In November 2013, Dr. Vivian was honored for his vision and leadership in the fight for justice when he was awarded this Nation’s highest civilian honor—The Presidential Medal of Freedom. Among his many leadership roles, he has served on the board of the Center for Democratic Renewal and the National Voting Rights Museum. He currently serves as a and founding Board Member of Capital City Bank, a Black-owned bank in Atlanta, and is also Board Chair of BASIC Diversity, Inc., the Nation’s oldest diversity consulting firm. He has provided civil rights counsel to Presidents Johnson, Carter, Reagan, Clinton, and Obama, and he continues to lecture on racial justice and democracy throughout the world.

The New School for Social Research named Dr. C.T. Vivian “... spiritual leader, apostle of social justice, strategist of the civil rights movement ... For decades he has been in the vanguard of the struggle for racial equality in America”, as they presented him with one of his many honorary doctorates.

Dr. Vivian, once known as a Christian journalist, is best known for his work with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As National Director of Affiliates, and strategist for every Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.) organization, he truly helped change the nation. In Birmingham, his work helped to enact the Civil Rights Bill and in Selma, the Voting Rights Bill. Vivian was deeply involved in other movements such as Nashville, TN; Danville, VA; St. Augustine, FL; and Chicago, IL. Dr. Vivian had won his first non-violent direct action movement in 1947 by integrating restaurants in Peoria, IL. The summer following the Selma Movement, Dr. Vivian developed, organized and launched Vision, an educational program that assisted over 700 Alabama students to attend college on scholarship. Vision would later be known as Upward Bound. In 1970 Vivian authored the first book written by a member of King’s staff entitled Black Power and the American Myth.

He is featured throughout PBS's acclaimed documentary “Eyes On The Prize” (1987 & 2006). PBS later produced a full-length presentation, “The Healing Ministry of the Rev. Dr. C.T. Vivian”. He is also featured as both an activist and analyst in the series, The People’s Century (PBS/WGBH, 1998), and in the Tom Brokaw documentary “King” (History Channel, 2008).

After leaving Dr. King’s Executive Staff, Dr. Vivian trained ministers and developed the urban curriculum for seminaries throughout the nation at the Urban Training Center in Chicago. He returned to the realm of seminary education as the Dean of Divinity at Shaw University Seminary. There he originated and acquired funding for an unprecedented national level program, the basis of his doctoral work, Seminary Without Walls.

In 2008, Vivian founded the C.T. Vivian Leadership Institute, Inc. to create a model leadership culture for the purpose of training and educating the new generation of grass-roots leaders inspired to mobilize a constituency. The Institute is based out of Atlanta, Georgia. More recently, Dr. Vivian received an Honorary Doctorate from Morehouse College (2010), served as National President of S.C.L.C. (2012), and currently serves as Dean of The Urban Institute at The Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, GA.

Notable accomplishments:

- Served as part of a team of religious advisors to President Barack Obama during his successful 2008 campaign.
- He has advised foreign Heads of State.
- He has addressed the United Nations.
- He has addressed the World Baptist Alliance as a keynote speaker during their conference on racism in the world community. Shared the platform with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.
- Was Director of what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called “The best non-violent movement in the nation”.
- Served on an independent UN Committee on Human Rights Education.
- In one year alone he was highlighted in three books, two of which were authored by Pulitzer Prize winners and the other by a U.S. Congressman: The Children, David Habersham; Pillars of Fire, Taylor Branch; and Walking With The Wind, Congressman John Lewis.
- Highly respected across the racial spectrum. His awards include: The Trumpet Award (2006), The National Jewish Labor Award, and The Martin L. King, Jr. Humanitarian Award
- He organized street gangs in Chicago, turning gang members away from violence, and developed a program that earned them jobs.
- He was National Deputy Director of Clergy for Jesse Jackson’s 1984 Presidential bid.
- Has made several human rights assistance visits to Cuba and has personally met with President Fidel Castro.
The C.T. Vivian Leadership Institute, Inc.  
Passing the Torch to Create a Leadership Culture in Atlanta as a Model for Every City.

About Us

The C.T. Vivian Leadership Institute [CTVLI] is an Atlanta-based non-profit organization dedicated to the development and sustainability of communities. The organization was founded in 2008 by Dr. C. T. Vivian to “create a model of leadership culture in Atlanta”. CTVLI serves as a hub designed to centralize existing programs and services to work in coordination with local organizations to serve the needs of the community.

The Institute is designed to create an atmosphere where lifelong learning can take place in all stages of life. The CTVLI focuses on four areas that are critical to the success of individuals and communities: Faith, Personal, Education, and Economic Development. CTVLI programs are designed to reach each participant wherever they are, with the goal of taking them where they want to be. By offering classes to the individual and services to the community as a whole, the specific needs of both will be met.

The Mission

The C.T. Vivian Leadership Institute is dedicated to developing sustainable programs to revitalize underserved communities.

The Vision

A community where All people can thrive.

The Initiatives

The CTVLI offers a range of programs and classes to support life long training, in every stage of life. Our Program services the needs in the following areas:

- Faith Based Development
- Educational Development
- Personal Development
- Economic Development
C.T.V.L.I.’s model for redevelopment and revitalization is designed to strategically impact community infrastructure by encouraging faith-based organizations to expand their service offerings and provide much needed programs and for their economic development and growth.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Businesses provide jobs, products and services that are vital to the community’s economic development. C.T.V.L.I.’s model of incorporating its business development services promotes sustainability and increases businesses’ capacity to generate employment opportunities and profit.

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Being informed and empowered citizens are key to a community’s growth and development. C.T.V.L.I.’s model of personal development systems, resources, tools and curriculums provides mentoring, job training and life skills that enhance person capacities.

**EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Our programs adds to the foundation that schools lay for continuing education by preparing youth for the global market. C.T.V.L.I.’s model for education addresses the needs and trains the students while the schools educate so that they are equipped to engage in the global marketplace.
A System Out of Balance

The CTVLI believes that all 4 areas are important elements needed for the success of an individual or a community. It is important to evaluate the needs in order to address the needs for the situation.
Civil Rights activists called Freedom Riders rode in interstate buses into the segregated southern United States to test the United States Supreme Court decision Boynton v. Virginia, (1960) 364 U.S. The first Freedom Ride left Washington D.C. on May 4, 1961, and was scheduled to arrive in New Orleans on May 17. Riders were arrested for trespassing, unlawful assembly, violating state and local Jim Crow laws, etc. Most of the subsequent rides were sponsored by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) while others belonged to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced Snick). The Freedom Riders followed on the heels of dramatic "sit-ins" against segregated lunch counters conducted by students and youth throughout the South, and boycotts beginning in 1960.

Arguably, the Riders did not engage in civil disobedience because the Supreme Court’s decision in Boynton v. Virginia granted them a legal right to disregard local segregation ordinances regarding interstate transportation facilities. But their rights were not enforced, and were considered criminal acts throughout most of the South. For example, upon the Riders' arrival in Mississippi, their journey ended with imprisonment for exercising their legal rights in interstate travel, and similar arrests took place in other southern cities. Freedom Riders knew that they faced arrest by authorities determined to stop their protests and possible mob violence and before starting they committed themselves to a strategy of non-violent resistance. The Freedom Riders faced much resistance against their cause, but ultimately received strong support from people both inside and outside the South for their efforts.
The Goal of The Male Scholar’s Program

The goal of the C.T. Vivian Leadership Institute Male Scholars Program (“Male Scholars”) is to match male student intellect with specific learning methods intended to stimulate high-level thought, to condition their bodies to develop the strength and energy necessary for what will be their contribution to the world and to help them to engender a sense of the themselves in the universe at a critical stage of their development.

By fully accessing their identities, students shall chase their purpose and work towards a direction for their lives. By their example, the students will be family, class, community and world leaders.

How Our Program Differs

In particular, we in the Male Scholars' Program have been very careful not to refer to our program as a traditional "mentoring" program. On the contrary, our program has been developed in a more traditional African format, where our men (or "Elders" as we refer to them), participate alongside our boys as they move through adolescence towards adulthood or manhood. In this type of "rite of passage" journey, we actively LEAD our boys towards manhood, taking ownership in not only every boy's successful journey, but also in creating a village around our boys to support them, and we work to make everyone in our village accountable for the success of our boys. So, the use of the term Leader vs. Mentor, and Male Scholar vs. boys, are a deliberate effort to distinguish ourselves from the traditional mentor/mentee relationship. We do not want our boys to ultimately be LEAD by the Elder men in our community to (1) see the village (2) see the benefit of the village (3) to learn and understand how to nurture the village that supports them and (4) to become a leader themselves in the village.
Our Nationwide partnership and movement works to narrow and eliminate the achievement gap among participants of minorities and low income families. Each participant is assessed on readiness, knowledge, skills, and life experiences to aligned a continuum of educational interventions for school success.

Under the leadership of Dr. Vivian and the support of highly expert team of dedicated individuals, a research model is utilized to re-engage young people into educational placement until successful completion of higher education and entrance into the work place.

Our ACT College Entrance Exam Program has a long standing, proven track record for increasing participants scores by 5-8 points overall. This improvement is literally the difference between funding school partially with loans or even possibly receiving a full scholarship. With our Mentor to Mentee to Mentor approach, participate receive additional support by exercising the techniques acquired in the program by mentoring/tutoring new participants.

For our adult learners and at risk youth, our GED programs goes beyond just teaching to pass the test. Our focus is on the participants life skill set and goals after GED. This program is designed to re-engage students who may have otherwise been overlook.

TLABS - Technology Laboratory

We believe that a self-directed learner is “the best learner.” Therefore our model of learning and teaching is predicated on each individual student “learning how to learn” and subsequently teaching themselves. This model will be sustained through the use of computers and interactive learning application systems.
Sample Signature Classes

- Seminary Without Walls
- Leadership Now
- Financial Literacy
- Networking and Social Media 101
- Youth Entrepreneur Courses
- Youth Diversion Programs
- Male Scholar’s Programs
- Grace Girls
- Public Speaking
- Critical Thinking
- ACT / College Readiness
- Vocational Training
- GED
- Microsoft Office Basics
Our Methods

At the CTVLI, we employ a diverse array of teaching and coaching methods. Depending on the course subject and the facilitator’s discretion the Institute may utilize traditional forms of teaching, in classrooms with handout and textbooks as reference material, or technology based learning, distance learning and as a cost saving method.

Technology has also been proven to close the learning divide and allow the Institute to reach a greater market. In other cases, such as our Male Scholar’s Program, we use, good old face to face 2:1 interaction. This allows for the forming and bonding between the young scholar and elder. However, digital communication maybe established as the scholars enter into high school. For some of our older participants and even due to class structure old fashion pen to paper. Regardless of the program, the CTVLI strives to meet each participants’ on their current level, ultimately taking their next goal!
Diversion and Re-Entry Program

Our Diversion and Re-Entry Programs, targets at risk youths, first time and non-violent offenders to assist with rehabilitation through academic and vocational training. In addition to personal development training that will make re-integration into society seamless. Sample offenses can include but not limited to: trespassing, alcohol violation, and shoplifting, curfew violation, running away from home, truancy, graffiti, petty theft and destruction of property. Mechanisms use to reach our participants are: workshops, training classes, community services, employment referrals for restitutions, counseling,

The CTVLI Youth Diversion Program

By partnering with the local juvenile justice and school systems, at-risk youths are exposed to healthy coping habits and positive behaviors at an early stage. Each youth will be provide personalized tools needed to cope with their specific needs along with access to resources from our Family and Community Resource center to assist the “whole” need of the youth. We encourage our youth’s parents and extended family to play an active role in the “re-direction” of their youth and tracking their progress.

The CTVLI Inmate Re-Entry Program

Returning to the community from jail or prison is a complex transition for most offenders, as well as for their families and communities. Upon reentering society, former offenders are likely to struggle with substance abuse, lack of adequate education and job skills, limited housing options, and mental health issues. Similar to the Youth Diversion Program, the CTVLI will encourage positive and healthy behaviors along with training to assist with this transition back into society.

“We know one thing for certain: Spending $91,000 a year to lock up a juvenile and getting 65 percent recidivism in return is not working. We can be smarter with taxpayer dollars. More importantly, we can produce a safer Georgia.”

— Chief Justice Carol Hunstein,
State of the Judiciary address, Feb. 7, 2013
Octavia Geans Vivian

Biography

She was born on February 23, 1928 in Pontiac, Michigan. She was the wife of Dr. C. T. Vivian, and the author of Coretta, the first biography of Mrs. Coretta Scott King. Octavia earned a degree in Social Work from Eastern Michigan University and was active in church and civic work throughout her life. She married C. T. Vivian in 1952 and their union flourished for 58 years and produced six children: Denise Vivian Morse (Carlton), Cordy, Jr. (deceased January, 2010), Kira E. Vivian, Mark Evans Vivian (Utrophia), Anita Charisse Thornton (Andre), and Albert Louis Vivian (DeAna Jo Swann) and fourteen grandchildren. The Vivians moved to Atlanta, Georgia when Rev. Vivian joined the Executive Staff of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Octavia worked tirelessly to end racial segregation in the Georgia's DeKalb County Public Schools. She also became one of the first African-American Deputy Voter Registrars in DeKalb County Georgia. Octavia organized women and mothers of the greater neighborhood to end one principal's efforts to segregate the elementary school from within. Octavia took the lead in collecting and organizing documents that detailed the history of S.C.L.C. and the American Civil Rights Movement. In 1970, Octavia authored and published Coretta, the first biography of Coretta Scott King. She revised and re-published a memorial edition of Coretta upon Mrs. King's death in 2006. Octavia also assisted Coretta King in the early months of establishing the Martin Luther King Jr. Center. She also spent several years working as a secretary for the Cascade United Methodist Church and in Public Relations at Morris Brown College. Octavia was a loving, strong and spiritual woman who assisted and supported C.T. on his journey to gain freedom for African-Americans across this country. She trusted and loved God, and she believed her mission in life was forged by His design.

Mrs. Octavia Vivian wrote this biography on Mrs. Coretta Scott King
LEADERSHIP NOW! - PASSING THE TORCH

From standing up by sitting down, to letting freedom ring, from keeping “Hope Alive” to “Yes we Can!” It is by Passing the Torch to our youth to change the world!