National Advisory Council Members Quotes for Attribution

The Honorable Bill Clinton, 42nd President of the United States, said, “America has always been at our best when we work to fully embrace the meaning of our motto, *E pluribus unum*—out of many, one. Our strength is rooted in our diversity, and we are united in the values we share. But too many people are still locked out from the opportunities to achieve their full potential because of who they are, what they look like, or where they were born. We need to keep working to build an America that truly lives up to our highest aspirations. That’s why I’m proud to support the mission of E Pluribus Unum.”

Angela Glover Blackwell, Founder in Residence, PolicyLink, said, “To build a more equitable and inclusive society, we must openly acknowledge the challenges we face and commit to promoting the political will necessary to enact change. I am proud that PolicyLink has played such an important role in E Pluribus Unum research on the American South. I’m equally proud that we can support disseminating these findings to help shape the national equity movement for an equitable economy, healthy communities of opportunity and a more just society.”

Donna Brazile, veteran political strategist, adjunct professor, author, and columnist, said, “I want to commend Mitch Landrieu and Emerson Collective for taking on this challenge. As a child of the segregated south, I know firsthand the experience of those who still feel the deck is stacked against them. We must continue to shine a light and expose injustice in all its forms so that a brighter tomorrow may be possible. E Pluribus Unum has tremendous potential and I am excited to be a part of it.”

Bill Bynum, Chief Executive Officer, Hope Credit Union, said, “Over the course of a career focused on creating opportunity ladders in the Deep South, I have learned that in order to achieve economic prosperity, we must first acknowledge our common humanity, and join together to address the inequities created by a history of exploiting people based on their race, gender, ability and zip code. I am honored to support the vitally important efforts of E Pluribus Unum to make this a reality.”
Michelle Ebanks, President, Essence Communications Inc., said, “The media plays a significant role in defining the images that influence how we see the world. Sharing multi-faceted storytelling through the lens of creatives of color, ESSENCE empowers diverse communities to own our own narrative. I am proud to join the E Pluribus Unum effort to lift up all voices so they may be heard. We all deserve dignity and respect, and it starts with how we are represented to each other.”

Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director, The Public Theater, said, “Theater is the fundamental art form of democracy. On the stage, we can tell powerful stories that personalize the injustices we face as a society and raise up voices that often go unheard. E Pluribus Unum’s work re-enforces what we already know, that the arts bring people together, regardless of race or class. In joining its National Advisory Council, it is my goal to explore new ways to tell these stories so we may build a more equitable society.”

Laurence Powell Jobs, Founder and President, Emerson Collective, said, “Few leaders are as thoughtful, as pragmatic, as courageous, or as mindful of America’s complicated heritage as Mitch Landrieu. By harnessing a range of tools—from leadership to policy to how we talk about the issues that matter most—E Pluribus Unum will not only explore issues that divide us, it will offer solutions that can help bring us together.”

Fred Luter, Jr., Pastor, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, former president, Southern Baptist Convention, said, “Faith plays a powerful role in the community life. It brings people together and gives common purpose. Regardless of the color of our skin or which part of town we live, we are all God’s children and thus, all equal in his eyes. We must embrace this if we are to move past racism and classism that divides us. E pluribus unum, ‘out of many, one,’ is a powerful message of unity to build something greater than ourselves and I am excited to be a part of it.”

Marc H. Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League, said, “I commend the E Pluribus Unum team on this report. It is a powerful statement on the state of race and class in the American South. We have tremendous challenges ahead of us in order to build a more equitable society, but we can do this by championing economic empowerment, equality and social justice. The National Urban League is ready to stand shoulder to shoulder to advance the cause of equity.”

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, Harvard University, said, “We need to have more conversations across the color line in this country in which people can speak openly and honestly and ask questions without fear of recrimination, black or white. This is the only way we will move forward as a people. That’s why it’s so important for initiatives like E Pluribus Unum to do the work of educating people about our true history and bringing people together to find common ground.”
Michael L. Lomax, Ph.D., President and CEO, UNCF (United Negro College Fund), said, "I'm excited to join E Pluribus Unum's advisory council because of its focus on leadership, education and bringing people together. Disagreement with those who hold differing points of view is now practically a blood sport, but I've found that some of UNCF's greatest partnerships and programs focused on highlighting our similarities rather than our differences. To live up to our nation's potential, we all have to do our part to find common ground."

Drew Gilpin Faust, President Emeritus, Harvard University, said, "We are at a pivotal moment for our nation. We must speak out against the hatred, racism and exclusion increasingly evident all around us. Prejudice is taught and nurtured and modeled. But respect and inclusion can be modeled as well. That is why it is so important for initiatives like E Pluribus Unum to educate people about our history and bring them together to find common ground."

Cleo Wade, Author & Activist, said, "At a time where we are telling people to speak up, be seen, and be heard, we must remember that someone has to take responsibility for hearing them and seeing them. We cannot build a more equitable society without empowering young people to tell their stories by creating spaces for them to share their experience with race and class in this country. The work of E Pluribus Unum is important and urgent. We cannot afford to have another generation inherit was continues to go unhealed in America."

Darren Walker, President, Ford Foundation, said, "The story of America has always been one of possibility and hope, even in the most difficult times, but in order to fulfill the dreams of the next generation we must recognize how much we have in common instead of focusing on that which divides us. We know that hopelessness stems from inequality, but in order to truly disrupt that which drives us apart economically, racially, culturally, politically, and socially, we must highlight a path toward a more fair and just world that includes each and every one of us. I believe E Pluribus Unum provides such a direction and I am grateful to Mayor Landrieu for his unwavering commitment to this ideal."