

BLAZING YOUR OWN TRAIL

In *Blazing Your Own Trail*, Kiki Baker Barnes invites readers to explore the profound lessons she learned throughout her journey from athlete to award-winning college sports executive. Combining personal stories of triumph, failure, and growth, Barnes introduces the Blind Exchange Framework, a powerful leadership model built on the principles of Faith, Focus, and Forward Movement. Through insightful reflections and real-life examples, Barnes shares how these principles have guided her through major life transitions—both personal and professional. Whether overcoming challenges on the track field, navigating leadership roles in collegiate athletics, or blazing her trail in the male-dominated sports industry, Barnes' journey demonstrates the power of faith and determination in achieving success. This book is for aspiring leaders, athletes, and anyone who seeks to find their purpose and lead with integrity. *Blazing Your Own Trail* will inspire you to embrace life's uncertainties, rise from setbacks, and courageously pursue your dreams.

"Ever since I met Kiki, she has exuded a brilliance that shines through in everything she does. Her energy, passion, and commitment to excellence are infectious, and she leads with a natural charisma that inspires everyone around her. Kiki has the rare ability to take her personal experiences and turn them into valuable lessons for others. Her unwavering faith and focus on purpose make her a trailblazer in every sense of the word. Anyone who has the chance to learn from her will come away not only motivated, but also empowered to blaze their own trail."

- Garrett Morris
Actor, Singer, Comedian, Friend

"Kiki Baker Barnes is a force to be reckoned with. Her leadership is marked by a rare blend of vision, determination, and integrity. She has a remarkable ability to rally teams around a shared purpose and inspire them to achieve extraordinary results. Whether facing adversity or seizing new opportunities, Kiki's unwavering commitment to excellence and her genuine care for colleagues, make her a true standout. For anyone aspiring to make a significant difference, Kiki's story offers invaluable lessons in leadership, mentorship, and personal fulfillment."

- Deb Grant
CEO, Corporate Playbook



KIKI BAKER BARNES, PHD

Dr. Kiki Baker Barnes is an award-winning sports executive and the first African-American female commissioner in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the HBCU Athletic Conference (formerly the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference). She is known for advancing athletic programs and mentoring future women leaders through her "So You Want A Career in Athletics" program. Dr. Barnes also provides strategic consultancy to national sports organizations and has been recognized by *Essence Magazine*, *Sports Illustrated*, the NBA's New Orleans Pelicans, and Girl Scouts of Louisiana Southeast. Her career accolades include the Nike Nell Jackson Executive of the Year Award (2021), the Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year Award (2019), and the Women Leaders in Sports Administrator of the Year Award (2015). Dr. Barnes holds degrees from the University of New Orleans and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. A proud native of Minden, Louisiana, she lives in New Orleans with her husband, Dr. Marc A. Barnes. They have two adult children, Caitlin and Marc Jr.

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FAITH, FOCUS, AND FORWARD
MOMENTUM IN LEADERSHIP

