

GET TO KNOW THE PANEL



Laura Frank is the University of Denver's 2025 Wolzien Visiting Professor of the Practice in Research Informed Communication and executive director of the Colorado News Collaborative (COLab), a nonprofit with 180 news partners building stronger communities through stronger news.

A pioneer in collaborative journalism and champion of local news, Laura blends investigative journalism and data analysis with entrepreneurial development across print, broadcast and digital media. She loves building new organizations, networks and collaborations in commercial and nonprofit media.

Laura is a founding member and chair emerita of the Institute for Nonprofit News. She has led teams honored with duPont-Columbia and national Edward R. Murrow Awards and was awarded media entrepreneurship fellowships at Columbia University and the University of Southern California.



Vera Azuka Idam (she/her) is a first-generation African immigrant, mother of three and dedicated community leader. As a Black journalist and publisher of *Afrik Digest*, she has spent a decade empowering the African immigrant community through civic information, storytelling, integration support and community events. She also spearheaded the Colorado Ethnic Media Exchange, enhancing ethnic media outreach across the region.

Vera is passionate about promoting peace, unity and initiatives that uplift women. She currently serves on the New Americans Community Advisory Committee and the Statewide Equity Office's External Strategy Statewide Community of Practice. She holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix and a B.A. in English from the University of Lagos in Nigeria.



EVENT FACILITATOR

Angela Engel, M.A., is a facilitator, writer and educator. She is a force for positive change with more than three decades of experience engaging communities, catalyzing action and empowering voices. Her books and articles shed light on critical social issues and offer practical solutions.

Engel teaches graduate studies for the at-risk and alternative education program at Marian University preparing future educators to make a difference in the lives of underserved students. As the director of an education nonprofit, Angela has led numerous successful initiatives improving the lives of countless individuals and communities locally and nationally. Through Colorado State University's Family Leadership Training Institute, Angela has empowered over 1,500 people with the skills and knowledge to advocate effectively for their communities.

Whether working with small groups or large gatherings, Engel creates inclusive and inspiring spaces where everyone feels heard and valued. Her expertise in conflict resolution and consensus building helps diverse stakeholders collaborate effectively to achieve shared goals. She brings an authentic voice to the decision-making table, transforms lives through education and advocacy, and leaves a lasting positive impact on the communities she serves.



Mike Littwin has been a Denver columnist since 1997, writing for the *Rocky Mountain News*, *Denver Post*, *Colorado Independent* and now *The Colorado Sun*. He writes about all things Colorado, from news to sports to popular culture, as well as national politics.

Mike comes from a newspaper family — his father was a reporter. He got his first byline when he was 16 and has been hooked ever since. His first job was as a sportswriter for two Virginia papers, covering Dr. J and the old American Basketball Association. He moved to the *Los Angeles Times* as a sports and then news feature writer, then to *The Baltimore Sun* before moving to Denver to become part of one of the nation's last, great newspaper wars. He has been a columnist since 1984.