



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

In 2017, she 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, *Blackbelt Voices* has been featured as a “New and Noteworthy” podcast by Apple Podcasts, named one of “The 15 Best Educational Podcasts for You to Expand Your Mind” by *Oprah Daily*, and listed among “Eight Podcasts to Deepen Your Knowledge of Black History” by *Vanity Fair*.

Through Blackbelt Media, Adena contracts with social-impact organizations across the South on storytelling and strategic communication. Prior to becoming an entrepreneur, she spent much of her career working for the Conway (Arkansas) Area Chamber of Commerce, serving as its director of communications and publications editor for more than 11 years. 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.” She was selected as a 2023 Arkansas Business 40 Under 40 honoree.

Adena achieved her Accreditation in Public Relations through the Public Relations Society of America and earned a Certificate in Social Impact Storytelling from Georgetown University. She is a highly requested speaker on storytelling and has presented at industry and association conferences, including PRSA ICON, the Arkansas Governor’s Conference on Tourism, the Kentucky Travel Industry Association, and the Mid-America Cable Telecommunications Association’s Mid-America Cable Show.

Adena has served in leadership roles for the Public Relations Society of America at the chapter, district, and national levels. She was 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. She is a former

executive board member for PRSA's Association/Nonprofit Section and the PRSA Southwest District and a former co-chair of PRSA's National Communications Committee. She is also a member of PRSA's Independent Practitioners Alliance.

A lifelong resident of central Arkansas, Adena has served on the boards of directors for the Children's Advocacy Alliance, Conway Public Schools Foundation, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arkansas, Arkansas Tech University Alumni, and Faulkner County Coalition for Social Justice. She lives in Conway with her husband and son.