



Adena J. White is an accredited public relations professional and social-impact storyteller with 15 years of experience leading communications efforts for place-based nonprofit organizations.

In 2017, Adena founded Blackbelt Media to tell the stories of changemakers working to make the South a better place for all. Blackbelt Media produces the *Blackbelt Voices* podcast, which tells stories from and about Black folks down South that honor Black history, celebrate Black Southern culture, and shape the future of the region. Since it launched in September 2019, the podcast has been featured by Apple Podcasts, *Oprah Daily*, and *Vanity Fair*.

Through Blackbelt Media, Adena contracts with cause-driven organizations across the South on storytelling and strategic communication. She joined the Excel by Eight team in July 2022 as its communications director and has provided communications support to the Arkansas Black Philanthropy Collaborative since May 2021.

Adena spent much of her career working for the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce, serving as its director of communications for nearly a decade before transitioning to a part-time role as editor of its subsidiary, Conway Publications Inc. She began her public relations career at the University of Arkansas System's Winthrop Rockefeller Institute.

Adena obtained a bachelor's degree in speech communication and journalism with an emphasis in public relations from Arkansas Tech University and was inducted into ATU's Hall of Distinction in 2021 as an Outstanding Young Alumna. She completed a master's degree in applied communication studies from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and, in 2022, received the department's "Alumni Making a Difference Award." In 2013, she achieved her Accreditation in Public Relations through the Public Relations Society of America.

Adena has served in leadership roles for PRSA at the Chapter, District, and National levels. She served on the board of directors for the Arkansas Chapter of PRSA for nine years and was elected president of the 100-member chapter in 2019, making history as the first Black person to hold this office. She is a former executive board member for PRSA's Association/Nonprofit Section and is co-chair of the National Communications Committee. She is also a member of the Independent Practitioners Alliance.

Adena resides in central Arkansas with her husband and son.