



**BLACK FARMERS
AND
AGRICULTURALISTS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

PRESIDENT THOMAS BURRELL



Thomas Burrell was born on a farm in Covington, Tennessee in May of 1949. He fought for his country and served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War from 1969 to 1970. After being granted an honorable discharge in 1972, he earned a business of administration degree from the School of Business at the University of Michigan in 1975.

Burrell was one of the first Black farmers to publicly engage in a civil war against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1981. He gained overwhelming support from other Black farmers and staged weeks of protests, sit-ins and public rallies at a local USDA county office in his native home and other counties. The demonstrations sparked worldwide media attention and later evolved as the Black Farmer's Class Action lawsuit in 1997; the lawsuits provided over \$5 billion dollars in compensation to thousands of Black farmers and other minority farmers, including Native Americans, Hispanics, female farmers and ranchers all over the country.

In 2001, Mr. Burrell became the president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Inc. (BFAA) headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee. For the last four decades, he has been fighting for the rights of Black farmers, their heirs, administrators and assigns who are still being discriminated against by the USDA. He convinced his legal team in 2015 that USDA's contractor (Epiq Systems) was violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — by not allowing African-American male claimants participation in a lawsuit filed on behalf of Hispanic men and women and African-American women. After several years of opposition by the USDA's attorneys, U. S. Department of Justice, and a panel of federal judges, the U. S. Court of Appeals in the D. C., denied the government's motion to have the \$1.8 billion dollar case dismissed.