

Esosa Osa urges NAACP banquet attendees to be bold

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NORTH CANTON – Esosa Osa, CEO of Onyx Impact and the keynote speaker of the annual Stark County NAACP Freedom Fund banquet, urged those in attendance to be bold in their civic engagement.

"Build something new," she said Oct. 17. "Build something bold."

Osa, who grew up in the Dayton area and now lives in Georgia, founded Onyx Impact to amplify independent Black media and combat digital misinformation, disinformation and propaganda. She spoke at Arrowhead Golf Club and Banquet Center to about 125 people.

The banquet's theme for 2026 was "We the People," which Osa mentioned at the start of her speech, noting the importance of that phrase and its meaning. She referenced a U.S. Supreme Court decision in April that "eviscerated" the 1965 Voting Rights Act protections regarding racial discrimination in legislative map drawing.

"People are voting right now, early voting as we speak, with no Voting Rights Act beneath their feet," Osa said. "That's insane."

Before founding Onyx Impact, she was the senior adviser to Stacey Abrams' unsuccessful 2022 Georgia governor campaign and the deputy director of Fair Fight Action, a voting rights organization founded by Abrams. Osa also worked on a 2018 U.S. congressional campaign and as a portfolio manager at BlackRock, a global asset management company.

Disinformation, the deliberate sharing of false information, is one of the greatest tools of manipulation, she said. It differs from misinformation, unknowingly spreading false information without harmful intent.

Osa said it's not the first time authoritarianism has threatened the United States, however, pointing to "Jim Crow" laws that legalized segregation in the South from the 1870s until the 1960s.

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"And that means that we actually have a blueprint to being bold," she said.

Osa called on attendees to recognize wins rather than just the struggle, reach out to young people earlier in election cycles and support voting rights organizations. She ended her speech by recalling that her immigrant father told her she could be anything — as long as it was a doctor or engineer.

"But I think I still found a way to help people and to build," she said. "I think this room can do the same."

Esosa Osa, CEO of Onyx Impact, speaks on Oct. 17 at the annual Stark County NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

U.S. Congresswoman Emilia Sykes spoke to the group and elected officials and candidates in attendance were recognized.

Stark NAACP President Hector McDaniel presented several awards at the end of the evening that included the president's award for the Innis Maggiore Group, which helped the NAACP build a social media presence and website pro bono.

McDaniel also spoke of the diminishing Black media in Stark County and the nation. When the source of information has the same experiences, they become a "trusted voice," he said.

Harry Boomer has been a "trailblazer" in that role for the Cleveland area, McDaniel said before presenting Boomer with the Stark County NAACP's legacy and broadcasting award.

Boomer, who retired from 19 News after a 55-year career in radio and television, reiterated the need for attendees to do what they can to help move the country toward a more equal and united nation.

"Please make the choice to do the right thing, and I appreciate this award," he said.

Executive committee members of Stark County NAACP 3202B who attended were Andrea Ramsey, third vice president; Pam Smith, assistant treasurer; Krisceda McDaniel, membership chair; Joe Martuccio, criminal justice; Rachel Briggs, legal redress; Dr. Geneva Parker & Bishop Darell Parker, education; and Bishop Gerald Evans II, religious affairs.