

*From Whence We Came Only Has Relevance
For What We Do For The Future*

MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS

NAMD

“LET us not forget from whence we came! Let us come back to our communities, to the Harlems and other ghettos of America. In a sense, NONE of us have REALLY made it; for what happens to the least of us, happens to all of us. None of us shall be securely free until all of us are free.”

William H. Toles, former V.P.
ITT Continental Baking Co.

Every Black person in White Corporate America has a much-needed role to play in seeing that all programs implemented by their companies equitably include the Black community. This story is about some of the Black pioneers who blazed the trail for Blacks to enter White Corporate America. It is also the story of an organization that has fostered the employment of other Blacks and has gained acceptable professional status for its members. This is the story of the National Association of Market Developers (NAMD) and its members.

The Background

ONLY a handful of national firms in White Corporate America engaged in any meaningful efforts to cultivate the Black-oriented market in the 1930's and the pre-World War II period. The vanguard national firms that dared to pursue what was then the “revolutionary” practice of recognizing that not only did Black Americans exist as *people*, but also as *consumers* of goods and services were the Esso Oil Company (now Exxon Co., USA), Rumford Baking Powder Company, Pepsi-Cola Co. and, to a lesser extent, Royal Crown Cola Co. Significantly, graduates of two historically Black institutions—Fisk University and South Carolina State College—were among the first employees in this aspect of business opportunity.



Michael Allen Bateman, President of NAMD and Minority Affairs Manager for Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation.

During World War II, a few national firms such as Philip Morris and Pepsi-Cola launched more extensive programs. These programs were characterized by the use of specialized sales and sales promotion field forces.

The end of World War II witnessed both renewed Black consumer-oriented market activities on the part of the companies mentioned above and the entry of new companies into this segment of the marketplace. The renewed thrust in-

cluded both the employment of Blacks within these firms and the employment of Blacks as external consultants. These early efforts, however, were almost exclusively goodwill-oriented, rather than centered within a pure or practical marketing approach.

In the early 50's, a dozen or more national companies came to believe that a Black person in their marketing strategy was desirable since White company management did not know how to reach

the Black consumer. Black visibility was high; Black training in marketing techniques was zero. This lack of training for Black personnel stemmed from two sources: 1) White middle-management persons felt threatened by Black salesmen; and 2) White management persons felt that no training was necessary for Blacks.

The first Blacks to assume any managerial role in the White Establishment often had to redesign general marketing tactics in order to generate more profits. In the 50's and 60's, they had to constantly document marketing-community activities in order to prove to the company that segmented or special marketing was lucrative. This is the route that many Black pioneers took to becoming members of planning and policy making teams, and vice presidents.

Some Black Pioneers

ONE of the external consultants who was utilized by these firms was MOSS HYLES KENDRIX, known as the founder of NAMD. He was the owner of Moss H. Kendrix Public Relations and public relations counselor for the Coca-Cola Company. He was also the first president and board chairman of NAMD.

Kendrix describes the early days of Black consumer-oriented marketing as the “Missionary Era of Marketing of the Negro Market.” This remarkable man pointed the way to others by his generous and continuous contributions of ideas, inspiration and resources.

As early as August 1952 Kendrix had begun discussing the possibility of organizing a public relations and sales group to be known as Hucksters In-

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“Pulling Ourselves Up By Our Own Bootstraps”...A Series