



HEATHER MCGHEE

Heather designs and promotes solutions to inequality in America. Her most recent book, [The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together](#) spent 10 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Her 2020 TED talk, "[Racism Has a Cost for Everyone](#)" reached 1 million views in just two months online. In 2021 she will launch two original podcasts on the economy and on how to create cross-racial solidarity in challenging times.

For nearly two decades, Heather helped build the non-partisan "think and do" tank Demos, serving four years as president. Under McGhee's leadership, Demos moved their original idea for "debt-free college" into the center of the 2016 presidential debate, argued before the Supreme Court to protect voting rights in January 2018, helped win pro-voter reforms in five states over two years, provided expert testimony to Congressional committees, including a Supreme Court confirmation hearing in 2017, and led the research campaigns behind successful wage increases for low-paid workers on federal contracts, as well as at McDonalds, Walmart and other chain retailers.

As an executive, McGhee transformed Demos on multiple levels. She led a successful strategic planning and rebranding process. She designed a [Racial Equity Organizational Transformation](#) which led to an increase in staff racial diversity (from 27 percent people of color to 60 percent in four years), an original racial equity curriculum for staff professional development and a complete overhaul of the organization's research, litigation and campaign strategies using a racial equity lens. McGhee also nearly doubled the organizational budget in four years. A strong coalition-builder and trusted cross-movement leader, McGhee deepened Demos' influence through new networks and collaborations inside and outside the Beltway.

An influential voice in the media and an NBC contributor, McGhee regularly appears on NBC's *Meet the Press* and MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, *Deadline White House* and *All In*. Her conversation on a C-SPAN program in 2016 with a white man who asked for her help to overcome his racial prejudice went viral, receiving more than 10 million views and sparking wide media coverage that included a *New York Times* op-ed, a *New Yorker* piece and a CNN town hall.

She has shared her opinions, writing and research in numerous outlets, including the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, Politico and National Public Radio. She is a sought-after public speaker for audiences that include policymakers, philanthropists, civic organizations, students and community groups. She was a featured speaker at the inaugural Obama Foundation Summit in October 2017 and gave the commencement address at Vassar College in June 2018. She has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the [Grist Environmental Top 50](#) in 2016 and the United Auto Workers Owen Beiber Social Change Award in 2018.

In spring 2018, Starbucks founder Howard Schultz asked McGhee to advise the company as it designed an anti-bias training for 250,000 employees in the wake of the unjust arrest of two black men in a Philadelphia store. McGhee [wrote a report with recommendations](#) for how Starbucks can apply a racial equity lens to their businesses, and how other companies both large and small can benefit from doing the same.

McGhee has deep political experience, having served as [an architect of the agenda-setting domestic policy platform](#) for Senator John Edwards' 2008 primary campaign focused on bold solutions to inequality. She also played a leadership role in steering the historic Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, and was one of the key advocates credited for the adoption of the Volcker Rule.

She holds a B.A. in American Studies from Yale University and a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley School of Law, as well as honorary degrees from Muhlenberg College, Niagara University, and CUNY Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy. McGhee is the chair of the board of Color Of Change, the nation's largest online racial justice organization, and also serves on the boards of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Open Society Foundations' US Programs and Demos.

For more information, please visit www.heathermcghee.com and follow Heather on Twitter: @hmcghee and Instagram and Facebook: @HeatherCMcGhee