



LeadAR

Member **SPOTLIGHT**
Class 19

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System



Karyn Bradford Coleman

Chief of Staff

Democratic Party of Arkansas

Karyn Bradford Coleman is a native of Des Arc, Arkansas, nestled in the Arkansas Delta. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Organization Management from the PSMI Program at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas and is the Chief of Staff for the Democratic Party of Arkansas.

Community service is a cornerstone of Karyn's life's work as evidenced by her community involvement. Karyn is a member of the Little Rock Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, where she has served in several leadership roles including Assistant Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and Collegiate Advisor. She is a member of the Junior League of Little Rock, a graduate of Leadership Greater Little Rock Class XXXIII, a current member of the University of Arkansas LeadAR Class 19 cohort, and a graduate of the 2020-2021 Higher Heights Inaugural Senior Civic Leadership Cohort. Further, Karyn serves as a City of Little Rock Land Bank Commissioner, a member of the Little Rock Community Housing Advisory Board, and a Board Member at Better Community Developers, Incorporated. Karyn and her husband, Kenyen, are small business owners in Little Rock, and have one son, Kendill.

Why did you apply to the LeadAR program? What motivated you?

The opportunity to glean from other rising leaders from across all areas of the state, was the initial draw for me. I wanted to have an opportunity to come back to my neighborhood and broader community with real working solutions for growth and to create a roadmap of legacy for our future generations.

What leadership quality do you admire most in others? Why?

Fearless is the leadership quality I most admire in others. When leaders can tackle tough issues with confidence and a strong belief in themselves and their team, a fearlessness is produced that is impenetrable.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you? Why is this surprising?

When I was a 6th grader, I taught tap, jazz and ballet to 5 through 8-year olds.

What are your top three ingredients necessary for success?

Tenacity, confidence, and an openness to listen and learn.

What are your top three ingredients necessary for happiness?

Faith, hope, peace.

Describe your personal leadership style.

I believe in the personal and professional development on a continuous loop. A leader who is constantly learning is better able to empower those around her to lead with confidence and build their own capacity. I'm tenacious, introspective, and assertive when necessary. However, I never forget the golden rule I was taught by a former leader I worked for: "People first."

What is something you hope to gain from your LeadAR experience?

My goal is to continue to learn to work with diverse viewpoints and find common ground and solution-based answers to the questions facing Arkansans and society at large.

How can effective leadership help move the state of Arkansas forward?

Without progressive and forward-thinking leaders, Arkansas faces the possibility of irrelevance. Effective leaders will continue to learn, expand, and improve the infrastructure of elements most critical to Arkansas' success. Those elements include our educational systems, economic development, science and research, and the continued pursuit of social and racial equity in all areas of our state. Effective leaders always seek to lead using a lens that includes all these elements.

You are stranded on a desert island. What are your three MUST HAVE items?

My husband, socks, and matches.

What is something that was difficult for you six months ago but easy for you now?

Approaching subjects proposed by people who I don't know and don't agree with. Now, constructively addressing these situations is a breeze for me.

What else do you want others to know about you?

The Arkansas Delta in Prairie County is my home even though I no longer live there. Creating a more equitable and viable state for rural Arkansans is just as important to me as helping our larger areas attract commerce and continue to thrive. Family, faith, and community service are the cornerstone of my life's work. The opportunity to dismantle challenges and improve the lives of the neighbors I live, work and worship with is my constant North Star and I thank my parents for loving me enough to instill that in me.