

# Carmita Vaughan

## Founder and President, Surge Institute

It has been said that “High-Impact entrepreneurs disrupt the status quo and drive enhanced societal benefits.” These trailblazers create immeasurable positive change for generations to come. And so it is with Carmita Vaughan.

**Carmita Patrice Vaughan** is the Founder and President of Surge Institute, a novel leadership program for emerging leaders in the field of education. Surge strengthens the pipeline of diverse talent and ensures a next wave of leaders that represent the populations that education reform and equity efforts seek to serve. Carmita is a proud product of Birmingham, Alabama — a city that has significantly shaped who she is, what she values, and how she defines her life’s work.



Carmita’s career started in Corporate America. Her technical savvy, business acumen, faith and commitment to developing others quickly advanced her through assignments in global marketing, strategic planning, and engineering/operations management for Fortune 500 companies including Procter and Gamble and Danaher Corporation. In spite of her corporate success, Carmita yearned to lead high impact initiatives that benefit urban youth and transform urban communities; and so began her journey into the non-profit sector.

This passion for empowering our Country’s most under-served young people by providing them with pathways to excellence through education and holistic supports, led Carmita to the Chicago Public Schools Office of High Schools. There she served as Chief of Staff under the leadership of Arne Duncan, the current US Secretary of Education. She spearheaded change initiatives as Chief Strategy Officer for America’s Promise Alliance, a youth development organization founded by Gen. Colin Powell. Carmita is also the former CEO of CURE: Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy, a medical research foundation that funds global breakthrough research to find a cure for epilepsy — the disease to which her mother succumbed.

Carmita holds an MBA from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management, and a BS in Chemical Engineering from the University of Michigan. She was selected as a 2013 Marshall Memorial Fellow by the German Marshall Fund. She was a 2010 Aspen/NewSchools Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Fellow, a 2009 Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow and is a graduate of the Broad Residency of Urban Education.

Carmita has unbridled passion for urban education and the arts. She is a member of the Kellogg Alumni Council and serves on the Board of Directors for the Academy for Urban School Leadership, Marwen, and America’s Promise Alliance. Carmita currently resides in Chicago.