

## About

### Ashley Watson - Biography



Ashley was raised by her mother and grandmother. In St. Petersburg, Florida, she faced her first adversity as a teen mother. To support her family, she opted to work in the medical field and obtained her Nursing Assistant certification. She leaned on her medical industry skills in her quest for greater development and expansion. Working at the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulations in Tallahassee, Florida, allowed her to shift into the government sector. As a result of her professional change and increased financial acumen, Ashley was able to relocate. The native Floridian chose Columbia, Maryland, to raise her family.

Ashley chose to conquer the transportation and logistics sector after moving and refining her business acumen in the medical field and working for the government. She is not afraid of new challenges, so she decided to enter the male-dominated transportation industry in order to bring her caring touch from nursing and the structure from her government experience to the world of logistics. With that goal in mind, Ashley decided to hang up her heels and pursue a career as a professional driver with a Class A CDL. It had been nothing short of a life-changing experience switching from a hospice nurse to a non-traditional career as a professional truck driver for her.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) hosted the Biden-Harris Truck Action Plan Roundtable Discussion, in which Ashley took part in. Participants in this discussion included representatives from the Biden-Harris Administration, the FMCSA, organizations, transportation providers, and port drivers to talk about attracting and maintaining diverse drivers in the trucking industry. As a result, NMWAIT, Inc. was also graciously invited to the White House on April 4, 2022, to attend the Biden Trucking Action Plan event. Additionally, she has had meetings with several state lawmakers. Her goal is to increase the visibility, capacity, and profitability of professional minority women and men in the transportation industry.

As an innovative, team-centric leader with over 20 years of multi-faceted experience who excels at developing strategies, talent development, and implementing strategic solutions for organizational and individual growth as well as development. It has been Ashley's personal mission to help over 500 companies develop and reorganize their infrastructure to position their companies for profitable growth. Because of her desire, Cohesive Solutions, LLC, was established as a compliance solutions agency specializing in DOT and FMCSA compliance management. Her deeper purpose, however, inspired her to want to assist and guide over 1,000 minority women entering the trucking industry who had been discouraged and did not feel they had a safe and supportive environment to achieve. With the support of other forward-thinking minority professionals and business owners, she founded the National Minority Women Association in Transportation, Inc. (NMWAIT) in 2021 with the mission of assisting women in advancing their careers, achieving financial security, and closing the gender gap between male and female truck drivers.

As a philanthropist, she values collaborative leadership that is strong in community engagement and results oriented. Ashley recently spoke at a community fundraiser for Girls, Inc. to discuss her transition and opportunities into the transportation industry. In addition, she organized Trucker Matters 2, a community appreciation and awareness event with several sponsors, including the Howard County Health Department and the Howard County Human Trafficking Department. The Truckers Matter 2 CAA event's goals were to maintain truck drivers' involvement, to hear any complaints they may have, to give essential commodity, and—most importantly—to distribute vital literature regarding NMWAIT's We Believe Campaign Initiative. The We Believe Campaign seeks to raise awareness about the significance of supporting survivors of sexual assault and sex trafficking in all industries of endeavor, regardless of gender. Ashley is an excellent example of how to lead various cross-functional teams in producing results in a changing environment.

When Ashley is not managing her compliance company or fulfilling her responsibilities as the president of a minority women-owned advocacy nonprofit organization, she is a passionate homeschooling mother who enjoys traveling (in other words, trucking local, semi-regional, and occasionally long haul) and inspiring and elevating our next generation. One of her many favorite quotes by Shirley Chisholm is: "*You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining - you make progress by implementing ideas.*"

Professional Affiliation:

- Founder and President: National Minority Women Association In Transportation, Inc.
- Board Member: Beyond The Walls - Movement
- Member: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Member: Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS)
- Member: Maryland Nonprofit
- Friend of Committee: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Transportation Research Board (TRB)