Our Next Prez?

Julianne Malveaux takes note of some rising political stars, any of whom could be our first Black woman president.

During the 2012 Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Charlotte last September, I met some of the women we will be reading about in the next few years, all of them passionate about politics and its ability to transform lives.

I was impressed by Darryl Joy Walters, 20, who attended her first DNC as a delegate from the 4th Congressional District of Louisiana. A junior major in communication and religion at Wiley College in Texas, she is extremely active in the Young Democrats, both in Texas and in Louisiana. Walters is a fervent supporter of women's rights, access to higher education and the Affordable Care Act.

Also keep your eye on Morticia Talmadge, 33, another first-time DNC delegate and a member of the North Carolina Board of the Young Democrats of America. Her plans include law school and a run for state office. What has Talmadge fired up? 'I am angry about the defunding of Planned Parenthood; lots of Black women use their services,' she says. 'I'm using my position to focus on our reproductive rights.'

At 30, Mary L. Washington is serving her first term in the Maryland House of Delegates. The quantitative demographer worked on the redistricting of Baltimore's government and helped pass Facebook Privacy legislation, forbidding employers from asking for Facebook passwords as a condition of employment. And as the only openly gay Black woman in Maryland's state legislature, she passionately advocates for marriage equality.

Democrats are not the only ones with Black women on the political landscape. As Florida's lieutenant governor, Trinidadians-American Jennifer Carroll is generating national interest as the highest-ranking Black woman in the Republican party. I'm sure we will hear much more from her.

No matter their ideology, all these women have a commonality: They aspire to make their mark, giving hope to those who may have considered using public service as a way to change the world.