

KEYNOTE SPEAKER MR. KEVIN POWELL



Kevin Powell is one of the most acclaimed political, cultural, literary and hip-hop voices in America today. Kevin is a native of Jersey City, raised by a single mother in extreme poverty, but managed to study at Rutgers University in New Brunswick thanks to New Jersey's Educational Opportunity Fund. Kevin has gone on to be the author of 12 books, including his newest title, *The Education of Kevin Powell: A Boy's Journey into Manhood*. It is a critically acclaimed and brutally honest memoir about his life, including his youth. In 2018, he will publish a biography of Tupac Shakur, the late rapper and controversial American icon. Kevin's writings have also appeared in CNN.com, Esquire, Ebony, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, Rolling Stone, The Guardian, ESPN.com and Vibe Magazine, where he worked for many years as a senior writer, interviewing such diverse public figures as Tupac Shakur and General Colin Powell.

Kevin routinely appears in interviews on television, radio, and in print and on the Internet discussing major issues of our time. As an activist, he is the president and co-founder of BK Nation, a new national, progressive, multicultural organization focused on such issues as education, civic engagement, leadership training, health and wellness, social media, arts and culture, and job and small business creation. Kevin was also a Democratic candidate for Congress in Brooklyn, New York, his adopted hometown, in 2008 and 2010.

As a pop culture curator, Kevin produced the first exhibit on the history of hip-hop in America at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, which toured America and overseas. As a humanitarian, Kevin's work includes local, national and international initiatives to end violence against women and girls (including a very well-regarded appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Show highlighting domestic violence); and he has done extensive philanthropic and relief work, ranging from Hurricane Katrina to earthquakes in Haiti and Japan, to Superstorm Sandy in New York, to his annual holiday party and clothing drive for the homeless every December since 9/11. As an acknowledgement of Kevin's life of public service and his dedication to literature and the arts, Cornell University recently became the owner of The Kevin Powell

Collection, documenting nearly 30 years of his work to date in print, photos, videos, books, handwritten notes, speeches, and select memorabilia