



Ryan J. Woods

President & CEO

An educator and historian, Ryan J. Woods is President & Chief Executive Officer of American Ancestors. For more than two decades, he has dedicated his professional life to developing experiences to educate, inspire, and connect people through the exploration of history, heritage, and culture. He was the lead creator of AmericanAncestors.org and has recruited more than 1 billion searchable records for its databases. He has also been instrumental in planning our national visitor destination experience which will open in 2024, as well as the launch of the 10 Million Names Project. Since joining the American Ancestors staff in 2007, Ryan has played a key role bringing the enduring power and promise of family history to people across the country and around the globe.

“Almost everyone is curious about where they came from. Finding out more about your ancestors builds self-esteem, fosters better family relationships, and creates a foundation for social awareness and civic pride. It’s also a lot of fun.”



Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Interviews American Ancestors President & CEO Ryan J. Woods



Ryan Woods takes the Main Stage at RootsTech 2024 to discuss the 10 Million Names initiative..



President & CEO Ryan J. Woods speaks to iHeart Radio's Nichole Davis.