Carolina, using documents such as the U.S. Civil War Pension File, bills of sale, wills, marriage settlements and estate papers from planters' families.

"No historian had ever used the pension files like this before," says Fields-Black, a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, resident, "to reconstruct one community and to tell the story of the enslaved people in bondage and in freedom."

Journey to award-winning author

Fields-Black was raised in Miami, Florida, by Dorothy Jenkins Fields, founder of the Black Archives History and Research Foundation of South Florida, and Eddie Fields, a retired attorney.

"I grew up thinking I was going to be a lawyer," Fields-Black says. "My sister and I were expected to take over Dad's law firm. Behind the scenes, I was developing a love of history."

At just 8 years old, Fields-Black and her older sister, hired by their mother, recorded the oral histories from aunts and uncles who lived on the same block in Miami's Brownsville neighborhood.

"We'd have a list of questions my mother wrote on a legal pad," Fields-Black says. "After a few times, I was fascinated and had a few of my own questions. I would veer from the legal pad and ask follow-up questions."

At Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, Fields-Black graduated in 1992, after studying English and history with the intent to attend law school. Along the way, she decided to write history textbooks. While in college, Fields-Black sought people who were experts in the field to ask for advice, share ideas and find out how best to reach her goals.

Daniel Thomas Williams, the former university archivist for Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama, made an impression on a young Fields-Black. When she'd see his car parked outside his sister's home, near Fields-Black's family home, she would knock at the door. Through discussions with Williams, who died in 2010, and other faculty, she learned that most people who wrote text books worked at a college or university. She'd need a doctoral degree.

Fields-Black earned her first master's degree in history from the University of Florida at Gainesville in 1995. By 2001, she'd completed a second master's degree and a doctoral degree in history from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

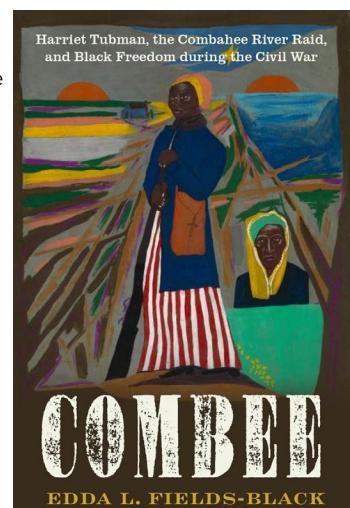
Grit, drive and determination

Since 2001, Fields-Black has been at Carnegie Mellon University. As professor of history and director of Dietrich College Humanities Center, she continues to struggle with people not taking her seriously and assuming she doesn't know what she's doing.

"For a long time, I combatted this by being an overachiever," she says. "I see it as a form of imposter syndrome, where I constantly felt like I had to prove myself. I would go to great lengths to become 'an expert' on something so that I could raise my hand in a meeting and say whatever and convince other people that I should be taken seriously, that I did have this body of knowledge, that I did have the grit, the drive, the determination to be taken seriously."

A stage 3 cancer diagnosis at age 44 changed Fields-Black's perspective on expending energy on how others view her.

"Do your work," she says, "and let your work speak for itself."



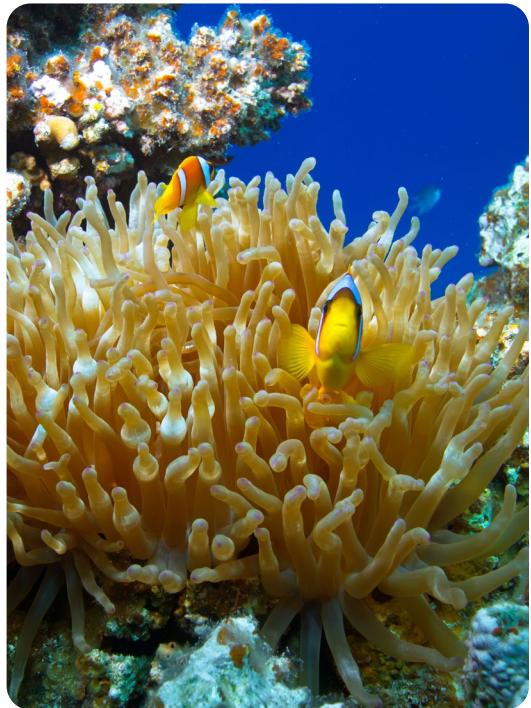
Courtesy of Oxford University Press

Immersed in restoration of coral reefs

Ken Nedimyer can trace the genesis of his work benefitting coral reefs to his daughter's 2001 4-H project.

"It initially involved setting up the coral nursery," says Nedimyer. "It then morphed into a service project that involved taking other 4-H students out to the nursery to help us."

Nedimyer remains immersed in efforts to conserve the Sunshine State's threatened reefs. He founded a nonprofit called [Coral Restoration Foundation](#), based in Key Largo, Florida. As a result of Coral Restoration's propagation techniques, thousands of corals have been grown and sheltered in offshore nurseries, and are then planted on reefs. A cadre of community groups, dive operators, public aquariums, scientists, students and volunteers have all played a role in the foundation's restoration efforts. The foundation's work also includes research projects, K-12 education initiatives and workshops.



Nedimyer earned the title of Sea Hero of the Year in 2014, an honor that came with a prize of \$5,000.

Nedimyer, named a CNN Hero in 2012 for his coral-restoration work, is encouraged by the progress made in protecting the world's coral reefs.

Mike Echevarria met Nedimyer in the early CRF days, joining the CRF Board of Directors as the chair for four years. Later, Nedimyer left CRF to form Nedimyer Consulting Services, continuing his passion for creating innovative solutions to restore coral reefs worldwide.

Along with Echevarria, Nedimyer co-founded [Reef Renewal USA](#), focusing on the Florida Keys reef tract, in 2019.

"There is hope for coral reefs, and there are many things we can do to help protect and restore them. Growing coral in nurseries and replanting the right corals on the right reefs is one strategy that can help, but there are many others that can also help. There are dozens of other groups, big and small, that are addressing other problems, and they all need to be supported and encouraged," says Nedimyer.

"Climate change isn't the only threat to coral reefs, and many of the threats are local and relatively easy to address. People use climate change as an excuse to do nothing about the problems, but doing nothing is going to ensure that reefs continue to decline. We don't have to settle for dead and dying reefs."



Fairs to remember

Linda Nez, "Carnival," 1992, commercial wool yarn, 43 x 57 1/2 in. (109.3 x 146.1 cm), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Chuck and Jan Rosenak and museum purchase made possible by Ralph Cross Johnson, 1997.124.188.



"State Fairs: Growing American Craft" highlights how artists, makers and communities across the U.S. have transformed the fairgrounds into spaces celebrating creativity, cultural exchange and handmade traditions.

At the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., through Sept. 7, "State Fairs: Growing American Craft" brings together more than 240 works spanning from the mid-1800s to today. Visitors can see everything from Choctaw basketry and hand-stitched quilts to elaborate butter sculptures, crop art portraits and monumental craft installations. Alongside the art objects, more than 100 photographs capture the artistry that flourishes in these public gatherings at an accompanying gallery.

The exhibition explores how the fairground has served as a dynamic cultural arena since the first state fair was organized in upstate New York in 1841. It reveals how fairs have long served as cultural crossroads where tradition, innovation and everyday life intersect while highlighting the fair as a stage for women's creativity, Indigenous artistry and the accomplishments of young makers in 4-H programs. These objects not only demonstrate technical mastery but also reveal how humor, pride and storytelling are woven into the fair experience.

Over five years, curators conducted research and fieldwork at fairs nationwide. The project includes collaborations with artists and craftspeople from 43 states and tribal nations, with all 50 states and Puerto Rico featured in a photographic companion gallery.

A highlight of the exhibition is Linda Nez's "Carnival." Made in 1992, the artist created a colorful scene filled with people wearing a mix of traditional Navajo and contemporary clothing at the oldest fair on the reservation, the Northern Navajo Nation Fair in Shiprock, New Mexico.

Influenced by her aunt and fellow weaver Susie Black, Nez defiantly uses wool and yard to portray figurative scenes rather than the traditional abstract designs most Navajo weavers create. Nez's refusal to conform to this expectation reveals her willingness to innovate in the face of financial pressures from collectors who prefer the long-established designs.

Additionally, Nez rejects the typical use of linear or atmospheric perspective in favor of a stacked one that renders all of the figures relatively equal in size. This stylistic choice reflects Nez's intention to create a scene of harmony and community devoid of hierarchy as children and parents ride rollercoasters and wait in line for treats like hamburgers and cotton candy.

This work, among many in the exhibit, reveals how state fairs continue to shape the story of American craft and culture with skill and community spirit.

"State Fairs: Growing American Craft" came into fruition through the curatorial guidance of Mary Savig and the Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator-in-Charge for the Renwick Gallery, contributing curators Amber-Dawn Bear Robe, Elana Hain and Jon Kay and Sara Morris, with support from Elizabeth Routhier.

Global roots, Southern soul, great food



"My culinary training really started with learning and emulating my grandmothers, my mom, all my aunts," says Chef Leonardo Maurelli III. Photo courtesy of Ithaka Hospitality Partners

As the senior vice president of culinary operations for Ithaka Hospitality Partners, Chef Leonardo Maurelli III recognizes how much the culinary landscape has changed. Influenced by social media, his guests expect dishes from all over the globe to be available and approachable, he says.

"People want things highly customizable," says Maurelli, an Auburn, Alabama, resident. They're adventurous. As a chef, that's super freeing. It allows me to dig into ingredients and techniques."

Maurelli was born in Panama and immigrated in 1991 to the U.S. when he was 11 years old to Daphne, Alabama. He was raised in a large Italian and Latin family. When he was 14, Maurelli's father helped him get a job washing dishes at a local Italian restaurant. Later, Maurelli earned a Bachelor of Science from Auburn University in hotel and restaurant management.

"My culinary training really started with learning and emulating my grandmothers, my mom, all my aunts," he explains. With time and maturity, his three cultures - Italian, Panamanian and Southern American - have become the foundation of his style.

"Cooking for me is deeply personal," Maurelli explains. "Latin cultures, Italian cultures and Southern American cultures, while we use different ingredients, the style in which we eat is very similar - that family style, breaking bread and large platters of food at the table."

Ceviche de Palmito with Elderflower and Catalina Avocado

Servings: 6

Ingredients

- 3 cups heart of palm, thinly sliced into rounds or delicate ribbons
- 1 medium red bell pepper, brunoise
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper, brunoise
- 1 small Scotch bonnet pepper, very fine brunoise and adjust for spice tolerance
- 1 medium red onion, brunoise, lightly salted and rested 10 minutes before adding
- 6 tablespoons lime juice, fresh, split into 4 tablespoons for marination, 2 tablespoons for final toss
- 3 tablespoons calamansi juice, fresh
- 3 tablespoons yuzu juice, fresh, split into 2

Directions

In a bowl, whisk together the lime juice, calamansi juice, yuzu juice, elderflower cordial, olive oil and salt to make the citrus-elderflower marinade.

Toss the heart of palm, peppers and onion with this marinade and let it sit in the refrigerator for at least 8 hours, up to 24 hours.

After marination, strain the excess liquid if needed and add the remaining lime juice, yuzu juice and elderflower cordial for brightness. Add the fresh minced chives and cilantro.

Serve in chilled bowls or plates, evenly portioning 4 ounces per serving. Arrange the Catalina avocado slices alongside the ceviche or place a quenelle of lightly smashed avocado with lime juice and salt for creaminess. Garnish with micro cilantro, edible flowers and a drizzle of yuzu oil.

tablespoons for marination, 1 tablespoon for final toss

- 1 1/2 tablespoons elderflower cordial, split into 1 tablespoon for marination, 1/2 tablespoon for final toss
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Fleur de sel or Maldon salt, to taste
- 2 tablespoons chives, minced
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, finely minced
- 2 Catalina avocado, sliced into thin wedges or lightly smashed with lime juice and salt, prepared fresh before serving
- Micro cilantro and edible flowers for garnish
- Yuzu oil, a few drops for finishing

A recipe for opportunity



As regional vice president, Olivia Dorsey works with her assigned Joint Ventures accounts and suppliers on the West Coast.
Photo courtesy of Olivia Dorsey

In 2006, Olivia Dorsey, Thompson Hospitality's regional vice president of Joint Ventures, changed careers; she moved from private consulting to the foodservice business. She hasn't looked back.

"I took the job," Dorsey says. "And to my surprise, I really started enjoying what I was doing. I was able to make some great accomplishments working for Thompson. Thompson Hospitality treats their employees like family. They show the employees that they care about them. They're committed to their employees."

Dorsey grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and moved to Chicago in 1967 to attend DePaul University, majoring in business administration. After college, she worked for 28 years in companies that manufactured trucks and engines, and in distribution.

When Dorsey joined Thompson Hospitality as a director, the skills she acquired working in supplier diversity transferred to her position on the Joint Ventures team, a partnership with the foodservice company, Compass Group. In 1997, Thompson Hospitality launched Joint Ventures with Compass Group to connect "clients to diverse suppliers and give diverse suppliers access to a larger network."

The relationship allows Thompson to go to market within all Compass business sectors.

"We drive diversity and impact communities economically through food, celebrations of different ethnicities and recruiting local suppliers," Dorsey explains. "We mentor them. We develop them and act as the liaison to bring them on board. We try to meet our clients' expectations around supplier diversity and local community participation."

Supporting local communities

Since 2016, Dorsey has lived in Gilbert, Arizona, 25 minutes outside of Phoenix. She works with her assigned Joint Ventures accounts and suppliers on the West Coast. Her assigned Thompson Hospitality executive chef conducts chef's tables, culinary events and teaching kitchens - regular activities offered to Joint Ventures' clients.

"We have contracts with business and industry, and higher education schools," she says. "Our chef will go in and actually teach students and employees how to cook and how to make summer meals and healthy meals."

A typical week for Dorsey includes participating in business reviews, giving presentations, meeting suppliers, participating in regional councils and learning about her clients' needs. She searches for women-owned, minority-owned and local businesses providing food products and services within her Joint Ventures accounts.

"A lot of businesses that we contract with (through Joint Ventures) are interested in bringing in local suppliers because they are part of the community," Dorsey says.

If the local supplier is the right fit, Dorsey refers the businesses to an accelerated program through Foodbuy, the purchasing arm of Compass, to get them ready to be paired with Joint Ventures' accounts. Dorsey mentors the local suppliers, helping them to identify strengths and weaknesses, and understand client expectations.

Dorsey coordinates Supplier Showcases, opportunities for eight to 10 local suppliers to set up booths and highlight products at her clients' locations.

"They are able to sell their product," she says, "and our culinary team will assess their product. Some of the suppliers will have the opportunity to bring their products into the account."

"Giving back to our communities is a huge part of our core values. I sleep well at night when I play a part in making someone else's life better."

Don't water the plants. Drink them.

Are you still cuckoo for coconut water? Well, here's a tip: This much-lauded liquid is no longer the sole darling of those in search of healthier hydration. Other so-called "plant waters" are filling glasses and water bottles as well as diluting (a little or a lot, depending on which report you read) coconut water's dominance in this category.

Long praised for its high electrolyte and potassium content, coconut water is considered by many to be the ideal post-workout, recovery drink. It's also a good source of amino acids, B vitamins, electrolytes and enzymes. A large glass contains about three teaspoons of sugar. Compared with an average-size can of soda containing about 10 teaspoons of sugar, coconut water is the better option. Still, it can't beat plain water – which, after all, has zero calories.

Here's a look at three newer entries in the plant-based waters category reported to have the highest nutritional content. And remember: It's always good to check with your health care professional when introducing something new to your diet.

Cactus water. Packed with a bevy of nutritional bonuses – betalains (anti-inflammatories), electrolytes, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals – cactus water is also a detoxifier. Proponents have deemed it a hangover aid, or as one nutritionist put it: "great to sip after a night out."

Chia water. Calcium, fiber, omega-3s and vitamin A are among the nutritional building blocks of chia seeds. All are present in chia water, too. Be mindful, though, of the sugar that manufacturers might add to make the drink palatable.

Watermelon water. An ultra-hydrator, watermelon water possesses an abundance of lycopene, potassium and vitamin C. If that's not enough, the drink is just plain delicious. That's especially appealing for those who don't favor coconut or chia water. As with coconut water, you'll get about three teaspoons of sugar in a 12-ounce serving.



Watermelon Sports Drink

Created by Chrissy Carroll, dietitian and coach

- 3 cups watermelon, chopped
- 1 cup water
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 tablespoon brown rice syrup or honey, maple syrup, optional

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until well combined.

Chia Fresca

Source: ohsheglows.com

- 2 cups water or coconut water
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 1/2 tablespoon fresh lemon or lime juice, or to taste
- Sweetener, to taste

Add the chia and water to a jar or glass and stir well to combine. Let sit for 10 minutes to allow the chia seeds to swell up. Use a jar with a lid to shake well and break up the clumps of chia.

Add lime or lemon juice and sweetener to taste. Stir or shake well to combine, and enjoy.

Tip: Chia seeds will sink and collect at the bottom of the glass quickly. Give it a good stir as needed.

On the cover: Ebony Anglers hosts Flagship Camp: Fishing Fundamentals, a free one-day camp in North Carolina for children ages 8 to 12. Photo by Whitsitt Photography. Articles on pages 2, 3, 6 and 7 by Vanessa Infanzon. Article on page 5 by Picture That Editorial Team. Published nine times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an email to marketing@thompsonhospitality.com. ©2026 Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group. Produced by Content Spectrum.