

W. Imara Canady

Recently chosen as one of Georgia's Best and Brightest **"40 Under 40"**, by GA Trend Magazine and a 'Person to Know' by Atlanta Magazine, W. Imara Canady joined the executive leadership team for the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, serving as Vice-President of Programming and Strategic Partnerships in 2009. Working directly with the CEO and Executive Vice-President, he is leading the charge of cultivating relationships and building collaborations that connect the center's vision and mission with a broad array of local, national and international cultural, academic and community organizations and institutions.

Imara returns to Atlanta, joining the staff of NCCHR, having spent 2 years working with the Chicago Community Trust, the nation's second oldest community philanthropic organization. Joining The Trust in 2007, he was 1 of 6 fellows, from a national candidate pool of 300 candidates, in a newly launched arts and culture management fellowship program. As a part of this nationally acclaimed program, Imara worked with the Presidents and executive staff of 6 of Chicago's leading cultural institutions developing individualized community and government relations strategies. Prior to moving to Chicago, Imara was a key aide to Atlanta Mayor, Shirley Franklin serving as Special Assistant to the Mayor/Special Events Manager, after having served as Communications Director/Press Secretary for her successful historical election in 2001. During his 7 year tenure in city government, Imara led a team that revamped the City's special event permitting process, which resulted in a yearly increase in revenue generation of over a quarter of a million dollars, as well as represented the Mayor on various special initiatives, including the Brand Atlanta marketing campaign and the initial conceptualization team for CCHR. He worked with the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau to assist in marketing the City of Atlanta to attract major entertainment related events such as the VIBE Music Festival, the BET Hip-Hop Awards and many others. As well, he worked with the State of Georgia and numerous high profile artists and entertainment industry executives to secure the filming of major motion pictures, video shoots and commercials in Atlanta. Imara's career as a public servant started in 1997 as Special Projects Coordinator for the previous Mayor of Atlanta and subsequently he worked for the White House, for the Office of Vice-President Al Gore and then as Budget Manager for Gore's 2000 Presidential campaign, managing a multi-million dollar budget.

Imara has a strong passion for arts and culture, having worked as a consultant for the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs, as a staff member with the Theatre and Dance Programs for the 1996 Cultural Olympiad of the Centennial Olympic Games and as a recent appointee by Fulton County Commission Chairman John Eaves to the board for the Fulton County Arts Council. His service to his community is personified by his membership on many boards including the American Red Cross Minority Recruitment Board, the Chicago 2016 Olympic Bid Committee's Next Generation Leadership Advisory Council, Horizon Theatre Company Board, the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame Advisory Committee, the Fund for Southern Communities, the Future Foundation and the Don't Stop the Music Foundation. He is a member of Leadership Atlanta, Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society and has received numerous awards and honors including being chosen as an Outstanding Atlantan in 2002 and an Emmy award winner in 2003.

Raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Imara graduated from Northside School of the Arts, though spent most of his early academic years at Woodward Academy. He received an Associates Degree in Journalism from Atlanta Metropolitan College, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mass Communications with an emphasis on Public Relations and Broadcast Journalism from Georgia State University and is in the final stages of completing graduate work at Loyola University - Chicago in Philanthropy and Non-Profit Management.