African Americans have a long and rich history of entrepreneurship in America. Since before the Civil War and continue their entrepreneurial tradition today. Segments of the African American population have exhibited the same entrepreneurial spirit as segments of other ethnic groups who have migrated to this country. Very often, however, the history of black entrepreneurship has been either overlooked or misconstrued.

Entrepreneurship for African Americans has incorporated ownership as a means to manage and disseminate information for the betterment of the community as well as a means to gain economic opportunities. African American religious publishers were the first entrepreneurs to represent African American interests using print media. This led the way for a variety of businesses and products.

As the United States began to take shape, a number of people of African origin were successful in their attempt to carve out an economic stake for themselves. Anthony Johnson, who accumulated substantial property in Jamestown, Virginia, is believed to be the first person of African descent to have become an entrepreneur in America. Jean Baptiste DuSable, a wholesaler and merchant who established the first settlement in Chicago in the early 1770s, was another pre-Civil War era entrepreneur.

Prior to the Civil War, however, slavery defined the existence of most African Americans. Thus, two categories of business persons were able to develop and sustain business enterprises. The first group was composed of free African Americans, numbering approximately sixty thousand, who could accumulate the capital to generate business activity. They developed enterprises in almost every area of the business community, including merchandising, real estate, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and extractive industries.

The second group consisted of slaves who—as a result of thrift, ingenuity, industry, and/or the liberal paternalism of their masters—were able to engage in business activity. Although the constraints of slavery were such that even highly skilled slaves could not become entrepreneurs in the true sense of the word, slaves did, during their limited free time, sell their labor and create products to sell.
The fact that African American entrepreneurship existed at all during the era of slavery is testimony to an entrepreneurial spirit and the determination of a people to achieve economic freedom even under the harshest conditions.

If it was all but impossible for slaves to engage in private enterprise, it was also hazardous for “free” blacks to do so, since they were effectively only half free. Free blacks lived under a constant fear of being labeled as “runaway” slaves and being sold into slavery. In addition, in areas where free blacks lived, laws were passed to restrict their movement and thus their economic freedom. This was one intention, for example, of the laws that Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina had passed by 1835 forbidding free blacks to carry arms without a license. The right of assembly was also denied blacks throughout the South—leaving it illegal for black civic, business, or benevolent organizations to convene. In addition to reflecting white slave owners’ fears of an African American uprising, such legal restriction had the purpose and effect of making it difficult for free blacks to earn a living.

The promise of freedom and political enfranchisement held out by President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of 1862 was soon undermined by racist judicial rulings. In 1878, in *Hall v. DeCuir*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a state could not prohibit segregation on a common carrier. In 1896, with the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling, “separate but equal” became the law of the land. Following these decisions, a pattern of rigid segregation of the races was established that remained the norm until the advent of the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

Nevertheless, even within the context of disenfranchisement and segregation, Booker T. Washington saw the possibility of securing African American economic stability through business development. In 1900 Washington spearheaded the development of the National Negro Business League to encourage black enterprise.

During the early 1900s, although services continued to be the cornerstone of the black business community, blacks found it easier to raise capital and ventured into more entrepreneurial endeavors.

In 1905, for example, Madame C.J. Walker developed a hair care system that gave dry hair a soft texture; millions of women, both black and white, became customers for Madame Walker’s products. Before her death in 1919, Madame Walker had more than two thousand agents marketing her ever-expanding line of products, which made her America’s first self-made black female millionaire.

Turn-of-the-century Durham, North Carolina, represented a special case of enterprise and economic resilience. In publications of the time, Durham was referred to as “The Wall Street of Negro America.” By the late 1940s, more than 150 businesses owned by African Americans flourished in Durham. Among these businesses...
were traditional service providers, such as cafes, movie houses, barber shops, boarding houses, pressing shops, grocery stores, and funeral parlors. What distinguished Durham, however, was the presence of large black businesses, including the extremely successful North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company.

The civil rights movement prompted the development of legislation and a number of government agencies to ensure the social, political, and economic rights of African Americans. Perhaps the greatest boost to black entrepreneurship came in 1967 with the establishment of the Small Business Administration (SBA) Section 8 (a) program. Under that section of the Small Business Act Amendments, the SBA is authorized to enter into contract with federal agencies on behalf of small and disadvantaged businesses. Entry into the program is contingent upon SBA approval of the business plan prepared by prospective firms. The total dollar value of contracts processed through Section 8 (a) has grown from $8.9 million in 1969 to $2.7 billion in 1985. Through the program, many small and black-owned businesses have been able to stabilize and grow.

Another product of the civil rights movement has been the 1977 Public Works Employment Act. Supplementing the SBA 8 (a) program, the Public Works Employment Act requires that all general contractors bidding for public works projects allocate at least 10 percent of their contracts to minority sub-contractors.

During the early 1980s, the SBA Section 8 (a) program was criticized because less than 5 percent of the firms had achieved open-market competitiveness, which implies that the program is in effect assisting the marginal entrepreneur, as opposed to the promising self-employed minority businessperson.

The fundamental concept of set-aside minority assistance programs was called into question during the height of the Reagan–Bush era. In 1989 the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling in City of Richmond v. Croson struck down as unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment a city ordinance of Richmond, Virginia, requiring that 30 percent of each public-construction contract be set aside for minority businesses. The Supreme Court did make a distinction between local/state and federally enacted business development programs, holding that the U.S. Congress has far more authority than the states in formulating remedial legislation.

The Croson decision has had a devastating impact on minority businesses. In Richmond, during the month of July 1987 when a lower court first ruled against the city’s set-aside program, 40 percent of the city’s total construction dollars were allocated for products and services provided by minority-owned construction firms. Immediately following the court’s decision, the minority businesses’ share of contracts fell to fifteen percent, dropping to less than three percent by the end of 1988. In Tampa, Florida, the number of contracts awarded to black-owned companies decreased 99 percent, and contracts with Latino-owned firms fell 50 percent after Croson. Such dramatic decreases in contracts awarded to minority businesses occurred throughout the country. More than thirty-three states and political subdivisions have taken steps to dismantle their racial/ethnic set-aside programs; more than seventy jurisdictions are conducting studies and/or holding hearings to review and evaluate their programs in light of Croson.

Although the Croson decision limited access for black-owned and other minority firms, the civil rights movement reclaimed some rights for blacks as citizens and entrepreneurs. This supported a trend toward growth. Employment in business firms owned by African Americans grew by 224 percent between 1972 and 1987; the number of firms increased nearly five times, and gross receipts grew by 700 percent. In 1972 there were 187,602 firms listed and by 2002 the number had increased 634.4 percent to 1.2 million. The revenue also grew from $20 billion in 1977 to $88.8 billion in 2002.

Historically, African American businesses have been restricted to the narrow range of service enterprises. They have tended to establish businesses that require relatively limited capital
and technical expertise, such as personal services and small-scale retailing. These firms have had to rely heavily on the African American community as their market for goods and services. In 2002 four out of ten black-owned firms provided health care and social assistance, personal services, and repair and maintenance. These services still remain as a key basis for African American businesses. Of the 10,727 African American-owned firms in 2002 with individual revenue of $1 million or more, total revenue for this group has increased to $49 billion versus $40 billion in 1997. Overall African American-owned firms account for five percent of all non-farm businesses in the United States.

The location of corporate headquarters in urban areas has provided increased business opportunity for black business service enterprises. Large cities have become areas where administrative and service functions are the dominant economic activities. The growth in corporate and government administration in central-city business districts has created a need for complementary advertising, accounting, computer, legal, temporary secretarial, and maintenance business services. In 2002, 44 percent of African American-owned firms were located in five key states, with New York having the largest number of firms at 129,324, followed by California 112,873, Florida 102,079, Georgia 90,461, and Texas 88,769. Within those states the key urban areas which have the greatest number of African American firms consists of New York City 98,076, Chicago 39,424, Los Angeles 25,958, Houston 21,226, and Detroit 19,530. These firms generate anywhere from $1.5 million to $5 million in revenue.

With the increase in opportunity for African American-owned firms, the issue of sustainability remains a key concern. African American-owned firms have the lowest survival rates of all ethnic business. In 1997 more than half of African American-owned firms were in the service industry with sixty-three percent of those firms able to survive. Black finance companies and insurance and real estate companies, which are one in every twenty African American-owned firms, have the highest survival rate of seventy-one percent.

Access for qualified African Americans as leaders in a broad range of businesses and corporations has seen an increase. In 1988 there were twenty-five corporate managers but no black executives. By 1993 there were twelve African Americans who were presidents and two CEOs. In 2005 there were eighteen African Americans as CEOs including three women, showing an increase of 300 percent, but still less than one percent of the senior-level positions of America’s one thousand largest firms. In 2006 Harpo Inc.’s Oprah Winfrey and RLJ Development’s Robert L. Johnson were the first African Americans to be recognized as billionaires, and Reginald F. Lewis became the first CEO of a billion-dollar company.

**PUBLISHING**

**Books**

Since black book publishing began in the United States in 1817, three types of publishers have emerged in this sector of the American book publishing industry: religious publishers, institutional publishers, and trade book publishers.

Religious publishing enterprises were established by black religious denominations in order to publish books and other literature to assist clergy and laity in recording denominational history and to provide religious instruction. Some black religious publishers also published books on secular subjects, which were generally related to celebrating some aspect of black culture or documenting black history.

Prior to the Civil War, two black religious publishing enterprises existed. The African Methodist Episcopal Church organized the AME Book Concern in Philadelphia in 1817—the first black-owned book publishing enterprise in the United States. The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (CME), known as the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, started the CME Publishing House in 1870, and the AME Sunday School Union and Publishing House was established in Bloomington, Illinois, in 1882, but moved to...
Nashville, Tennessee, in 1886. Publishing secular and religious books, the AME Sunday School Union and Publishing House remains today as the oldest publishing unit owned by the AME Church.

One of the most successful black religious publishers to come into existence during the nineteenth century was the National Baptist Publishing Board. Under the leadership of Dr. Richard Henry Boyd and the auspices of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., the National Baptist Publishing Board was organized in Nashville in 1896.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, educational, cultural, social, and political institutions were established to meet the specific needs of Black Americans. Many of these institutions developed publishing programs, which included book publishing.

Hampton Institute became the first black educational institution to publish books when the Hampton Institute Press was established in 1871. An active publisher until 1940, the Hampton Institute Press published travel books, poetry, textbooks, songbooks, conference proceedings, and the *Southern Workman*, one of the leading national African American periodicals published between 1871 and 1939.

John W. Work’s *The Negro and His Song* (1915) was the first book issued under the Fisk University Press imprint. During the 1930s and 1940s, when Charles Spurgeon Johnson chaired the university’s Department of Sociology, several important studies were published by Fisk University Press, including E. Franklin Frazier’s *The Free Negro Family* (1932); *The Economic Status of the Negro*, by Charles Spurgeon Johnson (1933); and *People versus Property*, by Herman Long and Charles Spurgeon Johnson (1947). The last publication released by the Fisk University Press was *Build a Future: Addresses Marking the Inauguration of Charles Spurgeon Johnson* (1949).

Black cultural and professional organizations and institutions have also developed publishing
programs that include book publishing. The books published by these organizations have documented areas of black history and depicted various aspects of African American culture.

In 1913, five years after its founding, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People launched its book publishing program with the publication of three books: *A Child’s Story of Dunbar*, by Julia L. Henderson (1919); *Norris Wright Cuney*, by Maude Cuney Hare (1913); and *Hazel*, by Mary White Ovington (1913).

In contrast, the National Urban League first embarked on book publishing in 1927 when it published *Ebony and Topaz*, an anthology of Harlem Renaissance writers, poets, and artists, which was edited by Charles Spurgeon Johnson.

Although the publishing program of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League focused on the publication of its newspaper, the *Negro World*, this political organization also published books. Two volumes of *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, compiled and edited by Amy Jacques-Garvey, were published under the imprint of the Press of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Until the 1960s, most black commercial publishers that engaged in book publishing enterprises were short lived. In 1967, however, Haki Madhubuti founded Third World Press in Chicago. Third World Press is now the oldest continually operating black commercial book publisher in the United States. Other publishers include Just Us Books, which began publishing in 1976; in 1985 Broadside Press was sold, but it continues to operate; in 1993 Genius Press began specializing in romance novels, and other companies were established as interest in diaspora literature increased and a variety of genres that explored the African American experience were more prevalent.

As readership grew from $181 million to $296 million in 1995 and continued to rise, white publishers in response created companies to specifically publish and market African American text. Although many in the black community saw these companies using a formulaic approach to producing books, the overall interest for black books remains high.

**Newspapers**

The black press in the United States is heir to a great, largely unheralded tradition. It began with the first black newspaper, *Freedom’s Journal*, edited and published by Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm, on March 16, 1827. The *North Star*, the newspaper of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, was first published on December 3, 1847.

By the 1880s, African Americans’ ability to establish a substantial cultural environment in many cities of the North led to the creation of a new wave of publications, including the *Washington Bee*, the *Indianapolis World*, the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the *Cleveland Gazette*, the *Baltimore Afro-American*, and the *New York Age*. By 1900 daily papers appeared in Norfolk, Kansas City, and Washington, D.C.

Founded in 1909 by James H. Anderson, the *Amsterdam News* has become one of the best-known black newspapers in the nation. It was first published on December 4, 1909, in Anderson’s home on 132 W. 65th Street in New York City. At that time one of only fifty black “news sheets” in the country, the *Amsterdam News* had a staff of ten, consisted of six printed pages, and sold for two cents a copy. Since then, the paper has been printed at several Harlem addresses.

Among the famous black newspaper editors were William Monroe Trotter, editor of the *Boston Guardian*, a self-styled “radical” paper that showed no sympathy for the conciliatory stance of Booker T. Washington; Robert S. Abbott, whose *Chicago Defender* pioneered the use of headlines; and T. Thomas Fortune of the *New York Age*, who championed free public schools in an age when many opposed the idea.

In 1940 there were over two hundred black newspapers, mostly weeklies with local reader-
ships, and by 1947 circulation of black newspapers had risen to two million readers. The key papers were the Courier, the Afro-American, the Defender, and the Amsterdam News. As the 1960s and the civil rights movement swept the country, black newspapers played their part by reporting news and often shedding light on unfair and discriminatory practices. In the 1960s the Afro-American Press, in order to provide support for the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, used several of their reporters, disguised as African diplomats, to show discriminatory dining practices along U.S. Route 1, the main highway between Washington, D.C., and New York. These tactics, along with the filing of lawsuits, challenged Jim Crow laws. Not all papers supported such moves and many that were backed by white supporters were not openly critical of discriminatory systems. This period of media in support of community ideas also opened the door to alternative papers such as Black Panther and Muhammad Speaks.

During the 1970s and 1980s there was a slow decline in the circulation of black newspapers. The increased role of television, economic issues, and declining influence saw many close their doors. Combining this with the opportunity for young black journalists in white media and the lack of new talent interested in local black papers, many well-established papers such as the Richmond Afro-American did not survive. The Internet became another factor that further diminished the readership of not only black newspapers, but the newspaper medium in general.

In spite of the difficulties, many traditional black newspapers continue to operate. With well over three hundred black newspapers still operating, the opportunity to develop technology-based papers has actually expanded the medium with websites as another means of reaching a broader readership.

The National Negro Newspaper Publishers Association was founded in 1940 to represent black newspaper publishers. The organization scheduled workshops and trips abroad to acquaint editors and reporters with important news centers and news sources. One result was a trend to more progressive and interpretive reporting. In 1956 the association changed its name to the National Newspaper Publishers Association [NNPA] and later to the Black Press of America. By 2007 NNPA's readership was over fifteen million readers. In 2001 the organization formed the BlackPressUSA Network, a web resource for the black community, and has provided over twenty-six websites for black newspapers. The black newspaper continues to maintain its focus of serving the black community, which keeps it as an integral part of the information highway.

### Magazines

As early as the 1830s, black magazines were being published in the United States. However, it was not until the 1900s that the first truly successful magazines appeared. In 1910 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People began publishing Crisis. In November 1942 John H. Johnson launched the Negro Digest, and in 1945 he published the first issue of Ebony. The idea for the new magazine came from two Digest writers, and the magazine's name was designated by Johnson's wife, Enice Johnson. Its first print run of 25,000 copies sold out immediately. The success of Ebony led to the demise of the Negro Digest, and in 1951 the magazine ceased publication. However, Ebony, which has remained a success, has a circulation rate of almost two million, and in 1951 Jet magazine was launched.

Since the founding of Ebony, several new and specialized black magazines have appeared. In 1967 Black American Literature Review, a journal presenting essays, interviews, poems, and book reviews, was founded. Also in 1967 Project Magazines, Inc. began publishing Black Careers. In 1969 the Black World Foundation published the first edition of the Black Scholar.

Earl G. Graves, a young businessman, in 1970 embarked on a concept to publish a monthly digest of news, commentary, and informative articles for blacks interested in business enterprise. Within a few short years his magazine, Black Enterprise, was accepted as the authority on African Americans in business and as an impor-
tant advocate for an active, socially responsive black middle class. A second magazine directed at black women founded in 1970, *Essence*, has steadily gained in its circulation since its inception. Featuring health and beauty, fashion, and contemporary living sections, *Essence* is considered one of the top women’s magazines. Susan Taylor served as the magazine’s editor in chief for nearly twenty years and was a key component of the magazine’s success. *Essence*, which in 2002 had a readership of more than seven million, was sold to Time, Inc. in 2005. One factor in the success of many African American publications is the ability to attract advertisers seeking to reach the African American middle class.

The diversity of the magazines available to the African American audience continues to grow with publications such as *O Magazine* launched by media mogul Oprah Winfrey in 2000, and other African American-owned publications such as *Heart & Soul*, *VIBE*, *American Legacy*, and *Black Child* just to name a few. Advertisers are able to reach middle-class black readers through a variety of media, inclusive of *Jet*, *Ebony*, and *Essence*, which continue to enjoy a healthy readership.

**BROADCASTING MEDIA**

**Radio**

African American representation and later ownership in the broadcast industry began in 1929 when black radio pioneer Jack Cooper began hosting a new radio program, *The All-Negro Hour*, on a white-owned Chicago station. A boom period occurred between 1946 and 1955, when the number of black-oriented stations jumped from twenty-four to six hundred.

There were black journalists before there was a broadcast industry, but in the Jim Crow America of the 1920s, there had to be black-oriented radio before there could be black broadcast journalists. That mission fell to a vaudevillian jack-of-

While early radio shows featured black singing groups, they featured no blacks talking. To Cooper, this “was like taxation without representation,” and so on Sunday, November 3, 1929, at 5 P.M., Chicago’s white-owned WSBC premiered The All-Negro Hour, starring Cooper and friends. Born was the concept of black radio, and Cooper went on to become the nation’s first black radio station executive, the first black newscaster, the first black sportscaster, and the first to use radio as a service medium.

The All-Negro Hour was like a vaudeville revue on the air, featuring music, comedy, and serials. Although it ended its run in 1935, Cooper continued with WSBC, pioneering the black-radio format by producing several black-oriented shows. Crucial to that format was local news and public affairs of interest to African Americans.

The first example of public service programming aired December 9, 1938, when Cooper launched the Search for Missing Persons show. Aimed at reuniting people who had lost contact with friends and relatives through migration and over time, it reportedly had reunited twenty thousand people by 1950. According to Ebony magazine, Cooper also remodeled a van into a mobile unit to relay “on-the-spot news events directly to four radio stations in the Chicago and suburban area,” including news flashes from the Pittsburgh Courier and interviews with famous personalities who came to town, such as boxer Joe Louis. Cooper also did play-by-play sportscasts of black baseball games from the van.

Listen Chicago, a news discussion show that ran from 1946 to 1952, provided African Americans with their first opportunity to use radio as a public forum. Following Cooper’s lead, between 1946 and 1955 the number of black-oriented stations jumped from twenty-four to six hundred. News was a part of the explosion. “We have learned to do newscasts that answer the question, ‘How is this news going to affect me as a Negro?’,” Leonard Walk of WHOD Pittsburgh said in 1954. “We have learned that church and social news deserves a unique place of importance in our daily Negro programming.” Yet by and large these broadcasters were not trained journalists. Black stations did not begin to broadcast news as we know it today until the 1960s.

In 1972 the Mutual Black Network was formed for news and sports syndication, under the auspices of the Mutual Broadcasting Network. By the end of the 1970s, the Mutual Black Network had just over one hundred affiliates and 6.2 million listeners. The Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation, a black-owned broadcasting chain based in Pittsburgh, purchased the Mutual Black Network in the late 1970s, renaming it the Sheridan Broadcasting Network. A second African American radio network, the National Black Network, was formed in 1973. Among its regular features was commentary by journalist Roy Wood, which he named “One Black Man’s Opinion.” In January 1992 the American Urban Radio Network was formed, and the National Black Network has since gone out of business.

The networks were a mixed blessing. They provided their affiliates with broadcast-quality programs produced from an African American perspective. But this relatively inexpensive access to news, sports, and public affairs features discouraged the local stations that subscribed from producing their own shows. News and public affairs staffs at the black-oriented stations remained minimal. There were some notable exceptions. New York’s WLIB-AM had a black format that included a highly acclaimed news and public affairs department. A series of shows produced by the station on disadvantaged youth in the city won two Peabody Awards in 1970. After the station was purchased in 1972 by African American civic leader Percy Sutton, the station became “Your Total Black News and Information Station,” offering more news and public affairs programming than any other black-formatted radio outlet in the country.

Before 1967 only two black educational outlets existed in the country; by 1990 there were forty black public radio stations. Many of them were community radio stations, owned and operated by nonprofit foundations, controlled by a
local board of directors, and relying on listener donations. Others were on college campuses. One of the most successful was WPFW-FM, a 50,000-watt outlet controlled by African Americans, launched in 1977 by the Pacifica Foundation.

Although minority-owned radio stations have increased slightly between 1978 and 1995, the Federal Communications Commission granted tax credit to radio and televisions that sold property to minority owners. The goal of the Commission toward affirmative action was to expand the viewpoints in the industry and broaden ownership beyond primarily white owners. Although the tax credit was eliminated the same year, U.S. Radio, owned by attorney Ragan A. Henry, had become the largest African American radio group in the nation. In 1996 it was reported to have twenty-five stations and was sold for $140 million to Clear Channel Communications of San Antonio, a white organization.

In 1980 Cathy Liggins Hughes, a pioneer in talk and contemporary radio, purchased a radio station in Washington, D.C., making her the first female owner of a station in a dominant market. Hughes who later founded Radio One, Inc., has become the owner of the largest African American broadcasting company in America and the first publicly traded stock on the U.S. stock exchange headed by an African American woman. By 2004 Radio One encompassed sixty-eight stations estimated at three billion dollars.

**Television**

It took the riots of the 1960s and a stern warning from a federal commission for the broadcast industry to undertake any concentrated hiring of African Americans. When American cities began to burn, blacks held about 3.6 percent of television news jobs. White news directors had to scramble to find black journalists to cover the story. In 1968 the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Commission, concluded that “the world that television and newspapers offer to their black audience is almost totally white, in both appearance and attitude.” “Within a year,” wrote Noble, “many of us found ourselves working downtown at major radio and TV stations.” In 1969 the Federal Communications Commission prohibited discrimination in broadcasting, but by 1973 there were still only seven African American reporters at the three major networks.

In 1980 Howard University launched WHMM-TV, becoming the first licensee of a public television station on a black campus and the only black-owned public television station in the nation. On August 31, 1991, San Francisco’s Minority Television Project went on the air with KMTP-TV, which became the nation’s second black-owned public television station. One of the principals was Adam Clayton Powell III, son of the late Harlem congressman.

The 1980s saw the explosion of cable television and the decline of the television networks. Black Entertainment Television, founded by former congressional aide Robert L. Johnson, made its debut in 1980 and established a news division by the end of the decade. That division produced a weekly news show, BET News, and Lead Story, a talk show featuring black pundits. In 2000 BET was sold to Viacom, Inc., an international media giant, which took the control of the station and its programming out of the hand of African Americans. The sale made Robert L. Johnson the first African American billionaire.

Cathy L. Hughes, known for her success as the owner of Radio One, Inc., beginning with the purchase of her first radio station in Washington, D.C., in 1980, partnered with Comcast, one of the nation’s largest pay television providers, and launched TV One Inc., a television station catering to the African American lifestyle. By December 2006 the station was seen in over 33 million households. Oprah Winfrey, who successfully orchestrated her career from talk show host of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in Chicago to media mogul and the first African American female billionaire, launched the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) on January 1, 2011. The station’s focus is to help all Americans “live their best life.”

As technology has opened the door to providing greater access to all aspects of society,
African Americans have actively been part of this information highway. The World Wide Web offers information on almost any subject that involves the African American experience from newspapers and magazines, organizations and resources, products and businesses, health and wellness, as well as personal sites for social networking.

**BIOGRAPHIES: ENTREPRENEURS**

**Jim Beckwourth (1798–1866)
Trapper, Author**

Beckwourth was born on April 26, 1798, to a father from a prominent Virginia family and an African American mother who is said to have been a slave. Beckwourth spent much of his life chasing adventure in the West, and became a well-known mountain man.

By 1842 Beckwourth had been married several times by the informal rules of the frontier, which only required being together as a condition of partnership; he made a living as a trapper and had many exploits in the American West. Once returning to the Rocky Mountains after serving with the U.S. Army during the Seminole wars, Beckwourth decided to open a trading post near what came to be Pueblo, Colorado. In 1850 after joining the California gold rush, he found a mountain pass through to California that bears his name. He opened an inn at the pass and by 1851 was guiding wagon trains through.

Beckwourth became quite famous as his memoirs and stories of his adventures were published in 1856. He later returned to Denver and opened another trading post. Wanting to get back to the adventure in the West, Beckwourth signed up as a scout with the Army to fight the Cheyenne Indians. In 1866 Beckwourth died of food poisoning while riding to a Crow encampment.
Malcolm CasSelle (1970–)
Technology
Malcolm CasSelle was born on March 22, 1970, in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Early in his life CasSelle developed a passion for computers and writing programs. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1991 and later earned a master's degree from Stanford University. CasSelle was part of the Japan MIT program after his undergraduate work, and while overseas he worked for Shroders Securities and NTT Software Labs. In the States he worked for Apple Computers and Blast Publishing.

In 1995 CasSelle and business partner E. David Ellington co-founded NetNoir Inc., an African American-oriented online website. The site offered a wide scope of news, information, and events within the African American community. CasSelle is currently director of Holo Personal Growth Partners, a marketing and advertising firm.

Kenneth Chenault (1951–)
Corporate Executive

Chenault joined American Express in 1981 as director of strategic planning for the Travel Related Services. In 1983 he was promoted to vice president of merchandise services and from 1984 to 1986 served as senior vice president and general manager of marketing. Under his direction the division jumped from $150 million to $500 million. In 1991 Chenault was named president of the American Express Card, and in 1993 he was named president of the American Express Travel Related Services U.S.A.

By 1995 Chenault had earned the position of vice chairman of the company and established himself as the highest-ranking African American in corporate America. By 1997 Chenault reached new heights as president and chief operating officer, and in 2001 Chenault was named CEO of American Express, and the second most powerful African American executive. He was an effective and productive leader at the helm of American Express and he inspired others by giving commencement speeches at Howard University in 2008 and Fisk University in 2010.

Comer Cottrell (1931–)
Personal Care Entrepreneur
Comer Cottrell was born on December 7, 1931, in Mobile, Alabama. After graduating from the University of Detroit in 1952 and entering the world of work, Cottrell noticed while working at a post exchange on a military base that there were no hair care products for African Americans. In 1970 Cottrell began his company.

With an empty Los Angeles warehouse, $600, and a typewriter, Cottrell began marketing his first product, hair spray, to barber shops and beauty salons with a moderate degree of success. By 1975 Pro-line opened a distribution center in Birmingham, Alabama, and by 1980 the company had expanded far beyond Los Angeles and moved to Dallas. Pro-line's revenues had increased from $36 million in 1989 to $104 million in 2000. Proline continues in its success and the company remains a family affair in its leadership.

Cottrell has been a strong and positive presence in the community. He purchased the property of bankrupt Bishop College in 1986 for $1.5 million. As an advocate for education in the black community he was able to persuade Paul Quinn College, an African Methodist Episcopal church-supported institution to move to the location. Cottrell provided $1.7 million to help with renovations of the site.

Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable (c. 1750–1818)
Chicago Founder
Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable was reportedly born in 1750 in Haiti to a French father and African-
born slave mother. It is believed that he was educated in Paris and came to North America through Louisiana or French Canada.

In the early 1770s Du Sable established the first settlement in an area which was later called Chicago. After a period away from this settlement, serving as a liaison between Native Americans and the British in St. Clair, Du Sable returned to expand the scope of the settlement. He built a poultry house, a bakery, a stable, a horse mill, a dairy, a smokehouse, and a workshop. As a frontiersman he also trapped animals and traded various goods. Because of Du Sable's efforts Chicago became a key center for commerce on the frontier.

In 1788 Du Sable married a Potawatomi woman, Kittihawa, or Catherine, and they had two children. After a failed attempt at becoming chief in 1800 Du Sable sold his holdings and moved to St. Charles, Missouri. He died, it is assumed in poverty, on August 28, 1818.

**Reginald F. Lewis (1942–1993)**

*Business Executive*

Lewis was born December 7, 1942, in Baltimore, Maryland. He received an A.B. from Virginia State College in 1965 and a law degree from Harvard Law School in 1968. He first worked with the firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison until 1970. He was a partner in Murphy, Thorpe & Lewis, the first African American law firm on Wall Street until 1973. Between 1973 and 1989 Lewis was in private practice as a corporate lawyer. In 1989 he became president and CEO of TLC Beatrice International Holdings Inc. With TLC's leveraged acquisition of the Beatrice International Food Company, Lewis became the head of the largest African American-owned business in the United States. TLC Beatrice had revenues of $1.54 billion in 1992.

Lewis was a member of the American and National Bar Associations and the National Conference of Black Lawyers. He was on the board of directors of the New York City Off-Track Betting Corporation, the Central Park Conservancy, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and WNET–Channel 13, the public television station in New York. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award presented by the American Association of MESBIC and the Black Enterprise Achievement Award for the Professions. Lewis died on January 19, 1993, in New York.

**Samuel Metters (1934–)**

*Strategic Planning*

Samuel Metters, a native of Austin, Texas, earned his B.S from Prairie View A&M University in architectural engineering and a B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley in architecture and urban planning. He later earned an M.S. in systems management as well as an M.S. and Ph.D. in public administration from the University of Southern California.

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Metters began Metters Industries in the basement of his residence in 1981 and in 2010 the company had grown to include six offices nationwide. The firm, which has over 350 employees, works with various agencies to analyze their goals and develop strategic plans to meet those goals. Clients have included the IRS, Northwest Airlines, Howard University, Federal Express, and Fox Studios. In 2002 annual sales were $20 million, down from a high of $34 million.

Rose Meta Morgan (1912–)
Hair Care Entrepreneur

Rosa Meta Morgan was born in Shelby, Mississippi, in 1912. Her father moved the family of thirteen to Chicago when Morgan was six years old. Although Morgan dropped out of school she did attend Chicago’s Morris School of Beauty and began earning money styling hair. In 1938 she styled the hair of Ethel Waters, a famous African American actress and entertainer, and was invited to accompany her to New York as her hair dresser.

In 1939 Morgan opened her own salon and was inundated with clients. She leased an old dilapidated mansion and renovated it. Approximately three years later in 1943 she opened the Rose Meta House of Beauty Inc. located in Harlem. Her clientele increased to as many as one thousand customers a week and her staff increased to twenty-nine. Morgan also began making and selling beauty products and fashion designs. Morgan bought and refurbished a new building and in 1955 opened a new location for her House of Beauty. The new location included a dressmaking department, a charm school, a wig salon, and a fitness department. Also in 1955 Morgan married Joe Louis, the boxer, but the marriage was annulled in 1958.

In the early 1960s Morgan co-founded the New Jersey Savings and Loan Association, and in 1965 Morgan founded the Freedom National Bank, the only bank in New York run by an African American and for the African American community. Morgan retired in the 1980s having created some of the most successful and innovative businesses in the African American community. She remained active well into her nineties.

Stanley O’Neal (1951–)
Corporate Executive

Earnest Stanley O’Neal was born in Roanoke, Alabama, on October 7, 1951. His family moved to Atlanta where he worked for General Motors while in high school. O’Neal earned his undergraduate degree in 1974 from the General Motors Institute, later named Kettering University. He was awarded a scholarship from General Motors to attend Harvard Business School where he earned an M.B.A. in 1978. After working for General Motors, first as an analyst and then a director in the treasury division, he left to join Merrill Lynch in 1986. O’Neal served on General Motors’s board of directors from 2001 to 2006.

Between 1986 and 2000 O’Neal held key positions at Merrill Lynch as managing director of Investment Banking, head of the Financial Services Group, co-head of the Corporate and Institutional Client Group and CEO of the Private Client Group. O’Neal has been credited with moving the firm from a promoter of stock trading to one that offered wealth management and financial planning.

In 2001 O’Neal was named president and chief operating officer of Merrill Lynch. During the sub-prime crisis in 2007 Merrill Lynch suffered losses of $8 billion, which were assigned to the leadership strategy of O’Neal. He left Merrill that same year in possession of a golden parachute compensation package valued at $161.5 million. On January 18, 2008, O’Neal was named to the board of directors of Alcoa.

Richard Dean Parsons (1948–)
Corporate Executive

Richard Dean Parsons was born on April 4, 1948, in Brooklyn, New York’s Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. He graduated high school at the age of sixteen and attended college at the Uni-
versity of Hawaii, where he played varsity basketball. Parsons graduated in 1968 and went on to earn his J.D., at the top of his class, from Union University of Albany Law School in 1971.

Parsons's first position in the work force was as a member of New York governor Nelson Rockefeller's staff. Parsons continued in his position when Rockefeller became vice president under President Gerald Ford in 1974. He stayed in government until 1977 when he left and joined the law firm Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler. He became a partner in the firm in 1979. He had an impressive clientele, including Happy Rockefeller and Estée Lauder.

In 1988 Parsons was named chief operating officer of the Dime Savings Bank of New York and was the first African American male to manage a financial institution. He remained with Dime Savings until 1993. Parsons's leadership was again called upon in 2001 when he was named CEO of the AOL Time Warner Corporation. At Time Warner, Parsons had served, during his tenure, in the positions of chairman and president. As CEO he was able to put the company on the path to sustainable growth, increase their balance sheet, and simplify their corporate structure. Parsons left Time Warner in December 2007. In February 2009 he was named chairman of the board of Citigroup Inc., the eighth largest firm in the United States.

Russell Simmons (1957–)
Music Producer

Simmons was born in the middle-class neighborhood of Hollis in Queens, New York, on October 4, 1957. In 1970 after having some involvement with gangs while a teenager, he decided to take classes in sociology at City College of New York. Although he did not complete college, Simmons saw an opportunity. He recognized the influence that rap music had on young urban African Americans telling their story. The crowds that came to parks and street corners to hear their performances encouraged him to promote local artists and begin Def Jam Recordings in 1984 with partner Rick Rubin. His efforts set the foundation that revolutionized hip-hop.

Simmons's involvement with hip-hop and the fashion that supported this urban music helped to inspire a clothing line Simmons called Phat Farm. It became one aspect of Simmons's multi-faceted business, Rush Communications. The firm encompassed films, television shows, management services, a magazine and advertising company, and clothing. By 1992 Rush Communications was the second largest African American-owned entertainment company in the nation. In 1999 Simmons sold his stake in Def Jam Records to Universal Music Group for $100 million. In 2004 he sold Phat Farm for $140 million.

Naomi R. Sims (1949–2009)
Model, Author, Entrepreneur

Naomi R. Sims was born March 30, 1949, in Oxford, Mississippi. She attended New York University (where she studied psychology) and the Fashion Institute of Technology, both on scholarships.

Sims was a fashion model with the Ford Agency in New York from 1970 to 1973. She was the first African American woman to be a high fashion model and the first to appear in a television commercial. She also appeared on the cover of Life magazine.

In 1970 Sims began to lecture and write fashion and beauty articles on a freelance basis. In 1973 she co-developed a new fiber for her line of wigs and founded the Naomi Sims Collection, which by 1977 reported annual revenues of $4 million. Sims has also written a number of books, including All about Health and Beauty for the Black Woman (1975), How to Be a Top Model (1979), All about Hair Care for the Black Woman (1982), and All about Success for the Black Woman.

In 1969 and 1970 Sims was voted Model of the Year by International Mannequins and won
the Ladies’ Home Journal Women of Achievement Award. For her work with underprivileged children in Bedford-Stuyvesant; she also won an award from the New York City Board of Education. In 1977 Sims was voted into the Modeling Hall of Fame by International Mannequins and made the International Best Dressed List, 1971–73 and 1976–77. Sims has also received recognition for her fund-raising efforts for sickle-cell anemia and cancer research. She belonged to the NAACP and worked closely with drug rehabilitation programs. Sims died of breast cancer on August 1, 2009, in Newark, New Jersey.

**Percy Sutton (1920–2009)**

*Business Executive, Attorney*

Sutton was born on November 24, 1920, in San Antonio, Texas. He graduated from the Phillis Wheatley High School and attended a number of colleges, including Prairie View College, Tuskegee Institute, and the Hampton Institute. His education was interrupted by World War II when he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was promoted to captain and served as a combat intelligence officer in the Italian and Mediterranean theaters. He was decorated with Combat Stars for his service.

After his discharge, Sutton attended law school on the G.I. Bill, first at Columbia University in New York, and then Brooklyn Law School where he received an LL.B. in 1950. During the Korean conflict Sutton re-enlisted in the USAF and served as an intelligence officer and a trial judge advocate.

Returning to civilian life, he opened a law office in Harlem with his brother and another attorney. In 1964 he was elected to the New York State Assembly, where he served until 1966. In 1966 he was appointed and later elected to the office of president of the borough of Manhattan, a post he held until 1977. Sutton, with his brother Oliver, and Clarence B. Jones founded the Inner-City Broadcasting Corporation in 1971. They purchased the first black-owned radio station in New York City, WLIB-AM. In 1987 Sutton was awarded the Spingarn Medal by the NAACP which honors, annually, outstanding achievement by an African American.

Sutton has been a civil rights advocate both as an attorney and a politician. He was a national director of the Urban League and president of the New York branch of the NAACP, and he was voted Assemblyman of the Year by the Intercollegiate Legislative Assembly in 1966. Sutton has served as a director of the Museum of the City of New York and the American Museum of Natural History.

Sutton died on December 26, 2009, and is buried in his hometown of San Antonio, Texas, in the Gates of Heaven Memorial Cemetery.

**John W. Thompson (1949–)**

*Corporate Executive*

John Wendell Thompson was born on April 24, 1949, in Fort Dix, New Jersey. Thompson earned his B.A. in business administration from Florida A&M University in 1971 and earned an M.S. in management sciences from Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Sloan School of Management in 1982.

Thompson joined IBM in 1971 and worked his way through the ranks to the senior level position of general manager of IBM’s American unit. In 1999 after twenty-eight years Thompson left IBM and became chief executive officer of Symantec Corporation, a software company. Thompson’s leadership strategy focused on corporate security solutions and increased the company’s revenue from $634 million to $944 million in two years.

Thompson’s leadership has broadened the exposure of Symantec and provided services to some of the largest enterprises in the world.

**Madam Sarah C. J. Walker (1867–1919)**

*Entrepreneur*

Walker was born Sarah Breedlove near Delta, Louisiana, in 1867. She was orphaned as a child, raised by a sister in Vicksburg, Mississippi, mar-
ried at the age of fourteen, and widowed in 1887 at the age of twenty.

Walker moved with her daughter to St. Louis, where she earned a living by taking in laundry and sewing. By 1905 she had become interested in hair care products for African American women and had begun working on a hot comb and her “Wonderful Hair Grower.” In 1906 she moved to Denver and, with $1.50 in her pocket, started a hair preparations company. She soon married C.J. Walker, a newspaper journalist who taught her the fundamentals of advertising and mail-order promotion. In 1908 she moved with her daughter to Pittsburgh, where she founded a beauty school that trained cosmetologists in the use of her products. Her husband continued the couple’s advertising plan of traveling to different locations to promote her products and train sales agents.

In 1910, with a more central location in mind, she moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, where she established a laboratory and factory and developed a nationwide network of five thousand sales agents, mostly African American women.

Her business prospered and Walker became very wealthy. She had a townhouse in Harlem and a custom-built mansion on the Hudson River near Irvington, New York. She died in New York on May 25, 1919.

Walker was a strong believer in self-reliance and education. She was proud of her accomplishments, especially of providing employment for thousands of African Americans who might otherwise have had less meaningful jobs. Walker was also a genius at marketing, promotion, and mail-order sales. Beneficiaries of her estate included Mary McLeod Bethune’s school in Daytona, Florida, and other African American schools, the NAACP, and the Frederick Douglass home restoration project in Florida.

Maggie Lena Walker (1867–1934)  
Entrepreneur

Walker was born on or around July 15, 1867, in Richmond, Virginia. She was the daughter of Elizabeth Draper, a former slave, and Eccles Cuthbert, a New York journalist of Irish extraction.

Walker attended Richmond public schools, and after graduating in 1883 she taught in the Richmond schools for three years before marrying building contractor Armstead Walker in 1886.

While she had been in school, Walker joined the Grand United Order of Saint Luke, a mutual aid society that served as an insurance underwriter for African Americans. Walker became active in the organization and held a number of lesser positions before becoming the Right Worthy Grand Secretary in 1899. She soon changed the name of the organization to the Independent Order of Saint Luke and moved its headquarters to Richmond.

In 1903 she became the head of the Saint Luke Penny Bank and the first woman in the United States to hold such a position. Although legally separate, the bank had a close financial association with the Independent Order of Saint Luke. The bank later became the Saint Luke Bank and Trust Company and finally the Consolidated Bank and Trust Company.

By 1924, under Walker’s guidance, the Order had a membership of one hundred thousand, a new headquarters building, more than two thousand employees, and its own newspaper, the Saint Luke Herald.

Walker was active in many other organizations, including the National Association of Colored Women, the Virginia Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, and the federation’s Industrial School for Colored Girls. In 1912 she founded the Richmond Council of Colored Women and was a founding member of the Negro Organization Society, a blanket association for African American clubs and organizations.

She was a board member of the NAACP from 1923 to 1934 and the recipient of an honorary degree from Virginia Union University. In 1927 she received the Harmon Award for Distinguished Achievement.
Tyra Banks (1973–)
Model, Talk Show Host

Tyra Banks, a top fashion model who has become a multimedia personality, was born December 4, 1973, in Los Angeles, California. Banks's extraordinary modeling career began in 1991 when her impressive runway performance in Paris, France, earned her a spot in numerous other shows. Banks's career in modeling earned her attention as one of the 50 Most Beautiful People in 1994 and 1996 and Supermodel of the Year in 1997.

In 2005 Banks retired from modeling and began an acting and movie career. With experience as a producer for the television show America's Next Top Model, Banks launched The Tyra Banks Show, a daytime talk show. The show was very successful and won several daytime Emmy Awards. Banks has started a scholarship at her alma mater for African American girls, founded a camp for teenage girls, and written the book Tyra's Beauty Inside and Out. She shares her experiences as a young woman and as an entrepreneur in her role as a motivational speaker. Her talents and burgeoning role as media mogul continues to earn attention.

Ed Bradley (1941–2006)
Journalist, Television News Correspondent

A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Edward R. Bradley received a B.S. in education from Cheyney State College in Cheyney, Pennsylvania. From 1963 to 1967 Bradley worked as a disc jockey and news reporter for Wandas radio in Philadelphia. From there he moved on to WCBS radio in New York. He joined CBS as a stringer in the Paris bureau in 1971. Within a few months he was transferred to the Saigon bureau, where he remained until he was assigned to the Washington bureau, serving from June 1974 to 1978 as a CBS correspondent.

Until 1981 Bradley served as anchor for the CBS Sunday Night News and as principal correspondent for CBS Reports. In 1981 he replaced Dan Rather as a correspondent for the weekly news program 60 Minutes. In 1992 Bradley was made host of the CBS news program Street Stories.

Bradley's effective role as correspondent earned eleven Emmy Awards, two Alfred I. DuPont–Columbia University Awards for broadcast journalism, a George Foster Peabody Broadcasting Award, a George Polk Award, and an NCAA Anniversary Award. He also earned in 1992 an Emmy for “Made In China,” a segment on 60 Minutes, in 1993 the Sol Taischoff Award, and in 2000 Bradley was inducted into the Deadline Club Hall of Fame by the New York chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Bradley died on November 9, 2006, of complications from leukemia.

James Brown (1951–)
Sports Anchor

Brown, who was born in Washington, D.C., on February 25, 1951, built a career as a sports broadcaster beginning in 1984. After earning a B.A. from Harvard University in 1973, and majoring in government, Brown was drafted by the Atlanta Hawks (but failed to make the team). He began his broadcasting career as an analyst for CBS Sports.

Brown went on to host the 1992 Winter Olympics, the CBS Sports Saturday/Sunday, the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics, the Fox Saturday Night Fight programs, and in 2002 he hosted his own show The James Brown Show. In 2001 Brown was awarded the prestigious Sportscaster of the Year Award. Brown currently hosts Inside the NFL and CBS's The NFL Today.

Tony Brown (1933–)
Commentator, Columnist, Producer

Tony [William Anthony] Brown, born in Charleston, West Virginia, is probably best known as the producer and host of one of the longest-
running minority affairs programs in history, *Tony Brown's Journal*. Brown received his bachelor of arts degree in 1959 and his master's degree in social work in 1961 from Wayne State University in Detroit. Brown took a job with the *Detroit Courier* as a drama critic. It was during this time that he began to be active in the civil rights movement, helping to organize the 1963 “March to Freedom” with Martin Luther King Jr. in Detroit. After leaving the paper, where he had worked up to the position of city editor, Brown landed a job with the local PBS station, WTVS, where he became involved in television programming and production. At WTVS he produced the station's first series aimed at a black audience, *C.P.T.* (Colored People’s Time). He joined the New York staff of the PBS program *Black Journal* in 1970 as the show's executive producer and host—in 1977 the show's name was changed to *Tony Brown's Journal*.

In 1971 Brown founded and became the first dean of Howard University's School of Communications. He continued in that post until 1974. Brown has been an advocate of community and self-help programs. He has written the books *Black Lies, White Lies: The Truth According to Tony Brown* (1995) and *Empower the People: A 7-Step Plan to Overthrow the Conspiracy that Is Stealing Your Money and Freedom* (1998). He has also written, produced, and directed the film *The White Girl*, and has appeared as a commentator for National Public Radio. He is recipient of the NAACP Image Award and serves as president of Tony Brown Productions in New York City.

**Xernona Clayton (1930–)**

*Broadcasting Executive*

Clayton was born Xernona Brewster on August 30, 1930, in Muskogee, Oklahoma. She received a B.S. from Tennessee State University in 1952. She also attended the Ru-Jac School of Modeling in Chicago.

Clayton was the first African American woman to have her own television show in the South when she became hostess of the *Xernona Clayton Show* at WAGA-TV in Atlanta. She has also been a newspaper columnist for the *Atlanta Voice*, taught public school in Chicago and Los Angeles, and has dabbled in photography and fashion modeling.

Clayton has also been active in the civil rights movement. Her first husband, now deceased, was the public relations director for Martin Luther King Jr. Clayton came to the attention of Atlanta officials, who appointed her as community-relations director of the Model Cities Program. She has also raised funds for sickle-cell anemia research and the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthplace Memorial Restoration Committee.

In 1968 Clayton won the Outstanding Leadership Award given by the National Association of Market Developers and a year later the Bronze Woman of the Year in Human Relations award given by Phi Delta Kappa sorority. She is also the recipient of the Georgia Associated Press Award for Superior Television Programming (1969–1971).

Clayton is the founder of the Atlanta chapter of Media Women and a member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. She has co-starred in a major motion picture, *House on Skull Mountain*. Clayton has remarried and is the executive producer of the Turner Broadcasting Network’s Trumpet Awards, honoring the achievements of African Americans.

**Don Cornelius (1936–)**

*Broadcasting Executive*

Cornelius is best known as the announcer and creator of *Soul Train*, one of the most widely watched dance and music shows in the twentieth century, particularly in the African American community. Don Cornelius was born on September 27, 1936, in Chicago, Illinois. After working as a radio announcer and formulating his ideas for a television show, *Soul Train*, it was finally realized on August 17, 1970, and was broadcast in the local Chicago area.

*Soul Train* had mass appeal particularly for the African American community which had little to
no entertainment with community focus. Billed as a dance party, the show’s success prompted the spinoff of an award shop specifically for African American artists. By 1992 Soul Train had become the longest-running syndicated music program. Although Cornelius retired in 1993 the show continued to run. Soul Train, which ran until 2006, holds the record as the longest-running syndicated program in television history. The show, which was sold to Madvision Entertainment in 2008, has been shown as reruns on BET’s spinoff station, Centric, as of 2009. The Soul Train Awards created in 1986 continues to operate and is regarded with high esteem by the black community and the music community as well.

Cornelius, with his deep voice, is also known for the closing catch phrase of The Soul Train Show: “You can bet your last money, it’s gonna be a stone gas, honey! I’m Don Cornelius, and as always, we wish you love, peace and soul!”

T. Thomas Fortune (1856–1928)
Journalist, New York Age Founder
Timothy Thomas Fortune was one of the most prominent black journalists involved in the flourishing black press of the post–Civil War era.

Born in Florida, on October 3, 1856, the son of a Reconstruction politician, Fortune was particularly productive before his thirtieth year, completing such works as Black and White: Land, Labor and Politics in the South (1884) and The Negro in Politics (1886), while in his twenties.

Fortune attended Howard University for two years, leaving to marry Carrie Smiley of Jacksonville, Florida. The couple went to New York in 1878, with Fortune taking a job as a printer for the New York Sun. In time Fortune caught the attention of Sun editor Charles A. Dana, who eventually promoted him to the editorial staff of the paper.

Fortune also edited the Globe, a black daily, and was later chief editorial writer for the Negro World. In 1900 Fortune joined Booker T. Washington in helping to organize the successful National Negro Business League. His later activity with Washington gained him more notoriety than his earlier writing, although the writing is clearly more vital in affording him an important niche in the history of black protest.

In 1883 Fortune founded the New York Age, the paper with which he sought to “champion the cause” of his race. In time the Age became the leading black journal of opinion in the United States. One of Fortune’s early crusades was against the practice of separate schools for the races in the New York educational system.

Fortune was later responsible for coining the term “Afro-American” as a substitute for Negro in New York newspapers. He also set up the Afro-American Council, an organization that he regarded as the precursor of the Niagara Movement. In 1907 Fortune sold the Age, although he remained active in journalism as an editorial writer for several black newspapers.

Mal Goode (1908–1995)
Television News Correspondent
Malvin Russell Goode had been with the Pittsburgh Courier fourteen years when, in 1962, he joined ABC to cover the United Nations. His first test was the Cuban missile crisis that arose just two months later, during which Goode distinguished himself with incisive television and radio reports during the long hours of U.N. debate.

Goode was born in White Plains, Virginia; educated in the public schools of Homestead, Pennsylvania; and graduated from the University of Pittsburgh. He was employed for twelve years as a laborer in the steel mills while in high school and college and for five years after graduation. In 1936 he was appointed to a post in Juvenile Court and became boys work director of the Centre Avenue YMCA, where he led the fight to eliminate discrimination in Pittsburgh branches of the YMCA.

Goode served with the Pittsburgh Housing Authority for six years and in 1948 joined the Pittsburgh Courier. The following year he started a career in radio with station KQV, doing a fifteen-minute news show two nights each week. In
1950 he started a five-minute daily news program on WHOD.

Goode was named news director at WHOD in 1952 and he was the first black to hold membership in the National Association of Radio and TV News Directors.

For two months in 1963 he joined with three colleagues to conduct courses in journalism for 104 African students in seminars at Lagos, Nigeria; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Goode died of a stroke on October 12, 1995, in Pittsburgh.

**Ed Gordon (1960–)**

*Television Anchor*

Edward L. Gordon III was born in Lansing, Michigan, and attended college at Western University. After graduating with a degree in communications and political science in 1982, Gordon began his broadcasting career in 1983 in Detroit as host of the *Detroit Free Journal*.

Gordon moved to Washington, D.C., in 1988 for an up-and-coming broadcasting company called Black Entertainment Network (BET). Gordon took on the role as newscaster as well as offering several special interest shows such as the 1992 response to the Los Angeles Riots, *Black Men Speak Out*, and the 1996 interview with O.J. Simpson, after Simpson was found not guilty of the murder of his wife. Gordon interviewed presidents and figures of diverse social and political perspectives, which earned him considerable influence in the industry.

In 1996, NBC hired Gordon on a three-year contract for $1.5 million. In 2004 he worked on the CBS news show *60 Minutes* and in 2005 began hosting his own show on NPR, *New & Notes*, focusing on African American issues. Gordon continued to work for BET on specific assignments and latter returned to BET in 2010 to host *Weekly with Ed Gordon* among other newsworthy projects.

**Earl Graves (1935–)**

*Publisher, Media Executive*

In the 1970s Earl Graves emerged as one of America’s leading publishers and exponents of black entrepreneurship. Within a few short years his magazine, *Black Enterprise*, was accepted as the authority on African Americans in business and as an important advocate for an active, socially responsive black middle class.

Born in Brooklyn, Graves graduated from Morgan State College. In 1965 he was hired to a position on the staff of Robert Kennedy, then senator from New York. In 1968 he organized Earl Graves Associates, a firm that serves as a consultant on urban affairs and black economic development, and published *Black Enterprise*. In 1998 Graves started *Black Enterprise Unlimited*, which focused on business and financial concerns of the African American businessperson. Graves was honored for his commitment and outstanding career in the business area with a Spingarn Medal from the NAACP.

**Bryant Gumbel (1948–)**

*Television Anchor*

A native of New Orleans, Bryant Gumbel was born on September 29, 1948, and grew up in Chicago. He received a liberal arts degree from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, in 1970. Before embarking on his career in television, Gumbel was a sportswriter. After submitting his first piece to *Black Sports* magazine in 1971, he was given additional freelance assignments and was soon hired as a staff writer. Within eight months he was elevated to editor in chief.

Gumbel began his broadcasting career in October 1972 when he was named a weekend sportscaster for KNBC, the NBC station in Los Angeles. Within a year, he became weekday sportscaster and was appointed the station’s sports director in 1976. He remained in that post until July 1980.
In January 1981 Bryant Gumbel was named co-anchor (with Jane Pauley) of the Today show on NBC. Prior to that time, Gumbel had made regular sports reports on Today, although his primary responsibilities were with NBC Sports as host of pre-game programming during coverage of the National Football League, Major League Baseball, and other sports broadcasts.

After leaving the Today show in 1997, the networks got in a bidding war over Gumbel, which resulted in a five-year $5 million a year contract. He anchored the CBS This Morning show in 1999 and returned to television news in 2000. When his contract ended in 2002, he hosted HBO Real Sports and served as a NFL announcer in 2005.

Cheryl Willis Hudson (1948–)
Publishing Executive

A native of Portsmouth, Virginia, Cheryl Willis Hudson graduated cum laude from Oberlin College and has studied at Northeastern University and Parsons School of Design. Prior to founding Just Us Books, she worked as an art editor and designer for several publishers, including Houghton Mifflin, Macmillan Publishing, and Arete Publishing.

Hudson as publisher, along with Wade Hudson as president and chief executive officer, founded Just Us Books, Inc. in 1988 to publish children’s books and learning material that focus on the African American experience. The company grossed over $1 million in 1995 and has continued to flourish. Just Us Books has been awarded the Parent’s Choice Award, the Multicultural Publisher’s Exchange Award, and the American Booksellers Association Award “Best Seller of 1994.” Hudson is also a published author whose works include Hold Christmas in Your Heart: African American Songs, Poems and Stories for the Holidays.

Cathy Hughes (1947–)
Radio and Television Host, Entrepreneur

Catherine (Cathy) Liggins Hughes, born Catherine Elizabeth Woods on April 22, 1947, in Omaha, Nebraska, is the founder of Radio One, Inc., the largest African American-owned broadcasting company in America. Hughes's company also became the first female-owned radio station to dominate in a major market, the first female-owned radio station ranked number one in a major market, and the first publicly traded stock on the U.S. stock exchange headed by an African American woman. Hughes and her son, Alfred C. Liggins II, the president and CEO of the company, dominate in the markets of Atlanta, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Detroit, and Philadelphia.

Hughes's commitment to the urban market and her success in reaching that market began first with KOWH radio station in Omaha. Hughes began working for Howard University's radio station while serving as lecturer in the School of Communications. She was so successful she became vice president and general manager. Hughes created the popular and copied format, “Quiet Storm,” a late night romantic listening, and the twenty-four-hour talk radio from an African American perspective when she purchased her first radio station in Washington, D.C., in 1980. Hughes was strongly invested in the advancement of the black community and consistently addressed topics that were relevant, often controversial, but always geared toward positive community building.

As the result of Hughes's efforts she has been awarded numerous honors such as the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Washington Area Broadcasters Association, the Baltimore NAACP's Parren J. Mitchell Award, and the 2001 National Association of Broadcasters Distinguished Service Award.

On January 19, 2004, Hughes partnered with Comcast, one of the nation's largest pay television providers, and launched TV One Inc., a television station catering to the African American lifestyle. By December 2006 the station was seen in over thirty-three million households. Currently her son, Alfred Liggins III, serves as CEO of Radio One and TV One.
Charlayne Hunter-Gault (1942–)
Journalist

Hunter-Gault was born in Due West, South Carolina, on February 27, 1942. Her involvement in issues concerning her community began in college by breaking the color line, along with another student, at the University of Georgia. She became the first woman to enroll and later graduate receiving her B.A in 1963 in journalism. She went on to work at the New Yorker, the New York Times, and local television stations. In 1978 Hunter-Gault joined the MacNeil/Lehrer Report. She became the program’s first woman anchor and she remained there until 1997 when she left to serve as the PBS correspondent in South Africa. She became the bureau chief for PBS in South Africa from 2001 to 2005.

In 2005 Hunter-Gault was inducted into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame.

John H. Johnson (1918–2005)
Publisher, Media Executive

One of America’s foremost business executives, John H. Johnson sat at the head of the most prosperous and powerful black publishing companies in the United States. Beginning with Negro Digest in 1942, and following with Ebony in 1945, Johnson built a chain of journalistic successes that now also includes Jet, Ebony Jr., EM: Ebony Man, and Ebony South Africa.

Johnson was born in Arkansas City, Arkansas, on January 19, 1918, and at age six lost his father, a mill worker, and was raised by his mother and stepfather. His segregated schooling was obtained locally until the family moved to Chicago. Johnson attended DuSable High School in Chicago, excelling academically and in extracurricular activities, writing for the yearbook and school paper.

After Johnson graduated, an insurance executive heard a speech he delivered and was so impressed that he offered Johnson a partial scholarship at the University of Chicago. After two years, however, Johnson quit classes. He entered the Northwestern School of Commerce in 1938, studying for an additional two years before joining the Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company. While running the company’s house organ, it occurred to Johnson that a digest of weekly or monthly gathered news items of special interest and importance to the black community might achieve a wide black readership. The idea resulted in the creation of Negro Digest, a periodical containing both news reprints and feature articles. Of the latter, perhaps the most beneficial to circulation was Eleanor Roosevelt’s contribution, If I Were a Negro.

Buoyed by success, Johnson decided to approach the market with yet another offering, a pictorial magazine patterned after Life. The first issue of Ebony sold out its press run of twenty-five thousand copies and soon became a permanent staple in the world of journalism as large companies began to advertise regularly in it.

In addition to having served as president and publisher of Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., Johnson was chairman and chief executive officer of Supreme Life Insurance Company, chairman of WJPC-AM in Chicago, and president of Fashion Fair Cosmetics. He also developed the Ebony Fashion Fair, a traveling show managed by his wife, Eunice Johnson. He served on the board of directors of the Greyhound Corporation, Verex Corporation, Marina Bank, Supreme Life Insurance Company, and Zenith Radio Corporation. Johnson also served as a trustee for the Art Institute of Chicago and United Negro College Fund; on the advisory council of the Harvard Graduate School of Business; as a director for the Chamber of Commerce of the United States; and on the advertising council of Junior Achievement and Chicago USO. He received honorary doctoral degrees from numerous colleges and universities, and many honors and awards from civil and professional organizations. In 1989 Johnson wrote Succeeding Against the Odds: The Autobiography of a Great American Business. Johnson died August 8, 2005, and was succeeded in the company by his daughter, Linda Johnson Rice.
Robert L. Johnson (1946–)
Television Executive

Robert L. Johnson was born April 8, 1946, in Hickory, Mississippi. He earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois in 1968 and a master’s degree in public administration from Princeton University in 1972.

Robert Johnson worked for the Washington, D.C., Urban League, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and as a press secretary for the Honorable Walter E. Fauntroy, congressional delegate for Washington, D.C., before joining the National Cable Television Association in 1976. While serving as vice president of government relations for the association, Johnson came up with the idea of creating a cable channel aimed at black viewers. In 1989 he took out a $15,000 personal loan to start Black Entertainment Television (BET). Johnson was successful in creating a cable channel that developed programming catering to the interests of the African American community. BET Holding, Inc., also developed channels which offered jazz, films, and other programming.

In addition to running BET, Johnson functions as the publisher of magazines, including Emerge: A Black America’s News Magazine and Heart & Soul, a health and beauty magazine. He also heads Arabesque Books, a line of African American romance novels written by and for African Americans, and MSBET, an interactive website formed in a joint venture with Microsoft Corporation. Johnson has also served on numerous boards.

Johnson has been awarded the Broadcasting & Cable magazine’s Hall of Fame Award 1997 and Business Leader of the year from Washingtonian magazine in 1998, as well as an NAACP Image Award and Distinguished Alumni Award from Princeton University.

In 2001 Johnson sold BET to Viacom for $2.33 million and their assumption of $6 million in company debt.

Tom Joyner (1949–)
Radio Personality

Tom Joyner (also known as “The Fly Jock”) is known for reaching more African American listeners than any other radio or electronic medium. Joyner, who simultaneously hosted two radio shows—a morning show in Dallas and an afternoon show in Chicago in the 1980s—has informed and entertained his audience with a variety of programming.

Joyner, born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on November 23, 1949, began in radio after graduating from Tuskegee University. Joyner in his early years in radio learned the need for involvement in the community. Taking this to heart Joyner structured his shows to inform, inspire, and entertain his listeners. In 1994 Joyner became the first African American male to host a nationally syndicated radio show with the debut of the Tom Joyner Morning Show on the ABC Radio Network. Joyner’s shows have included scholarships to college students in need, done in partnership with the United Negro College Fund and the Tom Joyner Foundation, a nonprofit organization. Also featured are political commentary, comedy bits, and little known black history facts. Joyner was selected to the Radio Hall of Fame in 1998.

In 2003 Joyner founded Reach Media as the parent company of subsidiaries such as Black America Web.com, Tom Joyner Foundation, and also the Tom Joyner Morning Show. In 2005 Joyner launched a syndicated television show, but he decided not to continue production due to high costs.

Delano E. Lewis (1938–)
Broadcasting Executive

Delano Eugene Lewis, born in Arkansas City, Kansas, on November 12, 1938, began his career as a lawyer upon earning his degree from the
Washburn University School of Law in 1963. After serving in roles such as the attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice, volunteer for the Peace Corps, and other increasingly more responsible positions, he took a position at the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company. Lewis became the company's president in 1988 and in 1990 their chief executive officer.

In 1994 Lewis took the position of president and chief executive officer of National Public Radio (NPR). Because of his successes he was asked by Vice President Al Gore to serve as co-chair of the National Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee from 1994 to 1996. The committee's goal was to find new ways to development communication networks. Lewis resigned from NPR in 1998 and became ambassador to South Africa in 1999 to address problems such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic. He served until 2001. In 2006 he was named senior fellow at New Mexico State University, and in 2007 he was named the founding director of New Mexico University's International Relations Institute.

Edward T. Lewis (1940–)
Magazine Publisher

Edward T. Lewis was born in Bronx, New York, on May 15, 1940. Lewis, although well-trained in banking, aspired to branch out on his own. In 1969 after attending an entrepreneur seminar and being inspired to start his own unique black business, the first issues of Essence magazine hit the newsstands in May 1970. Although beginning with other partners, within four years only Lewis and Clarence O. Smith continued on with the magazine. The magazine, which was based on reaching the untapped market of black women, took until 1976 before it broke even. By 2002 Essence had a readership of 7.6 million and reached African American women ages seventeen to fifty.

In 2000 Essence Communications Partners, the company that publishes Essence magazine, merged with Time, Inc., a subsidiary of AOL Time Warner Inc. Lewis and Smith's partnership ended and each has been acknowledged for their business and entrepreneurial successes. During their partnership Lewis and Smith diversified the company's subsidiaries such as the Essence Awards, Essence Travel, Essence By-Mail, and other ventures, which expanded the scope, exposure, and marketing opportunities for the company. Lewis has received recognition and awards from the American Advertising Federation, the United Negro College Fund, the Democratic Women's Political Caucus, and the Black Women's Forum to name a few. Lewis remains chairman and CEO of Essence Communications Inc.

Haki Madhubuti (1941–)
Poet, Essayist, Publisher

Haki Madhubuti was born Don L. Lee in Little Rock, Arkansas, on February 23, 1942. Madhubuti studied at Wilson Junior College, Roosevelt University, and the University of Illinois, and received a master of fine arts degree from the University of Iowa. Lee was determined to become a writer while preparing himself during his college years. He published his first work, Think Black, in 1966; this was followed by Black Pride; For Black People (and Negroes Too) (1968); Don't Cry, Scream; Enemies: The Clash of Races (1969); Killing Memory: Seeking Ancestors (1987); Black Men: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous? (1990); Heart-Love: Wedding and Love Poems (1998); Tough Notes: Letters to a Young Black Men (2001); and Yellow Black: The First Twenty-one Years of a Poet’s Life (2005). He has taught and served as writer in residence at numerous universities, including Chicago State University, Cornell, Howard, and the University of Illinois.

Lee, who changed his name to Haki Madhubuti in 1973, was one of the founding members of the Organization of Black American Culture Writers Workshop, and has served as vice chairperson of the African Liberation Day Support Committee and on the executive council of the Congress of African People. He has also served as director of the Institute of Positive Ed-
ucation in Chicago, publisher and editor of Third World Press, president of the African American Publishers, and co-director of the National Black Holistic Retreat founded in 1984 by Madhubuti.

Third World Press was founded by Madhubuti in 1967 and has published numerous titles by African American writers, including Frances Cress-Welsing, Gwendolyn Brooks, Chancellor Williams, and Amiri Baraka. Third World Press is currently the longest running continuous African American press in the United States. Madhubuti has received the Distinguished Writers Award from the Middle Atlantic Writers Association and he is the recipient of the Paul Robeson Award from the African American Arts Alliance. He currently serves as director of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center at Chicago State University.

Robert McGruder (1942–2002)

Journalist, Newspaper Editor

Robert McGruder was born on March 31, 1942, in Louisville, Kentucky. He began his newspaper career in 1963 with the *Dayton Journal Herald*. In 1964 he was drafted and served two years in the U.S. Army. McGruder worked at the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* for several years as a reporter, editor, and was selected as managing editor in 1981. McGruder began working at the *Detroit Free Press* in 1986 and became managing editor in 1995. In that year McGruder not only became the first black executive director of the paper, but he also was selected as the first black president of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association.

McGruder was an advocate for diversity in the newspaper industry and supported various campaigns. He utilized opportunities to hire and promote qualified minorities to better serve the entire community. His efforts earned him in 2001 the John S. Knight Gold Medal given as the highest honor bestowed by the parent company Knight Ridder to an employee. After a battle with cancer McGruder died on April 12, 2002. After his death Knight Ridder established the Robert G. McGruder Scholarship to support promising young minority journalists enrolled at Wayne State.

Carl L. Murphy (1889–1967)

Journalist, Publisher

Carl L. Murphy was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on January 17, 1889. He was educated at Howard University in 1911, Harvard University in 1913, and the University of Jena in Berlin in 1913. He served as an educator at Howard University before taking the helm of the newspaper *The Afro-American*. Murphy developed the newspaper into a national voice for African Americans with the largest circulation of a black newspaper.

During the *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka*, in 1954, Murphy and his paper were advocates for the community. Once the case was over, Thurgood Marshall publicly acknowledged Murphy’s courage and support and in 1955 Murphy was awarded the Spingarn Medal. Murphy died on February 26, 1967.

Norma Quarles (1936–)

Television News Correspondent

Born in New York City, on November 11, 1936, Norma Quarles is an alumna of Hunter College and City College of New York. She first worked as a buyer for a New York specialty shop before moving to Chicago, where she became a licensed real estate broker.

In 1965 she began her broadcast career in Chicago at WSDM-Radio, working as a news reporter and disc jockey. She later returned to New York, where she joined NBC in 1966 for a one-year training program. After three years with KYC-TV in Cleveland, she was transferred to WNBC-TV. In 1978 Quarles moved to NBC News as a correspondent based in Chicago. She had been producing and reporting the *Urban Journal* series for WMAQ-TV for a year at that time. Before joining WMAQ, Quarles was an award-winning reporter for WNBC-TV in New York, where she also anchored the early local news broadcasts during the *Today* show. In 1988 Quarles left NBC, after twenty-one years, to join Cable News Network's New York bureau and was a news anchor from 1988 to 1990.
Quarles is a member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Sigma Delta Chi, and a board member of the Governor's National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. In 1990 she was inducted into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame and in 1993 received the CINR Golden Circle Award.

Dudley Randall (1914–2000)  
*Publisher, Poet, Librarian*

Dudley Randall was born in Washington, D.C., on January 14, 1914, and was living in Detroit by the time he was nine years old. An early harbinger of Randall's poetic talent was the appearance of one of his poems in the *Detroit Free Press* at the early age of thirteen. After serving in the U.S. Army Signal Corps from 1942 to 1946, Randall worked in the foundry at Ford Motor Company and as a postal carrier and clerk while attending Wayne State University in Detroit. He received his B.A. in 1949 and an M.A. in library science from the University of Michigan in 1951. He also did graduate work at the University of Ghana.

Randall worked in progressively responsible librarian positions at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri (1951–1954), Morgan State College in Baltimore, Maryland (1954–1956), and the Wayne County Federated Library System in Michigan (1956–1969). From 1969 to 1975 he was a reference librarian and poet in residence at the University of Detroit. In 1969 he also served as a visiting lecturer at the University of Michigan.

Randall’s love of poetry led to his founding of the Broadside Press in 1965, and in 1980 he founded the Broadside Poets Theater and the Broadside Poetry Workshop. Randall began Broadside Press to publish his own works, but later expanded it to include other poets. Randall sold Broadside Press in 1985 to Hilda and Donald Vest, who continue to operate the press.

Randall was active in many Detroit cultural organizations and institutions, including the Detroit Council for the Arts and the International Afro-American Museum in Detroit. In 1981 Randall received the Creative Artist Award in Literature from the Michigan Council for the Arts, and in 1986 he was named the first poet laureate of Detroit. Randall died on August 5, 2000.

Max Robinson (1939–1988)  
*Television News Correspondent*

Born in Richmond, Virginia, on May 1, 1939, Max Robinson attended Oberlin College, Virginia Union University, and Indiana University. He began his career as a news reader at WTOV-TV in Portsmouth, Virginia. In 1965 he worked as a studio floor director at WTOP-TV (now WUSA) in Washington, D.C., before moving on to WRC-TV to work as a news reporter, and to WTOP-TV, where he worked as an anchor.

In 1978 Robinson joined ABC's *World News Tonight*, becoming the first black network anchor. Almost immediately, Robinson took it upon himself to fight racism at whatever cost necessary. ABC management became frustrated with Robinson and moved him to the post of weekend anchor. In 1983 Robinson left ABC for WMAQ-TV in Chicago, where he remained until 1985.

Robinson was the recipient of three Emmy Awards, the Capital Press Club Journalist of the Year Award, the Ohio State Award, and an award from the National Education Association. He taught at Federal City College, in Washington, D.C., and the College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, Virginia. Robinson died of complications from acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) on December 20, 1988, in Washington, D.C.

Al Roker (1954–)  
*Television Broadcaster*

Albert Lincoln Roker Jr. was born on August 20, 1954, in New York, to parents with Jamaican and Barbados heritages. Although not initially interested in meteorology, Roker took a class in college which led to a part-time position as a weatherman. After graduating from State University at
Oswego, Roker took several positions at stations in Washington, D.C., and Cleveland, Ohio.

Roker returned to New York in 1983, and in 1995 replaced his retiring long-time supporter and fellow meteorologist, Willard Scott. Roker became the meteorologist on the NBC Today show. Roker has since created his own production company and is outspoken on issues both controversial and relevant.

Carl Rowan (1924–2000)
*Journalist, Broadcaster*

Carl Rowan was born August 11, 1925, in Ravenscroft, Tennessee. He attended Tennessee A&I (now Tennessee State University) in Nashville and Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. He received his bachelor of arts degree from Oberlin College in 1947; in 1948 he received a master of arts degree from the University of Minnesota.

In 1948 he was hired as a copywriter, later advancing to staff writer, by the Minneapolis Tribune, where he worked until 1961. In 1961 he was hired by the U.S. Department of State as deputy assistant secretary for public affairs. After three years with the Department of State, Rowan was appointed U.S. ambassador to Finland by President Lyndon Johnson in 1963, and in 1964 he was appointed director of the United States Information Agency, which operates overseas educational and cultural programs, including the worldwide radio service Voice of America. In 1965 Rowan resigned from the USIA.


Rowan served as a political commentator for the Post-Newsweek Broadcasting Company, and was a frequent panelist on the NBC program *Meet the Press* and the syndicated programs *Agronsky & Co.* and *Inside Washington*. In 1987 he was awarded by Columbia University the Alfred I. DuPont Silver Baton for the television documentary *Thurgood Marshall: The Man*. In 1998 he received the Victory Award for overcoming personal obstacles from the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, D.C. Rowan had learned how to walk again after the amputation of his right leg below the knee. Rowan died on September 13, 2000, of natural causes.

John B. Russwurm (1799–1851)
*Newspaper Founder*

Born in Port Antonio, Jamaica, on October 1, 1799, Russwurm graduated from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, in 1826. From Brunswick, Russwurm moved to New York, where on March 16, 1827, he and Samuel E. Cornish published the first edition of *Freedom’s Journal*—the nation’s first African American newspaper.

In 1829 Russwurm decided to immigrate to Monrovia, Liberia, where he published the *Liberia Herald* from 1830 to 1850. Cornish, who had left the paper in late 1827, resumed his role as editor in 1830, publishing the paper under the name *Rights of All*.

Russwurm went on to serve as superintendent of education in Monrovia, and later as governor of a settlement. Russwurm died on June 9, 1851.

Bernard Shaw (1940–)
*Television News Anchor*

Bernard Shaw was a Washington anchor for the Cable News Network (CNN) from the time the network went on the air on June 1, 1980, until his departure in February 28, 2001. Shaw often reported first-hand on major international news stories. He was present when the Chinese government’s tanks rolled into Tiananmen Square in
May 1989, crushing the student-led pro-democracy movement. In January 1991 Shaw, along with two other colleagues from CNN, was stranded in Baghdad when allied bombing attacks launched Operation Desert Storm. From their hotel room, Shaw and the others provided first-hand accounts of the bombing raid on the city.

Bernard Shaw was born on May 22, 1940, in Chicago. From as early as the age of fourteen he was interested in the things going on in the world. After four years in the Marines Shaw entered college at the University of Illinois in 1963, but left school in 1966 when offered a job in Washington, D.C., as a White House correspondent. Shaw's first job as a television journalist came in 1971 with CBS News at the network's Washington bureau. He conducted an exclusive interview with Attorney General John Mitchell at the height of the Watergate scandal. Shaw left CBS in 1977 to join ABC News as Miami bureau chief and Latin American correspondent. Shaw was one of the first reporters to file from location on the Jonestown massacre story in Guyana, and he and his team provided the only aerial photos of the mass suicide–murder site. ABC sent Shaw to Iran to report on the 1979 hostage crisis at the American Embassy in Tehran. He then returned to Washington as ABC's senior Capitol Hill correspondent.

Shaw has received numerous awards inclusive of induction into the Society of Professional Journalists in 1995, the Paul White Life Achievement Award from the Radio Television News Director's Association in 1996, induction into the Chicago Journalists Hall of Fame in 1997, and in that same year the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's Tex McCray Award for Journalism. With his final newscast in 2001 he noted it was harder for him to leave than it was to enter since he had invested so much of his life in making his career happen.

Carole Simpson (1940–)

**Television News Anchor**

Carole Simpson, a native of Chicago, graduated from the University of Michigan with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism and did graduate work in journalism at the University of Iowa. She first entered broadcasting in 1965 as a reporter for a local radio station, WCFL, in Morris, Illinois. In 1968 she moved to radio station WBBM in Chicago, and in 1970 she went to work as a reporter for the Chicago television station WMAQ.

Simpson made her first network appearance as a substitute anchor for NBC Nightly News and as anchor on NBC's Newsbreak on weekends. In 1982 Simpson joined ABC in Washington as a general assignment correspondent. She is currently an ABC News correspondent and weekend anchor.

Simpson has served as president of the Radio and Television Correspondents Association, as chairperson of the ABC Women's Advisory Board, and as a member of the board of directors of the Washington Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, and she is a member of Theta Sigma Phi. She has been awarded the Media Journalism Award, the Milestone Award in Broadcast Journalism from the National Commission of Working Women, and the Silver Bell Award from the Ad Council.

Simpson was awarded Journalist of the Year in 1992 and opened a Leadership Institute for African women journalists in Dakar, Senegal, in 1998. As of 2007 she has served as an educator for Emerson College.

**Tavis Smiley (1964–)**

**Political and Social Commentator**

Smiley, who was born on September 13, 1964, in Gulfport, Mississippi, began his involvement in community issues in his college years at Indiana University at Bloomington, Illinois. Also influenced by his involvement with Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, service to the community became a key career and life goal. Smiley earned his B.A. in law and public policy in 1986.

Smiley served as an aide to Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley from 1986 to 1990 and had an unsuccessful run for Los Angeles City Council in 1991. In 1996 Smiley became a social com-

Smiley had a successful show on Black Entertainment Television (BET) where he presented news, information, and talk. With the non-renewal of his contract with BET Smiley went on to work for ABC-TV and CNN. From 2001 to 2004 he hosted The Tavis Smiley Show on National Public Radio (NPR). In 2007 Smiley served as the moderator for two presidential campaigns.

In March 2006 The Smiley Group and Third World Press released the book The Covenant with Black America, which consisted of essays that offered statistics and a plan of action to move the African American community forward. The book became the number one nonfiction book by a black-owned publisher on the New York Times best-seller list.

Smiley has received numerous awards for his contributions to the field of media, including an Image Award from the NAACP and the Mickey Leland Humanitarian Award.

In 2000 the Essence Communications, Inc., merged with Time, Inc., a subsidiary of Time Warner, the nation’s largest publisher. On June 28, 2002, Smith resigned to pursue other interests after a thirty-two-year partnership with Lewis. This brought additional attention since the partnership had just been awarded the Black Enterprise Marathon Men Award for the nation’s largest black-owned business.

Smith has received many awards for his advocacy for minority representation, and he was a founding member of the African American Anti-Defamation Association. Smith continues his entrepreneurial interest and launched the music production company, You Entertainment, in 2005.

Pierre Sutton (1947–)
Broadcast Executive

Pierre Sutton is president of Inner City Broadcasting Corporation in New York City and president of its radio stations in New York and California. He is the son of Percy E. Sutton, chairman of the board of Inner City Broadcasting and former borough president of Manhattan.

Sutton was born in New York City on February 1, 1947. He received a B.A. from the University of Toledo in 1968 and attended New York University in 1972.

He began his career in 1971 as vice president of Inner City Research and Analysis Corporation, was executive editor of the New York Courier newspaper in 1971 and 1972, served as public affairs director for WLIB-Radio from 1972 to 1975, was vice president of Inner City Broadcasting from 1975 to 1977, and became president in 1977. He has served as a board member of the Minority Investment Fund, first vice president of the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters, chairman of the Harlem Boy Scouts, member of the board and executive committee of the New York City Marathon, trustee of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, board member of the Better Business Bureau of Harlem, and member of the board of the Hayden Planetarium.
Susan L. Taylor (1946–)
Editor, Journalist

Susan L. Taylor was born on January 23, 1946, in New York City. Her parents, who were of Caribbean descent, instilled in her the family legacy of entrepreneurship. After completing high school Taylor decided to create a cosmetic business that by the 1970s was thriving. As a former actress, cosmetologist, and founder of her own cosmetics company, Nequai Cosmetics, Taylor began her relationship with Essence magazine as a freelance writer. In 1971 she became the magazine’s beauty editor, and from 1971 to 1980 she served as fashion and beauty editor. She moved swiftly through the ranks and in 1981 became the editor in chief. By 1986 Taylor had become senior vice president of Essence Communications, the publisher of the magazine, and by 1991 she had continued her personal growth by earning a degree in sociology from Fordham University.

Taylor has used her talent and influence to support the careers of other artists such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Terri McMillan. She also brought attention to the rebuilding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and she has created the Essence Music Festival, which is a yearly event to promote education and information as well as to entertain. Her own writing has also garnered her critical acclaim, and overall Taylor is seen as a model of success and inspiration to black women artists and to the African American publishing community. In 1999 Taylor was the first and only African American woman to be awarded the Henry Johnson Fisher Award, the industry’s highest honor given for lifetime achievement. She was also inducted into the Magazine Editor’s Hall of Fame. She has numerous other awards as well as honorary doctorates.

Taylor is the founder of the National CARES Mentoring Movement which began in 2006 to support children in achieving their education. She also co-chairs the organization Shared Interest with Danny Glover, which supports the building of houses and business ownership for South Africa.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862–1931)
Editor, Newspaper Owner

Ida Barnett Wells was born in Holly Springs, Mississippi, on July 16, 1862, and educated at Rusk University. She served as editor of the black newspaper, the Memphis Free Speech, and in 1892 became part-owner. Through the paper she engaged in a vigorous campaign against the practice of lynching. On May 27, 1882, the paper’s offices were destroyed by a mob.

In 1895 she married Chicago Conservator editor Ferdinand Lee Barnett. That same year Barnett published her first pamphlet against lynching, A Red Record. Over the years Barnett wrote numerous other pamphlets and articles and conducted speaking tours throughout the United States and Europe.

Juan Williams (1954–)
Television and Radio Correspondent

Juan Williams was born in Colon, Panama, on April 10, 1954, and his family moved to Brooklyn, New York, in 1958 when Williams was four years old. Williams went on to graduate from Haverford College in Pennsylvania in 1976 and took a job at the Washington Post. In 1987 Williams along with a production crew produced a fourteen-hour PBS series on the civil rights years, 1954 to 1965. This was accompanied by a book Eyes on the Prize: Civil Rights Years, 1954–1965. The series won critical acclaim and continues as an important record of ordinary people and their participation during this critical time. While at the Post Williams served as editorial writer, columnist, and White House correspondent. He left the newspaper in 1996 to host the television show...
**Montel Williams (1956–)**  
*Talk Show Host*

Montel Williams, a prominent talk show host and motivational speaker, comes from a non-media background. He began his career in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1979 and through a desire to help other, counseled families and servicemen under his command. His ability to reach and motivate others took him to the role of motivational speaker and then to his own talk show, which first aired in 1990. His show handled many controversial topics and sought to find solutions to problems.

In 1999 Williams announced that he has multiple sclerosis but would continue as host while serving as a role model for others. Williams continued the show until November 10, 2010. Williams's show has received many daytime Emmy Awards as well as humanitarian awards for his contributions. These awards include an honorable mention Gracie Award for excellence in the positive portrayal of women, the Nancy Susan Reynolds Award for his episode on teenagers and AIDS, and in 2002 the Man of Courage Award at the Seventh Annual Race to Erase MS.

**Oprah Winfrey (1954–)**  
*Talk Show Host, Media Mogul*

Oprah Winfrey's rise to fame is a tale at once moving and inspiring. She was born on January 29, 1954, in Kosciusko, Mississippi. Her name was supposed to have been “Orpah,” after a biblical figure in the book of Ruth; accounts vary as to the origin of the misspelling.

Winfrey was a precocious child who asked her kindergarten teacher to advance her to the first grade; Winfrey also skipped the second grade. Her parents, who were not married, separated when she was very young and sent her to live with her grandparents. At the age of six Winfrey moved to Milwaukee to live with her mother. From the time she was nine she was abused sexually by male family members and acquaintances; these events, which she did not discuss publicly until the 1980s, have had a profound effect on her life.

When she was fourteen Winfrey went to live with her father in Nashville, Tennessee, and it was there that her life was put back on track. Her father insisted on hard work and discipline as a means of self-improvement, and Winfrey complied, winning a college scholarship that allowed her to attend Tennessee State University. In 1971 she began working part time as a radio announcer for WVOL in Nashville. Two years later, after receiving a B.A. from Tennessee State, she became a reporter at WTVF-TV in Nashville. From 1976 to 1983 she lived in Baltimore, working for the ABC affiliate WJZ-TV, progressing from news anchor to co-host of the popular show *People Are Talking*. In 1984 she moved to Chicago and took over the ailing morning show *A.M. Chicago*. By September of the next year, the show was so successful that it was expanded to an hour format and renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. The show was placed in
syndication and the *The Oprah Winfrey Show* became one of the most popular television programs in history. A talented actress, Winfrey appeared in the motion picture *The Color Purple* (1985) and in the television movie *The Women of Brewster Place* (1989). In 1986 Winfrey founded Harpo, Inc., her own production company (“Harpo” is “Oprah” spelled backwards).

In 2011 after twenty-five successful years hosting *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, Winfrey ended the show after over five thousand broadcasts. She also launched on January 1, 2011, a new television station in collaboration with the Discovery Health Channel called OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network). Winfrey is the richest African American female in America in the twenty-first century, as well as the only African American consistently rated as a billionaire. She is also a philanthropist who donates money to worthy causes, offers scholarships to students for education, and in 2007 she opened The Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa to promote the education of young girls toward transforming communities and countries. As the most powerful African American woman in America she has used her influence to help and encourage all Americans “to live their best life.”